

Preface

South Korea has become one of the most economically successful countries in recent times and Seoul a dynamic urban center of the world, so why do Korean¹ people choose to migrate, learn a foreign language(s), eat strange foods, and decide to live without access to familiar social codes such as shared culture, language and extended kin? As part of overseas Korean communities, the record of migrants is sparse and intermittent. In his memoir *Out of Place*, Edward Said wrote about his unexpected reunion on what would be one of his last trips back to Cairo in 1988 with his family's butler of almost three decades, Ahmad Hamed. He describes the scene as one of falling into each other's arms, sobbing with tears of happy reunion all the while reflecting upon a mourned, irrecoverable time. And "as the past poured out of him [Hamed]...I knew again how fragile, precious, and fleeting were the history and circumstances not only gone forever, but basically unrecalled and unrecorded except as occasional reminiscence or intermittent conversation."² This touching yet bittersweet story resounds deeply with others living in diaspora.

By diaspora, I am referring to "ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin - their homelands."³ Conceptually, I am using diaspora as

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I will use Korea and Korean to refer to South Korea, South Korean people, and South Korean publications unless otherwise indicated. When the literature highlights North Korea, I will specify North and South Korea.

² Edward Said, *Out of Place* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), xi.

³ Gabriel Sheffer, "A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics," in *Modern Diasporas in International Politics*, Gabriel Sheffer, ed. (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 3.

“resource,” a formulation proposed by Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin that brings together people who share a similar predicament of diasporic life. The Boyarins base their idea of diaspora as resource upon their reading of the Pauline texts in the Old Testament. Their proposal engages the singularity or centrality of Jewish diaspora history with contemporary discourses of diaspora studies. In the Korean case, I use artists, artwork, and their artistic activities as material resources. Art practices of Korean artists in diaspora constitute part of the sentimental and material connections that recall the past, remember the forgotten, and record migrants’ history from the perspective of those living abroad.

The minority class of displaced, exploited Korean Russian farmers who were forcibly resettled in Kazakhstan by Stalin in 1937 is visually captured in the photographic portrait *Reminiscences* by Russian Korean Viktor Ivanovich Ahn. As one of two ethnic Korean artists from the Commonwealth of Independent States to participate at the 2002 Kwangju Biennial, this image of an old farming couple with tired eyes, wearied hands, and rugose faces evoke a story of the 490,000 Koreans currently residing in Kazakhstan and the 250,000 in Uzbekistan. Of her painting *Three Brushstrokes*, German Korean Hyunsook Kim [Kim Hyönsuk] explains the exacting disciplinary method used to perfect her brushstrokes, through them revealing the intimate moments of nostalgic longing that has sustained her inner-life while living abroad, feeling “out of place.”⁴ How do Kim’s melancholic modernist paintings compare to the fantastic, fictional superheros, rock stars, business tycoons, and others that U.S.-based performance artist Jennifer Moon enacts as

⁴ Artist Talk, Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium, Tokyo, September 2004.

real life characters in her installations? As separate art practices, these three artists are unrelated, and the attempt to relate them seems anachronistic, except for the fact that they came together in remarkable shows, the 2002 Kwangju Biennial's *There* Project and the 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium in Tokyo. Their ethnic Korean backgrounds and their national affiliations, then, become the common attributes that they share, or do they?

A majority of postwar North and South Korean publications on case studies of overseas Korean community or stories of pioneering immigrants and independence leaders evoke the difficulties of life in a strange land. Yet, they are ensconced in a historical framework that is descriptive, homogenizing, chronological and linear in narrative. Overseas Koreans are identified for the most part in terms of the assimilation processes at the destination country. Since Korean migration history texts represents these diasporic groups as part of a larger consanguineously linked family of Koreans abroad, it is difficult to understand exactly who, or more accurately, what their subject of study is. It is assumed that the reader will empathize with sentiments of shared plight and ethnic oneness by locating overseas Korean communities within the broader context of national suffering of modern Korea. Migrants in these studies lack agency. They are treated as fellow compatriots supporting the efforts to re-build the Korean nation and to develop the Korean state. Yet, as part of minority communities, living in foreign places, perhaps no longer able to return to their homeland or not wanting to, the stories of migrants as part of a larger Korean diaspora have rarely been recorded. And artists are especially able to captivate and fascinate the viewing audience by articulating the

complicated ideas and difficult-to-describe conditions of living in diaspora. This artistic ability enables subsequent exchanges that surround the art work that makes this story worth telling.

One goal of this dissertation is to show how ethnicity and nationality may be, on the one hand, true and real, but on the other, superficial. Toward this end, I analyze art in relation to the paradox: the fact that ethnicity and national cultural identity informs one's sense of self for some, and yet for others, is superficial and meaningless. Through an anthropological theory of art, I examine the attributes of the artwork from the vicinity of the art object in order to explore how such a paradox of cultural identity is constructed. Two dimensions of this methodological analysis include the global and national vis-à-vis the individual or intimate levels of examination.

In terms of the larger global and national dimensions, an analysis surrounding the artwork includes an examination of the artist, artwork, exchange, reception, discourse, and the production itself. It focuses on artist who made the work, show(s) where artwork was exhibited, surrounding social and cultural exchange(s), promoting curators and gallerists, ensuing discourses and discussions by scholars, critics, and audiences, production costs and artworks sold. The larger platform of the Kwangju Biennial is the case study that seeks out this larger meaning.

In individual cases, the paradox is palpable on an intimate scale. The artists whose art objects were exhibited, viewed, and discussed at Tokyo embody the inner conditions of art-making. The attributes that surround the art object incorporate social and transpersonal relations of the artist in context-specific or conjunctural settings. They

are a retreat from the global and/or national dimensions found within a biennial platform that often celebrates diasporic art as liberatory.

A method of art analysis that situates the artwork from the vicinity of the artwork within these two dimensional frameworks makes apparent the dynamism and complexities associated with an analysis of visual culture and cultural production. The images of the artworks on display at Kwangju and Tokyo bring into view the limitations of any essentialist claims that reduce the analysis of artists and their art practices solely to a nation, race, ethnicity, or culture. At the same time, the ethnographic fieldwork shows intimately ways in which Korean national history and cultural identity do inform the cultural production of diasporic art. In effect, artists in diaspora implicate both the local conditions of diasporic communities at their host countries that influence their art making *and* engages the Korean audience that still insists upon connections to homeland.

The activities of diasporic artists, their cultural production, and subsequent socio-cultural networks characterize increasing formations of transnational interactions and trans-state connections that evoke loyalties and solidarities both consistent with *and* in contradiction to traditional allegiances to territorial nation-states.⁵ In the academy, scholarship on Korean history, migration history, art history, and diaspora have to address, interact with and account for these paradoxical shifts as they affect identity and belonging.

⁵ The paradox of diasporic art is different from Sheffer's argument on modern diaspora. He finds that diasporic loyalties and solidarities remain only *inconsistent* with or in contradiction to traditional allegiances to nation-states. Gabriel Sheffer, "A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics," 1, italics mine.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Introduction

This dissertation is a cultural history of diasporic art that “casts” movements of Koreans living abroad to re-write *iminsa*, Korean migration history. The visual arts, artists, and artistic activities provide the material means to propose an alternative to dominant discourses of the nation-state, expanding nation-centered discourses beyond the confines of master narratives that are no longer tenable in an increasingly multicultural and multiethnic Korean society. I focus on artists who participated in controversial large-scale exhibitions including the 2002 Kwangju Biennial’s *There* project and the subsequent 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium held in Tokyo.

The *There* exhibition brought together twenty-four artists from Brazil, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, and the U.S. The 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium held in Tokyo presented artwork, performance, and multi-media installations by thirteen artists, in part organized as a response to the dissatisfaction with the 2002 *There* show. Art, artists, and their art practices are the main foci and thus treated as most pertinent in this cultural history for several reasons. First, artistic narrative is a preferred medium to express dwelling in diaspora, as it allows one to express complicated ideas and difficult-to-describe experiences. Second, the lure of art brings audiences back to the art object as a point of reference for discussion, debate, and interpretation concerning issues of migration and displacement. The mediatory effect of the object is that exchange, discussion, and social activity surround the object – a key point to the methodology of

casting diaspora. Third, the use of art as resource reflects upon what Robin Cohen describes as the most creative endeavors in the formation of diaspora discourses. Fourth, they better gauge the growing diasporic experiences of ethnic Korean populations both abroad and in South Korea proper, having returned from studies, business, exile, and living overseas. Finally, interrogating art creates for discursive space in which to examine the archive concerning Korean migration history.

These two transnational exhibitions of art represent significant moments within their own contexts, but as sites critical of exclusive conceptions of identity and belonging, they exemplify a possibility of reshaping the understanding of Korean diaspora from one that is hierarchical in nature to one that challenges these hierarchies on several fronts. The study of artists in diasporic communities challenges ideas of homogeneity and pure-blood relations that have dominated discussions of overseas Koreans. These discussions have largely confined the understanding of overseas Koreans within master narratives of the ethnic nation. That narrative reifies a history of progress and remains a crucial part of Korea's modern project to overcome its long and arduous "history of suffering" (*sunan ũi yŏksa*). Within this narrative, Koreans in diaspora are seen as pioneers and interlocutors who form potential bases for the expansion of national power overseas.

Through the study of these diasporic artists, one also sees a paradox of diasporic art as it pertains to Korean artists. This paradox is evident in the case of groups of artists of similar generation, background, and experience as well as for individual artists. While some diasporic artists uphold the ideas of Korean national culture and belonging bound by homogeneity and blood ties, other artists directly challenge the meaning such

narratives hold in their artistic expressions. As both individual and groups of artists, the study shows multiple identity formations that resist dominant narratives of the nation and reflect differing experiences of class, gender, global and national politics, and particular local situations, indicating how the nation-state system is increasingly challenged by globalization on the one hand. On the other, there are also artists who reinforce monocultural or singular conceptions of national culture, cultural identity, and state affiliation for diasporic subjects. In other words, artwork critical of essentialist understandings of self, community, or nation both *undermine* master narratives of the nation at the same time as they *reinforce* them.

I examine groups of artists who embody this paradox in the case of the 2002 Kwangju Biennial's *There* project. Wonju Lim, Jennifer Moon, Kim Yongsuk, Lina Kim, Kim Sangwon, and others do not categorize themselves as "Korean," "feminist," "ethnic," or "Asian" artists. Their art practices challenge any identity-bounded narratives that may limit their art practice. They equally resist nation-bounded narratives and discourses that may otherwise make difficult their entrée into and activities in the larger art market and art world. Sök Heeman, Pak Ilnam, Ro Fung-sok, Viktor Ivanovich Ahn, Chae Jun, and other older generation artists reflect upon their connection to homeland in the political and cultural terrains of their paintings and photographs. The fact that both types of artists were chosen to show their art work in these two exhibitions is undeniably a reflection of the two main curators, Yongsoon Min and Suh Kyöngsik, and their own relationship to the Korean nation and cultural identity. Linda Hutcheon underlines this paradox as what characterizes postmodern art "which works to subvert dominant

discourses, but is dependent upon those same discourses for its very existence: the ‘already-said.’”⁶

Hutcheon’s treatise on postmodernism, history, theory, and art makes clear that history and fiction are discourses in postmodern writing, and thus human constructs. The meaning and shape of the sense of the past are “not *in the events*, but *in the systems* which make those past ‘events’ into present historic ‘facts.’ This is not a ‘dishonest refuge from truth’ but an acknowledgement of the meaning-making function of human constructs.”⁷ Another way to think about the paradox of diasporic art, then, is within a postmodern context that questions these human constructs but tries to make space for alternative understanding.

The idea of paradoxes that undermines master narratives at the same time as they support them is one of several contradictions Hutcheon underlines as paradoxes of postmodernism. The challenges to historical narratives as “facts” or “truths” are not new ones but have firm roots in the modern. Paul Ricoeur describes the shock of modern civilization and its central paradox inherent in efforts to forge a postcolonial national identity: “how to become modern and to return to sources.”⁸ The implications for examining paradoxes for the margins, of those excluded from the center, are the ideas I explore in diasporic art, art making, and cultural production. Hutcheon puts it best when describing what exactly postmodernism questions:

⁶ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, and Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 46. I thank Tim Tangherlini for this source.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 89, italics hers.

⁸ Paul Ricoeur, “Universal Civilization and National Cultures,” in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 277, as cited in Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 87.

Its [postmodernism's] interrogations of the impulse to sameness (or single otherness) and homogeneity, unity, and certainty, make room for a consideration of the different and the heterogeneous, the hybrid and the provisional. *This is not a rejection of the former values in favor of the latter; it is a rethinking of each in the light of the others...* It is not a move to art as unpremeditated, as composition in a completely open field...[it is] a questioning that is totally dependent upon that which it interrogates. This is perhaps the most basic formulation possible of the paradox of the postmodern.⁹

Cultural Identity: Essentialist versus Positioned Claims

In Stuart Hall's essay on cultural identity and diaspora, he lays out two claims for cultural identity: an essentialist versus a positioned identity. Hall proposes that an *essentialist* claim for cultural identity is based on the unified belief in the history of shared ancestry, common historical experience, and cultural codes such as language or ethnic sameness which provide a people with unchanging, stable and continuous frames of reference and meaning vis-à-vis one's sense of self. It is a syncretic belief in the origins of a culture that is shared by those who believe themselves to be a part of that shared history. An essentialist claim is important in post-colonial and re-construction efforts, Hall contends, as it lends itself toward producing an imagined coherence to a

⁹ Ibid., 42, italics mine.

newly re-established sovereign polity and society.¹⁰ Yet, a structural approach to identity emphasizes subjects more determined by macro-structural processes and socio-political institutions. By stressing structural forces, the agency of the subject is minimized, and the social subject becomes part of a homogeneous larger unit.

The second form of cultural identity is a *positioned* claim, one that re-presents and re-contextualizes the contemporary contexts of history and culture. Whereas an essentialist claim is located in unilinear time that progresses smoothly, the positioned claim exists in a multi-chronic and discontinuous framework of time. The essentialist identity, then, is one of *being* and is foundational, and the positioned is one of *becoming*, grounded on “difference and rupture, formed upon critical points of discontinuities with deep and significant difference.”¹¹ A positioned claim’s discontinuities and ruptures allow for the possibility to recognize history and culture’s own constructed-ness through historical memory, nostalgia, fantasy, narrative, myth, and allusion.¹² In this sense, a positioned claim works within a multichronic logic that recognizes multiple histories – real, material, symbolic, and constructed. A positioned formulation of identity posits a process never whole or complete, but subject to change and transformation. By linking diaspora with cultural identity in a positioned manner, Hall emphasizes a “diasporic aesthetic” that creates space for “creolising, a cut-and-mixing, a forum for ‘cross-overs’ between the dominant and dominated, subjecting and subjected, and past and present that

¹⁰ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan RotheFord (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222-237.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹² *Ibid.*, 225-228.

are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through a trope of difference and hybridity.”¹³

My findings concerning artists in Korean diaspora indicate that cultural identity can no longer be considered only in “either, or” binary terms of essentialist, foundational narratives versus constructed, positioned points of difference. On the one hand, arguments that espouse difference and rupture of identities or “in-betweenness” in terms of culture limit discussions concerning migration policy, cultural industry policies, state affiliation, and citizenship debates. The language of “creolising, cut’n’mixing, and cross-overs” also do not enable engaging debate with those who uphold foundational narratives. On the other hand, static, bounded, and essentialist arguments on diasporic cultural identity equally cannot engage in dialogue and debate with those very diasporic subjects who believe themselves as multiply-situated, hybrid, and interstitial subjects in the context of migration, integration, and change. There must be, at the least, a discursive connection between these claims or positions that can begin the more open-ended work of engaging constructionist perspectives with structuralist positions. I believe that the combination of diaspora and art can provide a connecting point that recognizes the context of policy, citizenship and belonging from within the formulations of the nation-state as well as from the standpoint of the diasporic subject.

It is important to remember what the combination of diaspora and art is. I hypothesize that diasporic art is art produced by artists residing outside a homeland. Key to Korean diasporic art is that artists explore a shared history of trauma, suffering, or

¹³ Ibid., 235.

displacement and present historical memory of such events reconstructed affectively and re-imagined nostalgically. The analysis of the Kwangju and Tokyo exhibitions are the two cases that examine whether or not art can prove resourceful in engaging with diasporic discourses of visual culture on a larger scale. For this reason, I chose an ethnographic approach, interviewing artists and collecting their artwork *in situ*, especially by less established artists. The examination of the artists, artwork, and the review of the literature on Korean migration leaves me with the questions with which I began this project: what exactly constitutes a history of migration according to Koreans in diaspora? Can a study of Korean artists in diaspora help forward critical methods, diaspora theories, and new humanities? Can it stimulate creative societies, cultural industries, new forms of connectivity, or influence cultural policy through technological innovations that inform some of the larger tasks with which this project engages?

II. Locating Discourse: Terminology

Twelve years ago when I co-founded an arts group *Han Diaspora* and began coordinating multi-media art exhibitions in South Korea, diaspora was a foreign idea in urban Seoul. In doing the press junkets for the three years of production from 1996 to 1998, for example, I recall explaining the meaning, the concept, and examples of diaspora repeatedly for mainstream South Korean media,¹⁴ and only when I described the

¹⁴ Some of the press coverage *Han Diaspora* received included the daily newspapers *Munhwa ilbo*, *Chosŏn ilbo*, *Chungang ilbo*, *Hanguk ilbo*, *Kungmin ilbo*, *Hangyore sinmun*, as well as magazines and radio/television broadcasts such as *Vogue Korea*, *In Magazine*, *Hangyore 21*, *Lady Kyonghyang*, *SBS Morning Show*, and *Christian Radio Broadcast*. The other co-founder of *Han Diaspora* was artist and activist Nathalie Lemoine, also known as Cho Mihee. As one of the participants of the 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium in Tokyo, I discuss Lemoine's work in Chapter Five.

show in terms of overseas Koreans or international adoptees did the reporters nod in comprehension. It was only much later in graduate school that I realized that “diaspora” and *haeoe tongp’o* or overseas Koreans are not synonymous at all. The politics of history, ideology, and capital imbue these terms with shifting meanings, and the variety of differing terminology used to indicate, denote, identify, examine, and even disparage overseas Koreans makes the task of delineating the field of Korean migration history that much more difficult.

In the case of the largest diaspora in the world, the Chinese have three categorical distinctions in the field of migration and the study of its ethnic overseas reflecting different reasons for movement: *yimin* (k. imin) as migrants, *liumin* (k. yumin) as “wandering” people, and *nanmin* (k. nanmin) as displaced people or refugees. *Yimin* or migration is movement caused by war or natural disasters and enforced by government officials, and thus, *yimin* is not constituted as a voluntary act in the Chinese case. Displaced people or *liumin* emigrate as displaced, homeless or wandering persons, often as a result of anti-social behavior or immoral acts. This group may consist of outcasts, fugitives, rebels, outlaws, and vagrants. Refugees or *nanmin* are people forced to move due to political disturbance or natural calamities, and thus there is compassionate treatment toward them. Migration in the Chinese connotation of *yimin* does not necessarily translate into the idea of migration as difficult, diverse, and complex set of

conditions that affect people's decision to move willingly and unwillingly in modern and contemporary times.¹⁵

In the humanities and social sciences, Korean publications on the topic of overseas Koreans have used a wide selection of terms to demarcate ethnic Koreans living abroad including but certainly not limited to *Hanin* (Koreans), *Hangugin* (Korean national), *kyomin* (compatriots), *Hanminjok* (ethnic Koreans), *kyop'o* (Koreans abroad), *tongp'o* (fellow compatriots, or co-ethnics), *uri kyöre* (our consanguineous group), *Hangyo* (Koreans abroad or overseas), and *K'orian* (Romanized form of "Korean"). Scholars interested in the field of migration are also joined by policy-makers, political activists, journalists, bloggers, and a general public who take interest in and write about overseas Koreans. These terms are often preceded by *haeoe*, meaning "overseas," or *chaeoe*, meaning "residing abroad." Both indicate communities of ethnic Koreans living abroad, but while *haeoe* signifies those Koreans residing in places not contiguous with the home country, *chaeoe* is a more generic term that includes those residing in countries contiguous to the peninsula as well as those living overseas. In other words, I suggest that while both terms today indicate Koreans residing abroad, *haeoe* connotes "overseas" and is indicative of more recent "jet migrations" in the postwar period when people traveled long distances across seas whereas *chaeoe* includes the modern migrations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that included movement to

¹⁵ Gungwu Wang, "Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 3-4. See also, Qing-hwang Yen, "Ch'ing Changing Images of the Overseas Chinese, 1644-1912," *Modern Asian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1981), 261-285. There are 35 million Chinese in 151 countries as of 2007 according to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "Number of Overseas Chinese." *The China Daily* February 12, 2007, http://chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/12/content_807738.htm (Accessed on April 10, 2008).

China, Russia, and Japan. Often, the “*oe*” of *haeoe* or *chaeoe*¹⁶ is replaced with specific destination countries such as Japan *chaeil*, China, *chaejung*, U.S. *chaemi*, Russia *chaerŏ*¹⁷ to indicate country-specific sub-sets of Koreans residing abroad.

In the archive, few texts rarely discuss the confusion caused by the plethora of terms used, nor do they address the necessity of unifying them to make a coherent vocabulary through which one can delineate a field of Korean migration history. However, scholars have begun to reconsider the meanings of a couple of the most prevalent terms in use: *tongp’o* and *kyop’o*. Political scientist Hyun-ok Park specifies new approaches, attitudes, and policies introduced during the Kim Young Sam [Kim Yŏngsam] administration (1993-1998) that are especially relevant in considering the linguistic tropes of *kyop’o* and *tongp’o*.¹⁸ Loosely translated, *kyop’o* represent Koreans residing in foreign countries who are distinguished from those remaining in Korea; therefore, this term is an exclusive concept that separates those abroad from those who remained in the homeland. However, *tongp’o* are those blood-kin, fellow Korean compatriots, and this term works as an integrative, inclusive concept to conjure up fraternal ties and feelings of camaraderie. By emphasizing the trope of *tongp’o* starting in the late 1990s, the South Korean government wants to link cultural roots and nationalistic affection for Korea working toward building national strength with ethnic Koreans residing outside the nation.

¹⁶ *Che* means “residing,” and *oe* means “outside” but indicates “foreign” or “abroad.”

¹⁷ “Il” is shortened for *Ilbon* or Japan, “chung” for “Chungguk” or China, “rŏ” for “Rŏsia” or Russia.

¹⁸ Hyun Ok Park, “*Segyehwa*: Globalization and Nationalism in Korea,” *Journal of the International Institute* 4, no. 1 (1996), <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/vol4no1/segveh.html> (accessed January 22, 2002).

While Park loosely translates the two terms, Kwŏn Heokt'ae [Kwŏn Hyŏkt'ae] specifically examines their usage in the case of Koreans residing in Japan. Examining the history of the two terms *chaeil kyop'o* and *chaeil tongp'o* in South Korean press, Kwŏn finds that the idea of *chaeil kyop'o* is based upon a policy of exclusion whereas *chaeil tongp'o* is one that absorbs or assimilates its overseas Koreans. He further argues that *tongp'o* and *kyop'o* are inseparable from ideological associations in terms of specific historical events that were politicized by the South Korean state.¹⁹ In other words, for the Japanese Koreans, the political ideology of communist North or democratic South had underlying implications for the South Korean media that would use the terms *chaeil kyop'o* or *chaeil tongp'o* with that ideological subtext in mind.

From 1999 to 2006, Kwŏn text-mines the eleven major daily newspapers published in Seoul to check the usage of *tongp'o* and *kyop'o* and finds that *chaeil tongp'o* is used three times as much as *chaeil kyop'o*.²⁰ Interestingly, *kyop'o* is favored by the more conservative newspapers such as *Chosŏn ilbo* and *Tonga ilbo* whereas the more progressive *Hangyŏre sinmun* overwhelmingly used *tongp'o*.²¹ Although Kwŏn does not analyze the difference between all conservative versus progressive newspapers' treatment of overseas Koreans, his findings suggest that terminology is directly associated with political leanings. That is, both the left and right appropriated *tongp'o* and *kyop'o* in terms of their *minjoksŏng*, ethnicity, or the degree to which they were considered

¹⁹ Kwŏn Hyeokt'ae [Kwŏn Hyŏkt'ae], "Chaeil Chosŏnin wa Hanguk sahoe: Hanguk sahoe nŏn chaeil Chosŏnin ul ottŏk'e 'p'yosang' hae wannŏnga?" [Resident Koreans and Korean Society: How did Korean Society 'Represent' Resident Koreans?], *Hanguk yŏksa sahoe yŏngu* (2006).

²⁰ The eleven are *Chosŏn ilbo*, *Chungang ilbo*, *Dong-A ilbo*, *Hanguk ilbo*, *Hangyŏre sinmun*, *Kungmin sinmun*, *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, *Kyŏngjae sinmun*, *Maeil sinmun*, *Munhwa ilbo*, and *Yŏnhap nyusu*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

“Korean.” Kwŏn argues that the explicit shift in *Hangyore* newspaper’s use of *tongp’o* in recent times reflect changes on several fronts. Foremost among them, he cites the creation of the Overseas Koreans Foundation in 1997; second, the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Act of 1999; and as a result of the democratization movement, the conscientious movement to include all Koreans abroad into one all-inclusive category, *Han minjok* or ethnic Korean people, regardless of nationality or state affiliation.²² Kwŏn finds it difficult to assess whether or not the use of *Han minjok* emphasizes one Korean people and nation or is a reaction to the discursive strategies forwarding postnationalism and postnationality.²³

Kwŏn further examines the number of times that *kyop’o* and *tongp’o* appear specifically in the *Chosŏn ilbo* from 1945-2006.²⁴ Like other newspapers, the use of *tongp’o* and *kyop’o* are interchangeably used. From 1945 until the 1950, *tongp’o* was common whereas from 1950 to the end of 1970s, *kyop’o* appeared more frequently. After the 1970s, the newspaper reverted back to *tongp’o* again. After 1979, however, *kyop’o* was favored, and the trend since the mid- to late-1990s shows *tongp’o* has been and continues to be the term of choice. What is the meaning of this back and forth?

Such shifts coincide with key politically-charged events. For example, in 1950, North Korea began a “Campaign to Go North [Korea]” (k. *puksong saŏp*) in Japan, trying to mobilize Koreans in Japan to immigrate to North Korea. There was also the official

²² Ibid., 4. As one example of this, see Song Kŏnho, *Song Kŏnho P’yŏngnon chip: Han nara han kyŏre rŭl hyanghayŏ* [Collection of Essays by Song Kŏnho: Toward One Country, One People] (Seoul: P’ulpit, 1989).

²³ Kwŏn, Hyeokt’ae, “Chaeil Chosŏnin wa Hanguk sahoe,” 4.

²⁴ In personal communication, Kwŏn states that *Chosŏn ilbo* is the only newspaper that has been digitized starting in 1945, and thus he was able to access its archive through computing text-mining method.

announcement in 1955 of the recognition of the status of “Overseas Koreans of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (*Chosŏn inmin konghwaguk ui haeoe kongmin*). The campaign to return to the homeland (*kwiguk saŏp*) began in 1959 as well. From 1945 to 1973, of the ninety-one articles in the *Chosŏn ilbo* related to Japanese Koreans, sixty-one were related to the return movement. In 1959, in particular, forty-two of the forty-four articles dealt with the issue of the “Campaign to Go North.”²⁵

The second major event occurred in 1979 as the “Campaign to Visit the Homeland” for *Choch’ongnyŏn* (or North affiliated) members. On both occasions, Cold War ideology was indirectly associated with the fear these events elicited for South Korea.²⁶ In other words, *kyop’o* is directly associated with “Communist” Koreans in Japan in their affiliation with North Korea, the enemy of the South Korean state during the Cold War.²⁷ Kwŏn finds the shift in terms from *tongp’o* to *kyop’o* and vice versa occurs as the country prepares for an ever-possible war, and the *Choch’ongnyŏn* are treated as a synecdoche: they embody the extension of the communist North in Japan, ultimately threatening the larger goals of a democratic and capitalist South Korea. In sum, Kwŏn finds that the South Korean press upheld an exclusive anti-communist discourse bounded by anti-North Korean ideology throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. However, the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the start of Kim Yong Sam’s globalization policies in 1993 began the process of thaw between North and South.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., 5-6.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ Ibid.

In the early 1990s, after more than four decades of antagonistic North/South regimes entangled in an ideological war, South Korea's previous anti-communist, anti-North Korean nationalism became replaced by a new language of nationalism: *segzehwa*.

Although *segzehwa* is the official term for 'globalization,' which in the U.S. denotes internationalization of economic relations, this phrase in Korea evokes strong nationalist sentiment, calling for national unity in order to survive and gain leadership in the international community. What *segzehwa* represents is a de-territorialized national community among Koreans.²⁹

As part of this deterritorialized national community, overseas Koreans were referred to as *tongp'o* once again which supports Kwön's finding that South Korean press, namely the *Chosŏn ilbo*, also returned to using *tongp'o* from 1999-2006.

From *Tongp'o* / *Kyop'o* to Diaspora: New Terminology

A discussion of overseas Koreans as part of diaspora and diasporic experiences has only recently emerged. Sociologist Yoon In Jin is one of the first South Korean authors to embrace diasporic paradigms in his book *K'orian tiasŭp'ora* [Korean Diaspora].³⁰ Yoon surveys English language literature on modern diaspora, finding it resourceful as an all-inclusive concept that can incorporate the various aspects and

²⁹ Hyun-ok Park, "Segzehwa: Globalization and Nationalism in Korea," *Journal of the International Institute* 4, no. 1 (1996) <http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/journal/vol4no1/segzeh.html> (accessed January 8, 2004), 3.

³⁰ Yoon In Jin [Yun Injin], *K'orian tiasŭp'ora, chaeoe Hanin ūi iju, chŏgŭng, chŏngch'esŏng* [Korean Diaspora: Identity, Assimilation and Acculturation in the Migration of Overseas Koreans] (Seoul: Koryŏ taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2004).

interdisciplinary issues that must be dealt with in the study of overseas Koreans' experiences.³¹ According to Yoon, the various experiences of overseas Koreans include immigration, discrimination, acculturation, cultural adaptation, assimilation, community, national culture, national identity, and other topics of studies in the disciplines of history, anthropology, folklore, sociology, political science, economics, and linguistics. Diaspora is the concept that is able to connect these various components of overseas Koreans' experiences.

While Yoon's survey of overseas Koreans describes the advantages of using the concept of diaspora and provides a general chronology of modern movement of Koreans in diaspora, it does not introduce or bring forth new dimensions to theorizing, critiquing, or understanding diaspora and diaspora discourses in the Korean case. Instead, he focuses on sociological theoretical models explaining adaptation processes by minority groups.³² Yoon does state his preference for the term *chaeoe Hanin* over *chaeoe tongp'o* or *kyop'o* precisely because he believes that the former is a neutral and objective name whereas *tongp'o* and *kyop'o* are embedded in the belief system of how "Korean" one is. Therefore, Koreans in China, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. would be referred to as *chaejung*, *chaeil*, *chaerŏ*, and *chaemi Hanin*, respectively.

Even while he describes the confusion of the variety of terms and admits to the need to distance the terminology from the politicized and essentialist connotations of *tongp'o* and *kyop'o*, his gesture toward objectivity is just as quickly disregarded as he alerts the reader that he will continue to use terms such as *Chosŏnjok*, *Koryŏsaram* or

³¹ Ibid., 4-8, 15-18, back cover.

³² Chapter Two of Yoon's text deals solely with the theory of social processes of adaptation. Ibid., 25-44.

Koryŏin sahoe, and *Chaeil tongp'o* because overseas Koreans residing in these regions use these terms to refer to themselves. Moreover, he states that he will use *chaeoe Hanin* interchangeably with *chaeoe tongp'o*, further validating Kwŏn Hyeokt'ae's findings that public opinion and media outlets are inculcating overseas communities through the use of terminology traditionally used to signify one nation.³³

Spatially, the history of migration, *iminsa*, is configured along national boundaries where overseas Koreans reside. Therefore, a majority of migration history books highlight *Koryŏ saram*, Koreans in Russia and Confederation of Independent States (hereafter CIS), *Chosŏnjok*, Korean Chinese, *Chaeil Chosŏnin* or *Chaeil kyop'o*, Resident Koreans in Japan, or *Chaemi tongp'o*, Korean Americans, group names in which Korean migrants are placed into the national category of their host country (*suyong kukka*) juxtaposed to the ethnic background of home country Korea (*moguk*). The representation of these groups in their translated naming is already imbued with the history of socio-political antagonisms and the distinct political history of Korean communities in different host or destination countries.

For example, the local situation of Koreans who ended up in China's Autonomous Korean Prefecture of Yanbian, the *Chosŏnjok* (c. *Chaoxianzu*), will decidedly have a different outlook on language, culture, and identity than those who experienced overt discrimination as Koreans residing in Japan (j. *zainichi Chōsenjin*). The denotation of the term *Chosŏnjok* or "Chosŏn race" appends the ethnic minority of Koreans in China with the name of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910), a time when many Koreans migrated to

³³ Yoon In Jin, *K'orian tiasŭp'ora*, 21-24.

Manchuria. As well, *Chosŏn* may continue to be used because of their sympathetic stance toward the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea or *Chosŏn inmin konghwaguk* that still uses Chosŏn officially.

The term *zainichi* (k. *Chaeil*) literally means “residing in Japan,” and this term is often followed by the term for “Korean.” The naming of “Koreans” in Japan is the most complicated and confusing case in that writings about this group inter-mix the various names creating for a hodgepodge of terms, viz., *zainichi Chōsenjin*, *zainichi Kankokujin*, *zainichi Chōsen Kankokujin*, *zainichi K'orian*, or simply *zainichi*.³⁴ As an example of the politics and complexity of naming, Sonia Ryang has radically refuted the term *zainichi* altogether, referring to the very “un-residing” or “unzainichi-ness” of the Korean residents in Japan.³⁵

Moreover, the naming issue in Japan still remains debated and contested, as it expresses one's social and political standing within the community. Part of the contentiousness stems from the fact that Koreans in Japan became a stateless people in 1952, without any rights, benefits, or social assurances when Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty with the U.S.³⁶ Therefore, unable to gain social guarantees as Japanese citizens, those Koreans who were residing in Japan had to choose state affiliation with the North or the South, and in some cases, neither. For the former case

³⁴ Norma Field, “Beyond Envy, Boredom, and Suffering: Toward an Emancipatory Politics for Korean Residents and Others,” *Positions: Critique of East Asia* 1, no. 3 (1993): 640-670.

³⁵ Sonia Ryang, “Diaspora and Beyond: There is No Home for Koreans in Japan,” *The Review of Korean Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 55-86.

³⁶ Ryang reminds us that when Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty, all Koreans in Japan lost their Japanese nationality, and they were stateless people because at that time, Japan did not have any diplomatic relations with either the North or the South. Sonia Ryang, “Koreans in Japan,” *Amerasia Journal* 29, no. 3 (2003-204): 31-35.

who chose a state, they experienced the most egregious split in their communities as a direct result of the internecine antagonism of the two political regimes on the peninsula, while in the case of those who did not choose either, they remained a stateless people.

By the mid-1950s, the term *zainichi Chōsenjin* reflected political ties to *Choch'ongnyōn*³⁷ and affiliation with North Korea, whereas the names *zainichi Kankokujin* or *zainichi K'oriajin* meant affiliation with *Mindan*³⁸ and the South. Both terms mean Koreans residing in Japan, but the use of *Chōsen* (k. Chosŏn) and *Kankoku* (k. Hanguk) designate which “Korea” one aligns themselves to politically and ideologically, what historical linkages they maintain, and what type of social treatment/benefits they receive from Japan as well as from their state affiliation with the North or South. Sonia Ryang finds that today, such divisions no longer denote exclusive association with either North or South. She writes, “the contours of *zainichi* life are becoming more complex and volatile. The parody name *zainichi* condenses this complexity: in spite of the diversity of names for Koreans in Japan, not one captures them properly. This in turn is implicated in the way the Korean diaspora in Japan is perpetuated in terms of its uncertainty and insecurity.”³⁹

Yoon In Jin’s work is the most recent publication in a long list of publications by sociologists, anthropologists, and political economists who study the disparate elements of Korean migration and immigration integration. While Yoon’s work bears the title

³⁷ Founded in 1955, the group *Chaeilbon Chosŏnin ch'ong yŏnhaphoe* or *Choch'ōngnyōn* is officially called the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan. In Japanese, they are referred to as *Sōren*.

³⁸ *Mindan* or Koreans Residents’ Union in Japan was founded in 1946.

³⁹ Sonia Ryang, “Introduction: Between the Nations,” in *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, edited by Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 11.

Korean Diaspora, it does not reflect any paradigmatic change or shift in position from others in the field of Korean migration studies. That is, he continues the task of cultivating overseas Koreans as an important component of the master narrative of the nation wherein overseas Koreans play key roles within the project of overcoming the country's long history of struggle through the writing, and thus strengthening of the nation. In other words, "writing overseas Koreans" is writing the nation on a global scale for state development and national reinforcement.

Some of the earliest texts representative of migration history include Warren Y. Kim's *Chaemi Hanin osimnyŏnsa* (Fifty Year History of Korean Americans, 1959), Ministry of Culture's *Imin yoram* (Survey of Migration, 1962), Ko Sungje's *Hanguk iminsa yŏngu* (A Study on Korean Migration History, 1973), Kim Hyungchan and Wayne Patterson's *The Koreans in America (1882-1974)*, 1974, Kim Hyungchan's *The Korean Diaspora: Historical and Sociological Studies of Korean Immigration and Assimilation in North America*, 1977, Yi Kuhong's *Hanguk iminsa* (Korean Migration History, 1979), and Bong Youn Choy's *Koreans in America*, 1971. The overall conclusion is that these texts and others reflect the master narrative of overcoming the long history of suffering and devastation of the nation. As a consequence, migration as a field of historical inquiry becomes written as derivative history, in reaction to and as a reflection of international conflicts and power struggles among the major powers in the Pacific Rim.

I seek a means of naming overseas Koreans at once on terms that can equally discuss ethnic Koreans in an attempt to be inclusive of the range of host societies where they reside, be they Kazakhstan, Brazil, Japan, or China. By inclusive, Koreans in the

over 160 countries may not have as complicated historical ties to the peninsula as those in China or Japan, but they are, however tenuous, still part of a diaspora and therefore equally pertinent to the discussion on historical, theoretical, and material levels. Therefore, for semantic purposes of this project, I suggest the use of the terms Chinese Koreans instead of *Chosŏnjok* and Japanese Koreans instead of *zainichi Chōsenjin*. In the case of Koreans in the U.S., because the term American Korean could also include those Koreans in Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and elsewhere on the American continent, I will use Canadian Korean, Mexican Korean, Cuban Korean to indicate the destination sites of migration, and U.S. Koreans to represent those Koreans in the U.S.

In this proposition, I do not seek objective or value-neutral terms. As the discussion on the ideological uses and understanding of the meanings of *tongp'o* and *kyop'o* indicates, the linear progression from ethnic origin→nation→state→destination country through which identities have been configured and assumed in writing overseas Koreans make it impossible to do revisionist work without some resolution or a clearing of the Korea-centered political positions and ideological implications that are embedded in these terms. It is my hope that, at the very least, readers will take the mesolevel planes of analysis into consideration before critiquing the binary position of, for example, Chinese Korean. Finally, it is impossible to think that the over six million Koreans all maintain a sense of themselves as Korean. Scholars cannot take for granted that all Koreans abroad want to be associated with the construction of national affiliations, neither from the position of the overseas country of residence nor from that of their ethnic association with Korea.

Diaspora as *Resource*

In the twentieth century, a dizzying array of invocations of contemporary diaspora has resulted from the large number of people displaced in the aftermath of wars including two Sino-Japanese wars, two World Wars, two revolutions in China, and a slew of ideological wars from those fought in Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar up to the recent two wars in Iraq. Diaspora generally refers to displaced communities of people who were dislocated from native homelands. Historically, diaspora was and often still connotes a history, experience, concept, or theory associated with victimhood and suffering. As such, diaspora represents those forcibly dispersed from their birth country, followed by a subsequent destruction of and return to that country as in the Jews of Babylon. For this reason, Diaspora is often capitalized because the history of the Jews is considered the center of diaspora studies, although there are other cases of diaspora including West African slaves, Armenians, and in recent times, Palestinians, subjects who have all been displaced due to their forced dispersal from their birth countries.

In his 2008 second edition introduction to *Global Diasporas*, Robin Cohen describes that when he first published the book in the mid-1990s, his research at the Library of Congress concerning diaspora conjured up a few hundred titles on diaspora, mostly on Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and African. In comparison, by 2007, a search on diaspora produced 14,100,000 hits on the Google browser (81,900 on Google scholar), and he noticed many more ethnic groups and other social formations not defined by religion, ethnicity, or even nations. The expansion of the field has made it difficult to continue to privilege the Jewish Diaspora as the originary center of examination. It has

become more of a contentious point of debate to frame the larger questions concerning diaspora into a single case. Even in historical cases of the Jews in diaspora, the contentions exist. For example, John Barclay compares Jews in the Mediterranean diaspora, analyzing the various milieu in which they lived and the varied contents of their writing. He finds that post-biblical reconstitution of Judaism makes it clear that no unity in Diaspora Jews can be assumed, nor can Jews be considered privileged in their affiliations with God, distinguished because of their maintenance of customs, and allude to other sources of their glorious destiny or for that matter, destitute deracination.⁴⁰ I understand diaspora as resource for people who share a similar predicament and thus am arguing against particularism and the singularity of the Jewish Diaspora, as it has traditionally been discussed.

William Safran explores the term's semantic field and discusses the varying parameters of its definition. Diaspora definitions span the gamut of connotations and the list(s) are repeated in innumerable texts.⁴¹ The conceptual uses of diaspora often leave untouched the problems of essentialist or ahistorical claims. In many examples, diaspora has become the ubiquitous signifier of movement and displacement, and the over(t)ly used formulations in English language sources is one aspect of James Clifford's survey on diaspora. He detangles diaspora discursively in the context of contemporary critical studies emphasizing that its history has been embedded particularly in "negative" cases of

⁴⁰ John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trojan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, Ltd., 1996.

⁴¹ The numerous lists need no repetition here. References to these list(s) include but certainly are not limited to: William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: a journal of transnational studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 83; and Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 6.

diaspora. Clifford's review of diaspora discourses makes apparent the issues stemming from the ahistorical and ubiquitous ways in which diaspora is referred to in contemporary formulations. At the same time, he convincingly argues for a diasporic "dwelling-in-displacement." This type of dwelling represents a specific cosmopolitanism held in tension with structures of nation-states and strategies of assimilationist ideologies.⁴² In these critiques, I find there are two distinct characterizations of diaspora that handicap its usage – one historical and the other contemporary.

In a historical treatise of diasporas, Robin Cohen historicizes diaspora studies, referring back to the first "scattering across" borders that occurred when the Roman empire expanded across Asia Minor and the Mediterranean (800-600 B.C.E.) as a result of their expansionist policies, military conquest, and colonization.⁴³ He indicates the necessity of scholarly inquiries into the Jewish diaspora, not as the normative or central case, but as both a beginning and a focal point of interrogations into diaspora. But by claiming that the "origins and implications of the term *have to be assimilated* and understood before it can be *transcended*," is not Cohen's approach yet another means of centralizing diaspora's Jewishness?⁴⁴ Despite this centering, Cohen himself highlights the Armenians, Africans, Palestinians, the Irish, and the other diasporas as important diasporic cases that must be included in order to expand debates and discussions on the topic.

⁴² James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 310.

⁴³ Robin Cohen, "Diasporas and the State: From Victims to Challengers." *International Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1996): 507.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Cohen also distinguishes between interpretation of diaspora as a *positive* experience as opposed to the victim-laden *negative* experience that has been dominant in diaspora writings that focus on adverse diaspora experiences and narratives. The Greeks experienced a “positive diaspora” in the classical period whereas the opposing “negative” or “victim diaspora” sheds light on those who were subject to colonization, with the Jewish case being the most complex and diverse, thus making, purposefully or not, the Jewish diaspora central to understanding diaspora. I find more compelling Isaiah Gafni’s suggestion that instead of finding a negative aversion to Jewish diaspora, one might think about the “negative” as juxtaposed and compounded by the “positive” Talmudic readings of Jewish diaspora as a blessing. In this reading, diaspora helps Jews maintain their sense of self outside of their homeland. It also reinforces their sense of place as part of the universal mission to include the Jewish participation in the civilization of Egypt during the Hellenistic period. Another pertinent frame in which Gafni discusses the negative and positive “blessing” of diaspora is to make the distinction that “the pain of exile [of Jews] is only meaningful to those who cannot assimilate into new surroundings.”⁴⁵

In this dissertation, the intimate nexus of loss, displacement, melancholia, and even celebration embodied in art objects and artists’ practices cannot be described, analyzed, or traced back to distinct positive or negative prescriptions. A more helpful turn has been to think of diaspora not by definition but as *resource* for the many people who share a similar predicament. Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin propose a radical Jewishness in diaspora through their re-reading of Pauline texts that discovers Paul’s

⁴⁵ Isaiah M. Gafni, *Land, Center and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 17-18, 30.

central concern of Jews “in relation to all other people of the world to the God of Israel.”⁴⁶ The Boyarins draw upon Paul as a resource to formulate a universal position for Jews, a critical challenge they pose against the coercive, particular, and embodied identity of Jewishness according to the state and the forces of Zionism. In this sense, diaspora as resource allows for a deterritorialized scale of identities even as this scale is weighed down on two ends by universalism and particular embodied identity. Diaspora as resources does not bound one’s sense of self to a particular place. Their work thrusts Jewish diaspora studies and its centrally positioned archive into contemporary critical studies of diaspora to begin the work of re-situating Jewish studies in comparative diasporic frameworks through a hermeneutic re-interpretation of scripture.⁴⁷ Through the Boyarins’ insightful work, I would like to reconsider state affiliations and ethnic belonging in the current milieu of questioning the centrality of certain cases and master narratives of diaspora.⁴⁸ One of the main questions that this dissertation explores in terms of diasporic futures, then, is whether or not diaspora as resource can help produce conditions to delineate a field of Korean migration studies on terms set by the cultural production of those living abroad, and not only by its relation to the Korean nation-state, ethnicity, and culture.

The second handicap of diaspora concerns its contemporary usage that expands the concept to include everyone from refugees, immigrants, and alien residents to the situation of exiles and expatriates. In contradistinction to the privileging of particular,

⁴⁶ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 57.

⁴⁷ Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora: Two Essays on the Relevance of Jewish Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 10-11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

central definitions, diaspora's open-ended usages have conceptually led to universal or ahistorical appropriations of the term as a nebulous space of imagination and difference. Differences certainly do exist in its usage, and categorical differences among diaspora theories, diaspora discourses, and historical experiences of diaspora are never equivalent. Yet, in many writings about diaspora, such distinctions are collapsed, intermixed, or at worst, they remain unmentioned. Caren Kaplan and Eva Hoffman mention the distinctions between exile and immigrant, political refugee and guest worker, or even expatriate and traveler.⁴⁹ As a category of displaced people, however, diaspora still remains ahistorically and overly used. In one example, Nicholas Van Hear argues that "new diasporas" were stimulated greatly (if not caused) by "revolutions" in telecommunications, transport, and ideas, a globalizing frenzy of their movements encompassed by an onslaught of polyglot globetrotters. In another, Okwui Enwezor describes diasporic space as "the quintessential late twentieth century space, a space in which the terms of modern immigration, exile, loss, nation, subject, and citizen are negotiated and reinvented for various uses."⁵⁰ In still another instance, in her edited volume of essays, poetry, and theoretical expositions, Angelika Bammer argues that the separation of people from their native culture or "displacement" is one of the most formative experiences of our century.⁵¹ While these examples bear some truth, the long

⁴⁹ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 120-121; Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation: a Life in a New Language* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989).

⁵⁰ Okwui Enwezor, "A Question of Place: Revisions, Reassessments, Diaspora." In *Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain 1966-1996*, ed. Mora J. Beauchamp-Byrd and M. Franklin Sirmans, 85-91 (New York: Palace Press, International, 1997), 87.

⁵¹ Angelika Bammer, "Introduction," in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), xi-xxi.

history of peoples on the move makes such statements about diaspora and displacement in the twentieth century carry less impact and importance in light of the context of migration historiography.

Recently, the field of transnational studies has generated productive discussions of global movement and changing subject formation. There are, however, important distinctions that differentiate transnationalism and diaspora. Braziel and Mannur distinguish transnationalism as the transfer of goods, ideas and things, whereas diaspora is the lived experience of people across/through borders of nation-states.⁵² They argue that the pertinence of diaspora theory and diaspora studies lies in the ability to destabilize borders, thus allowing diaspora to rewrite the nation. Whereas Hyun-ok Park sees a deterritorialization of national community through *segyehwa*, Braziel and Mannur underscore the reconfiguration of the nation by its diaspora. In other words, theorizing diaspora offers an alternative paradigm for national affiliation by including diaspora as part of the nation. Offering multiple responses to hegemonic, homogenizing forces of globalization, they believe that the lived experience of diaspora complicates national identity.⁵³ The strength of Braziel and Mannur's volume is in theorizing diaspora, especially given the interdisciplinary breadth of the contributors' essays. However, the use of diaspora still remains subordinate to the nation and differs in the approach that I am taking by exploring diaspora as historically-situated material resource that generates alternative space from nation-state discourses.

⁵² Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, eds. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Even as scholars recognize the handicaps, confusion, and ahistorical uses of diaspora, the conditions in “tracing back” diaspora are never wholly fulfilled in writing diaspora. Indeed, Cohen writes that “there is no place to write a full account of the subsequent vicissitudes of the Jewish diaspora.”⁵⁴ A more constructive method of reinvigorating Jewish thought and diaspora is to recall and to re-engage in specific Jewish contexts in expanding diaspora discourses. This is the Boyarins’ strategy in suggesting that in the evaluation of diaspora, diaspora studies can acknowledge “the ways in which identity is maintained through exclusion and oppression of internal others and external others.”⁵⁵

I suggest a diasporic rhizomatic web that combines migrants’ experiences with the contexts of local histories and global causes of movement. The study of diaspora necessarily combines the larger historical forces of migration such as Korea’s incorporation into a world system, colonial rule, internecine war, and division of the peninsula, Cold War politics, and subsequent U.S. occupation as well as the micro-level analysis of individuals’ experiences within a single analytical field. At the same time, the interdisciplinarity of the project allows for multiple components to come together. In this sense, this dissertation compares different sites of production not in terms of absolutes, hierarchies or universals. It is rather an examination of asymmetries, but asymmetries systematically interrelated. I believe that art attunes to asymmetries in a fashion both constructive and sublime. Most importantly, diasporic art and its production through the lenses of exhibitions, visualizations, revisionism, and web interface presentations provide

⁵⁴ Ibid., 510.

⁵⁵ Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora*, 7.

distance away from the ethnonational fixedness on Korea and the nation that are embedded in the archive. In doing so, art and its production bring multiculturalism into a new light, commanding recognition through material culture of visual artwork fully reflective of the issues involving migration, cultural identity, national association, art and art history, state affiliation, and diasporic culture.

In teasing out the various actors in this field – artist, art object, reception, exchange, audience, and production – this diasporic web will speak to conditions of Korean identity construction and of Clifford’s dwelling-in-displacement. Therefore, a reading of art objects imbued with the social antagonisms could well yield concrete ideas about diasporic existence, both expanding the ethnonationalistic claims to Korean identities and our understanding of diaspora in the world at large.

Latent in diasporic experiences are the plethora of newly emerging reformulations of diaspora. Robin Cohen, for one, indicates that a most adventurous concept of diasporas is the suggestion that they can be constituted by acts of the imagination. For inherent in affective affiliation through diaspora lay possibilities for creative endeavors. Cohen’s point is that “transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or exclusive territorial claim,” nor, I would add, the telos of return to the “homeland.”⁵⁶ The historical context of early modern forms of hybridity and intermixing is a helpful survey of contact zones that lay outside bounded constructs. Further, aspirations for diasporic affiliations may not solely be limited to a political project but can result in artistic alliances. In a curious way, the cultural production that casts diaspora resists

⁵⁶ Robin Cohen, “Diasporas and the State,” 516-517.

master narratives, and yet, it can also prove effective in political, national, and global matters. Powers of diaspora are, in this way, also paradoxical. The Boyarins remind us, “on the one hand, everything that defines us [Jews] is compounded by all the questions of our ancestors. On the other hand, everything is permanently at risk. Thus contingency and geneology are the two central components of diasporic consciousness.”⁵⁷

III. Methodology: A Mesolevel Analysis

This dissertation locates Korean migration in time, as part of a larger survey of migration history inquiring into the macro-level causes and reasons for movement, or the “push and pull” factors in and around the peninsular region in East Asia. I also examine individual human experiences *in situ*, seeing the micro-level of migrants as actors who work to fashion their new lives. More importantly, I focus specifically upon groups of artists who participated in controversial art exhibitions. In so doing, my analysis probes a “mesolevel” of artistic producers from the largest and oldest Korean diasporic communities that experienced forced and voluntary migrations. Dirk Hoerder uses “mesolevel” to describe peoples’ movement “facilitated by family, kind, and other social and functional networks or communities that aid in the process of migrants’ getting jobs, ascertaining cultural codes, and understanding how to adjust to and associate with all that is new.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora*, 4.

⁵⁸ Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millenium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 19-21.

A mesolevel framework functions in two ways, analytically and in praxis. Analytically, a study of groups of artists examines cultural production and identity construction on a scale that intersects the macro-global-national and micro-individual levels. In this sense, the analysis takes into account the transnational contours of contemporary artists' movements whose work and identity is qualified and influenced by their traveling to Kwangju, Tokyo, and other metropolitan centers throughout the world where they showcase their artwork within an international framework.

For example, Y. David Chung, participant in 2002 *There Project*, is currently Associate Professor of art and Director of the Center for Korean Studies at University of Michigan. He has gallery representation at Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. and has taught or held art residencies in numerous universities and galleries throughout the U.S. As a child of South Korean diplomat father, Chung was born in Bonn, West Germany. After the coup d'état in 1979, his parents migrated and settled in the U.S. and ran a grocery store in D.C. metropolitan region. This Korean American immigrant story highlighting the tension of Korean/African American relations in urban America throughout the 1980s and 1990s informs much of Chung's earlier multimedia art work, including his rap operetta titled *Seoul House* which he wrote, co-directed and co-produced. *Seoul House* received critical acclaim. Invited by colleges, community centers, and institutions, this operetta was re-produced throughout the country and even made its way to Almaty, Kazakhstan. *Seoul House* provided an entrée for Chung into the Korean communities of the Central Asian republics, the topic and focus of his most

recent documentary *Koryŏ Saram: The Unreliable People*.⁵⁹ This documentary is the fruit of more than a decade of interviews, film, and editing.⁶⁰ In a snippet of one artist, Y. David Chung and his art practice, one can see that an analysis of the art work, cultural production, and identity construction of contemporary diasporic art is greatly facilitated by a mesolevel framework that brings together these various large- and small-scale factors involved in artistic production.

In praxis, there are two mesolevels in terms of organization and presentation. One mesolevel refers to the exhibition space in Kwangju and Tokyo where artists gathered, as two of many international exhibitions in which they participate as artists of diaspora. In terms of presentation, computing methods are used to catalogue and visualize information retrieved from a database that locates spatially attributes of artists or art work that I have collected and catalogued over the course of this project.

This second mesolevel uses a web interface and consists of three components. First, a webpage of the artists and artwork involved in the two exhibitions of analysis serves as a public access point for the artists-participants of the shows as well as a general audience. Since the countries where overseas Korean artists produce their artwork are far-flung, from Almaty, Kazakhstan, Sao Paolo, Brazil, Yanji, China, and Frankfurt, Germany to other cities in Japan, the U.S. and Europe, a web-based platform for display and discovery becomes all the more compelling. Access through the web anticipates a continued collaboration with artists, curators, and others involved in this project who

⁵⁹ For more information, see: <http://www.koryosaram.net/>

⁶⁰ Y. David Chung, interview with author, Los Angeles, May 2008.

have lent time and energy to provide the material, energy, and thus sustenance to formations of diasporic activities.

The second component consists of the visualization of these works, thereby facilitating communication, juxtaposition, and interaction, aiding our discovery of otherwise hidden relationships. Depending on which attributes end-users emphasize in the visualizations, they will inevitably see that diasporic artists' identities can be reconfigured along attributes such as age, education, art training, place of production, time of production, gallery representation, place of exhibition and others, manifesting how complicated their histories, experiences, and expressions are.

A third digital component on the level of practice is the possibility of using automated pattern recognition of visual images for diasporic art. As the primary archive expands and grows, automated recognition of tagged objects such as a word, a symbol like a sword, a color, or even a general theme might reveal the types of relationships, discoveries, and interconnections unseen to one researcher's eye. In other words, images hold the potential to retrieve information from the archive when the data corpus expands beyond the scope of one exhibition, one study, or for that matter, one nation or one area.⁶¹

The three mesolevels of analysis articulated for the analysis, in the organization, and re-presentation through digital computing methods exist between macro-level structures and micro-level individuals and connect many artists and their variegated art

⁶¹ As part of this mesolevel, the following urls access images and visualization prototypes of the artwork from Chapter Four on *There*. 1) <http://dev.cdh.ucla.edu/cdiaspora/> 2) <http://culturevis.com/kwangju/> 3) <http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/05/artdiasporaviz-korean-modern-art.html>

practices at the exhibitions spaces. In particular, the web interface brings together these multiple attributes of artists and art work that allows for further communication, juxtaposition, and thus interaction long after these exhibitions have ended. Finally, the logic of mesolevels used in terms of critical analysis and in praxis is another contradiction in postmodernism that closes the gap between high and low art forms. As Hutcheon reminds us: “postmodernism is both academic and popular, elitist and accessible.”⁶²

A fourth mesolevel of analysis locates this project intellectually. The locations where diasporic artists reside and their artistic activities take place are characterized by a rhizomatic formation about whose writing, classifying, analyzing, and understanding incorporates interdisciplinary methods. What Deleuze and Guattari conceptually call the “rhizome” is based upon a rhizome structure whose subterranean stem system and growth take place whenever “segmentary lines take lines of flight,” distinct from the tree (taproot) system or the fascicular root system. As they explain:

These lines [of flight] always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad. You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject.⁶³

⁶² Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 44.

⁶³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 9.

In their attempt to explain the multiple, Deleuze and Guattari use botanical root systems to illustrate how dichotomies and stratifications are formulated in human thought. The rhizomatic structure that incorporates rupture and its many “lines of flight” is held in tension with the always present danger of reconstitution, restratification and re-hierarchization. This tension exists because those on the margins, the off-center, and those excluded from master narratives challenges the hegemony within both diaspora and nation-state discourses. It is precisely this tension that makes the rhizome an effective concept in visualizing diasporic art.

An analysis of diasporic visual culture that surrounds the art object brings together voices of overseas Koreans on multiple levels. Yet, these divergent expressions come together in a cultural history that remains, at base, an act of “writing-from-below,” incorporating both the unevenness of “high” and “low” art practices and a cross-disciplinary model that brings together discourse, ideology, and methodology about Korean national history, migration history, art history, diaspora studies, and visual culture. Though the exhibitions under analysis take place in a specific social space and time, the re-presentation and retrieval of the events, as digitally reproduced and as visualizations of the artwork, become accessible through a web interface in virtual space and an unspecific time. The dissemination of knowledge through the use of visual culture and digital humanities further takes “lines of flight” as the writing of a cultural history is not only inspired by peoples in diaspora but also by the belief in an on-going, spontaneous, and unpredictable interaction of ideas, discourses, and visuality at the interface of a rhizomatic web.

Edward Said worked to challenge master narratives with counter narratives and professionalism with amateurism in order to keep alive a dialectical, creative tension between hegemonic formulation and spontaneous articulations. In his survey on diaspora, James Clifford similarly recognizes the importance of counterdiscourse and counterhistory against the professional and dominant ways in which diaspora has been used and represented. He makes the point that one can be historically specific at the same time one is anti-foundational and non-teleological. Clifford understands counterdiscourse and counterhistory, then, as “nontotalizing” attempts against hegemonic formulations. In this manner, diaspora can be used to theorize “nontotalizing strategies” for globalization from below.⁶⁴

The distinction between master and counter narratives within the histories of diaspora, or the schism between Diaspora with a capital “D” and diaspora with small-case “d” are still significant today. Taking into account Said and Clifford’s genealogies of creative societies, my project incorporates the on-the-ground spontaneity and artistic creativity of visual artists as they are connected to the larger cultural industry that has made transnational exhibitions possible and sustainable on a cultural, economic, and geopolitical level. This is why the Kwangju Biennials’ *There* Project and the Tokyo Symposium are so remarkable.

The context of anti-foundational intellectual efforts keeps alive the spirit of Said’s corpus of work and Clifford’s recognition for diaspora while at the same time understanding that master narratives, dominant ideologies, economic forces of cultural

⁶⁴ James Clifford, “Diaspora,” *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (1994): 318-319, 327.

industries and the arts profession are equally integral to a study of diasporic cultural production. If the exhibition space functions at the mesolevel organizationally, and the web interface provides accessibility through re-presentation and retrieval of artwork methodologically, then a pioneering intellectual spirit creates for a mesolevel that engages both master and counter narratives of history, art, and nation.

While some studies on diaspora have tried to claim a “middle ground” between constructionist and essentialized identity, it is *not* the aim of this project. This “middle ground” is not to be confused with a “mesolevel” that is inspired by a pioneering intellectual spirit. The discursive strategies of “middle ground” and “in-between-ness” in terms of cultural identity have and continue to be explored through cultural studies and also recently through new media studies. This dissertation casts a critical distance from studies that cannot account for the histories and lived experiences of people living in diaspora. It is impossible to forward any debate or engage in critical dialogue with North and South Korean specialists in the field of migration history without acknowledging the writing of national histories or recognizing national art as necessary and fundamental for certain positions, even as critical challenges are posed against these categories. Jie-Hyun Lim, for one, directly challenges the idea of the existence of Korean national art (*Han minjok ūi misul*) in a talk he gave for the *Munhwa yesul ch'ong yŏnhabhoe* (National Association for Culture and Art) titled, “Does National Art Exist?: Rescuing Art from the Nation.”⁶⁵ National art is defined as that which reflects the nation’s history (*yŏksa*),

⁶⁵ Jie-Hyun Lim, “*Minjok yesulŭn silche hanŭnga?: minjokŭrobot’ŏ yesul kuhagi*,” [Does National Art Exist?: Rescuing Art from the Nation], Talk to *Munyech’ong*, Seoul, 2007.

culture (*munhwa*), and ethnicity (*minjoksŏng*).⁶⁶ Lim calls for a reevaluation of the understanding of Korean art and art history that relies upon orientalist paradigms of Western art canons.⁶⁷ While there are valid points to Lim's skepticism of Korean national categories and national art in particular, a diasporic perspective is grounded upon the specificity of historical conditions that created for the writing of nations into history, and yet, recognizes the constructedness of national identity. In sum, it questions centrality, unity, and order, but it does not destroy them.⁶⁸

Social Anthropology of Art

Taking art objects, art practices, and art activities as subjects of study have conventionally been the work of art historians, art critics, and sometimes artists. They extract from objects of art their meaning, significance and discuss artwork critically within artistic or aesthetic movements and contextually within the history of art to assess cultural, economic, or aesthetic value. Historical and biographical contextualizing renders possible further analyses related to an artwork's mode of production pertaining to how it is made, when, why and how it is used, invoked, or appropriated. Even as contemporary art criticism "remakes" art history using multidisciplinary approaches and

⁶⁶ Kim Wŏnryong and An Hwijun, *Sinp'an Hanguk misulsa* [New History of Korean Art] (Seoul: Sŏul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1993), 3.

⁶⁷ For further discussion on the writing of national histories in Northeast Asia, see Jie-Hyun Lim, "The Configuration of Orient and Occident in the Global Chain of National Histories: Writing National histories in Northeast Asia," in *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media, and the Arts*, eds. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, and Andrew Mycock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 290-308; and also Jie-Hyun Lim, "The Antagonistic Complicity of Nationalisms: On 'Nationalist Phenomenology' in East Asian History Textbooks," in *Contested Views of a Common Past: Revisions of History in Contemporary East Asia*, ed. Steffi Richter (New York: Campus, 2008).

⁶⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 40.

riskier, unconventional models of analysis, the vantage point is still object-based.⁶⁹ I am attempting to understand the context of reading artwork that challenges the notion that language and reading are of higher quality than viewing, spectating, and experiencing pictures.⁷⁰

One way of framing my methodological approach in relation to art historians is to understand it as a social anthropology of art, a theory propounded by Alfred Gell. He suggests that the anthropology of art provides “ways of seeing” a cultural system rather than a historical period of art-making, an object, or an artist per se. He examines the circulation, production process, and reception of art rather than its *evaluation*. Gell’s theory on art emphasizes local context and personal embodiment of art and incorporates social antagonisms of art production. This is precisely because art objects and art practices possess a “peculiarity, intransigence, and oddness [that] are key factors in their efficacy as social instruments.”⁷¹ Therefore, art is a by-product of the mediation of social life and the existence of institution, and not a “function of the existence of specific art institutions, nor considered as mere forms of meaning and communication” – two concepts of aesthetic and symbolic theories of art from which Gell distances his approach.⁷²

⁶⁹ For example, see Svetlana Boym, “Ilya Kabakov: The Soviet Toilet and the Palace of Utopias.” *Art Margins* (1999). www.artmargins.com/content/feature/boym2.html. (accessed on May 14, 2002); also Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).

⁷⁰ W.J. Thomas Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

⁷¹ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 8.

Gell's anthropological method allows for more than large-scale observations, and in this sense, it differs from sociological treatments of art at an institutional level.⁷³ The investigation of art in its social context is also an approach to explaining culture that provides a different method to the "thin" conceptualizations of culture that are common in Korean migration studies. I use "thin" in contrast to Clifford Geertz's "thick description." Geertz has described the work of cultural anthropologists as involving a "thick" sorting out of the structures of significance that determines their social ground and import. Rather than a mere "thin" description of one person's physical behavior or social standing, an ethnographer examines cultural or social structures, actions, movements, or phenomena which are then perceived, interpreted, and analyzed. Without the scale of "thick description" from the structural to the individual levels, the meanings of things, as such, would not exist.⁷⁴ In one of many examples of thin description, (former) government minister Kim Tonguk describes at a seminar portion of the "Communities of our People Festival" (*Uri kyöre kongdongch'e*) his understanding of migration policies. On the one hand, a state's assimilationist policy is horizontal culture, *sup'yöng munhwa*, that flattens culture, whereas adaptation policy that maintain ethnic identity is vertical culture, *sujik munhwa*, that elevates or highlights culture.⁷⁵

Whereas anthropological treatment of art focuses more on social interactions and their personal dimensions, sociologists are more concerned about institutions. Some argue that the sociologist considers the larger institutional bird's-eye view which do not

⁷³ In particular, Gell discusses the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

⁷⁴ Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁷⁵ Yi Ku-hong, "Perspectives concerning *Kyop'os*," (November, 1996) 17.

necessarily account for the partial ground's-eye view. Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu base their analyses on institutional characteristics of mass societies, rather than the network of relationships that surround the particular art object or artworks in specific interactive settings.⁷⁶ In this sense, his idea of cultural production is unable to explain precisely the particular activities, perceptions, and intentions of individual's actions in their everyday practices. In one example of this inability to address the vicinity of the object in everyday life, Bourdieu discusses Algerians in Paris and their lives as part of a degeneration of *habitus*. Yet, he does not address how are we able to describe and explain the re-defining of social relationships as migrants who move, adjust, adapt, and re-construct identities as people and ideas migrate.⁷⁷

Global theories of people and sociological theories on art premise their arguments on the idea that daily, individual encounters of people and institutions are the “very fabric of world history” but do not discuss these micro-level associations as it relates to the larger macro-level institutions and ideology. Lauren Benton makes this observation in her critical assessments about interactions on a global scale that “reimagines global structure by bringing into light institutions that are constructed out of practice and do not exist at, or even bridge, separate ‘levels,’ but themselves constitute elements of global structure.”⁷⁸ Nicholas Thomas also recognizes the social content of material culture and art production in the postcolonial era. He contends that anthropological research of artworks or critical reviews by curators, critics, and art historians can open up meanings

⁷⁶ Gell, *Art and Agency*, 127.

⁷⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, edited and introduced by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 15.

⁷⁸ Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

that were “hidden” in a collection or in the formal properties of artworks. Thomas helps clarify the argument that artworks attract multivariate responses as they move across cultural and transactual domains.⁷⁹ Similar arguments are made for examining fiction in postmodern context. The emphasis is placed on the production and reception processes in addition to the text itself. The analysis takes place, then, “within an entire communication situation which includes the social, ideological, historical and aesthetic contexts in which those processes and that product exist.”⁸⁰ In other words, specificity of context surrounding the vicinity of the art object goes beyond modernist calls for self-reflexivity and situates discourse in a broader context.⁸¹

Movements of people on a global scale and the local histories and stories of individual lives come together in what George Marcus considers the “multi-sited ethnography,” anthropological methods that necessarily entails comparisons, sometimes unparallel, irrational, and uncontrollable. Scholars of diaspora such as Robin Cohen and others refer to “re-diasporization,” or the concept of multiple migrations, a defining aspect of diaspora that also explains the shifting needs of multi-sited ethnography. In order to map out the inter-relationships, associations, and spheres of confluence among multiple sites, a larger methodological “roadmap” has to include comparative histories of migration, nation, art, artists, and cultural production on macro-, meso-, and micro-scales of understanding and analysis. As Marcus describes, it is “putting questions to an emergent object of study whose contours, sites, and relationships are not known

⁷⁹ See Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 1991); and *In Oceania: Visions, Artifacts, Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

⁸⁰ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

beforehand, but are themselves contributing to complexly connected real-world sites of investigation. Again, the object of study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated. Thus, an ethnography of such an object will have a comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) ‘worlds apart’.⁸²

The multiply-situated ethnographic method of art analysis has taken me into urban capitals where ethnic Koreans reside and make artwork. Several reasons convinced me that I needed to create my primary archive based upon the ethnographic interviews with those people involved in the social production of art. First, the existing publications concerning art, artists, or the specific country cases of Koreans living abroad do not provide enough primary data to carry out a study of this nature. Second, this type of localized and interpersonal interactivity allows for an intimate perspective into the place, (studio) space, and modes of production occurring for each artist and each exhibition that brought the artists together. An examination of the social relations could not be made without my subjective insertion into the process of production; and as such, I am more than an interlocutor.

By now, the all-too famous photo of Malinowski writing busily in his notebook inside his tent amongst a band of on-looking Trobrianders (published in the 1984 edition), as opposed to the starkly different photo published in the original, first edition of the text *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* in 1932 of his *unmarked* tent amongst other Kiriwinians’ tents, demonstrates the changing circumstances affecting ethnography,

⁸² George E. Marcus, “Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 102.

anthropology, and oral history.⁸³ Writing is no longer strictly observed nor accounted for by one method, that is, by keeping calculated, good “field notes,” making accurate maps, and writing up objective reports. Nor is culture regarded as bounded, inward-looking, as possessing a singular identity that everyone shares. The inequalities in larger contexts of power systems, world systems constraints, and institutional formations have destabilized our understanding of belonging. Similarly, new histories (Marxist, Annales, Foucauldian), ideological shifts (postcolonial studies, feminism, hermeneutics, ethnic and non-West studies), and rule changes (semiotic, reader-response, post-structural) influence the method through which histories are guided and wield hefty weight into how the writing of this history is accomplished.⁸⁴ Michel-Rolph Trouillot goes so far as to state that postmodernism gives credence to the belief that all metanarratives based on rational thought and reality have become fundamentally destabilized, qualified upon the sudden disappearance of foundational rules, judgments, and known categories.⁸⁵

The work of ethnographers involves participation, observation and interrogation, or their doing, seeing and talking.⁸⁶ In the ethnographic components of this project, I am mainly the interrogator and observer, but I am not involved in a participation-observation that anthropologists traditionally carry out for extended periods of time. This project is premised upon primary material I have gathered through ethnographic interviews of

⁸³ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1932, 1984).

⁸⁴ James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 10.

⁸⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Anthropology of the Savage Plot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness,” in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, edited by Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1991), 20-21.

⁸⁶ Rosalie H. Wax, *Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

artists, curators, critics, and others who participated in the 2002 Kwangju Biennale and the 2004 Diaspora Arts Symposium in Japan. The fruit of such work produced written transcripts of interviews and observations I took away from my interaction with interviewees. Is the ethnographer as interrogator different from the oral historian? I would argue that methods of oral history take lessons from anthropology, and the changing field of oral history is equally affected by the disciplinary and ethical issues involved in writing ethnography. Gail Hershatter posits that oral history is no longer just about making the unheard voices heard because the vocation of the oral historian can no longer be limited to a transparent transcription. The idea and act of orally locating and recording history is much more labor-intensive.⁸⁷

I use oral history collected through a multi-sited ethnography in order to check the archive of Korean migration history that is structured by the necessities of the nation that in large part disregard the individual stories and personal lives that I believe are crucial components of the Hobsbawmian “twilight zone.”

Where historians try to come to grips with a period which has left surviving eyewitnesses, two quite different concepts of history clash, or...supplement each other: the scholarly and the existential, archive and personal memory.

But...the twilight zone [between history and memory] is different...It is itself an incoherent, incompletely perceived image of the past, sometimes

⁸⁷ Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter, *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980's* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

more shadowy, sometimes apparently precise, always transmitted by a mixture of learning and second-hand memory shaped by public and private tradition.⁸⁸

That is, the circumstances under which nationalist scholars produced knowledge about overseas Koreans in the post-war period must be considered. The urgent project of building the nation and re-constructing the newly-independent sovereignty in the aftermath of Japanese colonialism was first and foremost on the minds of nationalist intellectuals. Just as an examination of the colonial archive *constrains* the scholar who returns to them, my return to a post-civil war and -dictatorship archive constrains the examination of overseas Koreans.⁸⁹ Therefore, I find it crucial to carry out the labor-intensive work of negotiating the written text to the spoken oral history/interviews of cultural producers in diaspora.

IV. Overview of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into two parts. Part I deals with the historiography, history, and policy associated with Korean migration studies. As part of my efforts to re-contextualize the history of Korean migration, in Chapter Two, my larger purpose is to interrelate the arguments for multiplicity, transnationalism, transborder politics given the diversity of a large Korean diaspora with Korean academic publications, discourse, and (to a lesser extent) public opinion that maintains fixed conceptions of national belonging

⁸⁸ Eric Hobsbawn, *The Age of Empire: 1876-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), xx.

⁸⁹ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

and cultural identity. In Chapter Three, I discuss the politics of policy making as it concerns migration and continues to influence cultural policies concerning South Korea's cultural industries since the postwar period.

Part II includes the analytical chapters of cultural production and identity construction at the two exhibition sites in Kwangju and Tokyo that uses ethnographic methods. The 2002 Kwangju Biennial is known as the "worst" in terms of organization, budget, and artistic vision since South Korea debuted its first biennial in 1995. One reason for this negative view is that South Korean critics were unable to understand the "diaspora" show of art by twenty-four artists from Brazil, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, and the U.S. Nonetheless, the dialectics particular to the *There* exhibition prove the 2002 exhibition to be one of the most important, if not best, in the history of the Kwangju Biennial. In Chapter Four, I examine the artists, artwork, and cultural production of the geo-cultural corpus of a biennial as one example of an antidote to master narratives of the nation. The cultural production of the 2002 Kwangju Biennial's *There* exhibition exemplifies the possibility of a provisional act of emancipation, constituted by what I see as cultural *equality*.

The 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium marked a phenomenal meeting of Korean artists specifically presented under the rubric of "diasporic art." Chapter Five delineates the affective strategies of diasporic art using Freud's notion of the fetish as substitute. By reading objects of diasporic intimacy as a fetish, I argue that those objects on display in the Tokyo exhibition are not presentations of loss or painful condition, but symbolize a *preservation* of that moment of loss, that of *disavowal*. I hold that these

works are significant markers of repression that encapsulate moments of trauma. This analysis is part of a larger response to recent writings on diasporic cultural production that seek celebratory solutions.

Chapter 2

Korean Migration Historiography and East Asian “Cultures in Contact”⁹⁰

There is a hegemonic dimension to the writing of Korean migration history: the ideas of homogeneity (*tanil minjok*) and pure-blood relations (*sunsu hyölt’ong*) dominate the frames of understanding. As a crucial part of the modern project of overcoming Korea’s long and arduous history of suffering, overseas Koreans are understood as pioneers and interlocutors who provide potential bases for the expansion of national power outside the borders of the nation. The task of delineating the contours of the field of Korean migration history, *Hanguk iminsa*, remains difficult because of the various assumptions scholars have made in thinking about the subject of analysis and in “writing overseas Koreans,” placed in quotations precisely to indicate the on-going process of the modern project of the nation that inculcates its overseas communities. That is, the history of Koreans abroad is being written and rewritten with these present tasks in mind, be they to celebrate anniversaries of national liberation, of centennials, and other milestones of Koreans abroad. A ten-volume series titled *Segye üi Hanminjok* [Koreans in the World] was published in 1996 to celebrate fifty years of Korea’s independence.⁹¹ The National Folk Museum also published a series of fieldwork on the everyday life and reality (*silche*

⁹⁰ Dirk Hoerder’s *Cultures in Contact* provides a comprehensive history of the movement of humans throughout the last thousand years. The text is an example of in-depth material analysis that ironically formulates a migration theory expositing the impossibility of extracting any “laws of migration,” unable to fit data neatly into any one pattern or interpretation of migration. I borrow his book title and his narrative analytical approach to guide this chapter on the history of migration in and around the peninsular region. Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*.

⁹¹ *Segye üi Hanminjok* [Koreans in the World] (Seoul: Söul taehakkyo ch’ulp’ansa, 1996).

chosa) of six overseas Korean communities in celebration of the centennial of Koreans in the U.S., 120 years of Koreans in Mexico, and 140 years of Koreans in Russia.⁹²

There are many differing subjects of analysis that give name to past and contemporary migrant faces, viz., imperial rulers, colonial bureaucrats, soldiers, slaves, political refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons, gypsies, pirates, exiles, voluntary migrants, temporary sojourners, migrant guest workers, permanent settlers, expatriate travelers, and international businessmen. There are as many reasons why people move including expansion of empire, natural disaster, colonization, nation-state building, war, occupation, trade, education, travel, global capital, and forces of regional socioeconomic to international labor markets. The causes of macro-, meso-, or micro-scales of movements have their own historicity that helps us understand the values, emotions, interests, and identities of migrants as they emerge in new social settings.

In the Korean case, I find it ironic that the multiplicity and diversity that result from those in diaspora coexist with Korean public opinion, policy on overseas Koreans, and academic discourse that are based upon fixed ideas about national belonging and cultural identity. As a whole, the country and place of Korea remains central in these accounts because Koreans abroad are depicted as self-same entities defined specifically in terms of their relationship to Korea. These texts focus on national consciousness, or

⁹² *Ujübeksüt'an Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of Uzbekstan Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 1999); *K'ajaksüt'an Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of Kazakhstan Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 2000); *Rösia, Sahallin, Yönhæju Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of Russian, Sakhalin, and C.I.S. Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 2001); *Ilbon Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of Japanese Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 2002); *Miju Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of U.S. Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 2003); *Meksik'o Hanin tongp'o üi saenghwal munhwa* [Everyday Life of Mexican Koreans] (Seoul: Kungnip minsok pangmulgwan, 2004).

the retention of Korean culture, language, and identity that is negotiated as part of their adaptation and assimilation in destination countries. Korean scholars incorporate overseas Koreans as exemplary subjects and potential participants in the nation-building project. Why are the histories of Korean migrants understood primarily on the macro-level of the state and nation and presented contextually within frameworks of national culture, citizenship status, or state belonging bounded by the central force of cultural essentialism when numerous studies on transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, globalization, and diaspora implicate processes producing complex flows, multi-locality, and diversity. How can one begin to create interrogating room necessary to investigate the complex experiences that produced dynamic diasporic subjects who use artistic means to express self and construct identity?

My first purpose in this chapter is to relate these two bodies of arguments. My second purpose is to provide a framework for understanding the context in which contemporary Korean diasporic artists address key themes such as migration, loss of language, land and home, discrimination, integration into host societies, re-migration to another land, and more recently, transnational flows and return to homeland.

I carry out these goals in three steps. First, a historiography of Korean migration history and analysis of the relationship between migration history (*iminsa*) and national history (*kuksa*) provide the historical context specific to a divided country and a Korean people who were called upon to participate as loyal and active citizens in Korea's postwar project of (re)constructing the nation-state. Second, as part of an effort to reconstitute a framework of Korean migration history and the history of overseas Koreans,

I outline a history of a peninsular migration that locates intercultural ethnic “hybrids” as far back as the seventh century. The interpretive framework for the *longue durée* of movement in East Asia, migration policy, and the resulting interactivity among peoples and cultures is a crucial part of revisionist work. This survey on the long history of peoples’ movement works to constitute the multiple affiliations that people in this region have historically had and supported. Situating modern Korean migrations within a longer history of Northeast Asian migration demonstrates the intermixing of ethnic stock that provides distance away from the ethnonational “history of suffering” and racial purity that has dominated the field of Korean history. Third, I provide a history of the movement of Koreans and a short history of art since the modern open ports period in the late nineteenth century until the present era since the artists who exhibited their work at Kwangju and Tokyo are mostly connected to these modern and contemporary periods of Korean migration.

I. Master Narrative of the Nation-State and Korean Migration Studies

Master narrative of the nation-state frames the historiography of Korean migration studies and almost all of the histories engage in some sort of periodizations. That is, the start point of migration is Korea and the end point a destination country, and this movement from “homeland” to “host land” occurs at a certain time or a period of time, oftentimes dictated by specific geopolitical situation(s) which, in turn, reflect migration policies of that time. There exists a very large body of discrepant studies that deal with

these issues.⁹³ Rather than separating them along disciplinary boundaries – anthropological studies of individual lives, sociological surveys of certain sectors of overseas Korean societies, or political scientific analysis of policy – I am more interested in the overall purpose these studies serve, especially how the master narrative has become more obvious in recent decades.

At base, master narratives reifies a history of progress that is part and parcel of the modern Korean project of overcoming the long and arduous “history of suffering” (*sunan ũi yŏksa*) wherein the migrants are seen as pioneers and interlocutors who form (potential) bases for the expansion of national power overseas. The history of suffering encompasses Korea’s long experience with foreign incursions, beginning with the Han Chinese destruction of Old Chosŏn and establishment of four commanderies in northern Korea in second century B.C.E., the Sui and Tang invasions of Koguryŏ in sixth and seventh centuries, the Khitan invasions of late tenth and eleventh centuries, the Mongol devastation in thirteenth century, Hideyoshi’s aggressions in late sixteenth century, the Manchu invasions of the seventeenth century, the forced opening of Korea in 1876, colonization in the early twentieth century by Japan, and the on-going American occupation of the southern half of a divided peninsula post-1945. In Duncan’s discussion

⁹³ Yi Kuhong and An Yŏngjin, *Chaeoe tongp’o kwallyŏn munhŏn charyo mongnok* [Bibliography of scholarly materials concerning overseas Koreans] (Seoul: Overseas Korean Foundation, 2000). Yi and An’s 448 page bibliography is the most comprehensive survey on Korean migration publications in English, Japanese and Russian. However, there are no Chinese languages sources or publications out of Europe in this bibliography. Jeom-sook Kim presented an unpublished survey of English-language migration history materials concerning Koreans in the U.S. at UCLA in 2003. A list of the conference proceedings can be found on the following webpage:
<http://international.ucla.edu/asia/showevent.asp?eventid=596>

of protonationalism in premodern Korea, he suggests that Korea's history of foreign aggressions may have contributed to the formation of a sense of collective identity.⁹⁴

Master narratives of Korean history portray the peninsula as having existed as a uniquely stable unit for more than 5000 years.⁹⁵ Twentieth century national and cultural identity discourse has produced a strong belief in the homogeneity of the Korean peoples and its pure blood-line. Although nationalist sentiments existed throughout the twentieth century, as earlier writings by Sin Ch'aeho (1880-1936) show, an epistemological break between post-1945 intellectuals and early twentieth century thinkers shows how the former post-1945 group understood ethnic homogeneity as true and natural, whereas earlier writings explicated an acceptance of the more heterogeneous racial category that existed from intermixing of races and ethnic stock.

The idea of homogeneity was first coined in academic discourse in 1946 when nationalist scholar Yi Pyöngdo (1896-1989) first introduced the term *tanil minjok* in an article titled "The Homogeneity of the Korean People," protesting the externally enforced partition of the nation.⁹⁶ Yi defines *minjok* as those shared special cultural features (*t'öksu munhwa naeyong*) such as language, customs, thought, belief, morality, art, and literature that are historically constituted within a community. He carefully delineates how *minjok* is not a race because it can be an intermixture of races, nor is it one nation's people (reduced to sharing political, economic, legal apparatuses of one state). Yi argues

⁹⁴ John B. Duncan, "Protonationalism in Premodern Korea," in *Perspectives on Korea*, edited by Sang-oak Lee and Duk-soo Park Sydney: Wild Peony Press, 1998).

⁹⁵ Benedict Anderson's study of nationalism shows how such a long and august history is a necessary component of nation-state building. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1993).

⁹⁶ Yi Pyöngdo, "Chosön minjok üi tanilsöng" [Chosön People's Homogeneity], *Sinch'önji* 1, no. 8 (1946): 8-15.

that only those special features, original and innate to a powerful master culture, could have maintained Korea's unique cultural traits over such a long period of time. The essence of Korean culture or *minjok*, thus, helped the country survive through past difficulties and overcome foreign incursions.

Others writers, however, have emphasized a pure bloodline as an essentialist element of Korea's homogeneity. The idea of blood-kin relations extend back to Tangun, Korea's mythic progenitor and founder of the putative first Korean state of Old Chosŏn in 2333 B.C.⁹⁷ The blood tie has been inculcated in various ways during the twentieth century. The concept of homogeneity as expressed through its link to Tangun was a key doctrine of the new *Taejonggyo* religion, founded by Na Ch'ööl in 1909.⁹⁸ The Tangun narrative is also part of the national historical struggle initiated by Sin Ch'aeho in the early twentieth century, but his work attempted to construct a true historical consciousness (*Hanguk yŏksa insik*) through his re-writings of Korean history, not to claim a consanguineous link of all Koreans in the world.⁹⁹ More recently, in his preface to the series *Ethnic Koreans in the World*, Lee Kwanggyu writes that "we, the *paedal minjok*, carry on the tradition of an everlasting 5,000 year history and have roots in White Head Mountain, the birthplace of our progenitor Tangun." There is an effort to commemorate the country's independence from Japanese colonial rule with a publication

⁹⁷ Jeon Jaeho, "Concepts in the Korean Identity in the Globalization Era," *Quarterly New Asia* 12, no. 1 (2005).

⁹⁸ John B. Duncan, "*Hyanghwain*: Migration and Assimilation in Chosŏn Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (2000), 103.

⁹⁹ Scholars argue that before Sin, writings of Korean history lacked a true historical consciousness. Henry H. Em, "Minjok as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, edited by Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 336-361; Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini, *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1998); and Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

of a series of texts dedicated to Koreans residing abroad that interconnects them with the mythical progenitor Tangun, and in so doing, with the larger consanguineously-related community of Koreans, what Lee refers to as the *paedal minjok* or “delivered people.”¹⁰⁰

Korea’s loss of sovereignty to Japan in 1910 at the cusp of modernity certainly influenced this nationalistic agenda. In the late nineteenth century, Japanese apologists (*ōyong hakja*) pronounced that Korea’s peninsular character (*pando sōngkyōk*) lacked the ability to create internal stimuli for its own historical development. Thus, it had been historically dependent on others for its growth. This was part of Japan’s discursive attempt to justify its imperial aspirations. As well, they attempted to instill a sense of common racial origins between Japanese and Korean people (*ilsōn tongjoron*; j. *nissen dōsoron*), a theory formulated to obfuscate Korean identity altogether (*minjok malsal*).¹⁰¹ What Japan pronounced as dependent characteristics, Korea understood as part of an age-old cultural and political hierarchy in which China was respected and Japan thought inferior. In this sense, peninsular – continental relations were guided by a tributary system of “serving the great” China (*sadae*), wherein Korea brought tribute to pay respect to China and received in return books, technological skills, silks, medicines, and other goods. The nature and scope of these relations are undergoing critical historical revisions today, many coming to a consensus that China’s various tributary relations with Vietnam, Korea, and Japan resulted in active subjects who partook in dialectical exchange and learning.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Lee Kwanggyu, *Segye ūi Hanminjok*, Preface.

¹⁰¹ Pai and Tangherlini, *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, 4.

¹⁰² Ken Pomeranz, *Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires*; Peter I. Yun, “Rethinking the

Three Main Accounts of Korean Migration History

There are three main accounts of histories of Koreans abroad. The first account emphasizes push and pull factors, prescribing large-scale reasons such as poverty, adoption of orphans, or overseas studies that pushed or compelled Koreans to leave their home country and external conditions that pulled or attracted Koreans to migrate to destination countries. In this account, grand waves of movements include border crossings in and out of Manchuria during the mid- to late-nineteenth century due to domestic turmoil and other environmental reasons such as droughts and famine. The movement of displaced people northward increased in the late nineteenth century after the signing of the first international treaty when Korea's ports were "opened" to the outside world in 1876 and peaked during the colonial period (1910-1945) when displaced colonial subjects moved to Japan, Manchuria, Russia, and its Maritime Provinces as a consequence of economic pressures of colonization and political pressures that displaced commoners and intellectuals alike.¹⁰³

The postwar period was quickly followed by the division of the country made official in 1948 through the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Tribute System: Korean States and Northeast Asian Interstate Relations, 600-1600," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1998).

¹⁰³ See the following among the many more examples that begin periodizations of movement abroad during the nineteenth century. Chung Chong-Wook, "The Global Community of Overseas Koreans: the Chinese Koreans and the Korean Americans, a Vision for the Future," *International Journal of Korean Studies* (Fall/Winter 2000), 107-121; Warren Y. Kim, *Koreans in America* (Seoul: Po Chin Chai Printing Company, 1971); Hyung-Chan Kim and Wayne Patterson *The Koreans in America 1882-1974* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceania, 1974); Lee Kwanggyu, *Hanminjok ūi segyesajōk somyōng* (Ethnic Koreans in World History) (Seoul: Jimoondang, 1994); Lee Kwanggyu, *Overseas Koreans* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2000); Wayne Patterson, "The First Attempt to Obtain Korean Laborers for Hawaii," in *The Korean Diaspora: Historical and Sociological Studies of Korean Immigration and Assimilation in North Korea*, edited by Hyung-chan Kim (Santa Barbara: ABD-Clio, Inc., 1977); Yoon In-Jin, *K'orian diasūp'ora: cheoe Hanin ūi iju, chōgūng, ch'ōngch'esōng* [Korean Diaspora: Migration, Assimilation and Identity of Koreans Abroad] (Seoul: Koryō taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2004).

led by Kim Il Sung in the North, and in the South, the Republic of Korea under Syngman Rhee [Yi Sŭngman]. The migrants leaving the country from 1945 until the early 1960s consisted mainly of three groups: war brides (*yanggongju*) who married U.S. servicemen based in South Korea, orphans adopted internationally, and students who left to study abroad. From 1950 to 1964, approximately 6,000 war brides, 5,000 orphans, and 6,000 students left the country.¹⁰⁴ Although the first wave of Koreans arrived in the U.S. much earlier in 1907 to work in Hawaii's sugar plantations, after the 1964 Voting Rights Act and the 1965 Civil Rights Act, many more arrived, "pulled" by the changes in U.S. migration policies, especially its family immigration laws.

The push and pull account emphasizes a great period of movement in the 1960s when the fast-paced, great bulk of *chet'ŭgi* (jet airplane) migrations occurred as large numbers fled poverty and political persecution and left for the U.S., Germany, and Brazil to seek better social opportunities as well as democratic freedoms.¹⁰⁵ More recent publications also incorporate the huge out-flow of students who have moved and continue to move to Australia, the Philippines, Canada, the U.S. and China dismayed at their prospects in South Korea's highly competitive university entrance examinations or seeking to avoid compulsory military service.

¹⁰⁴ Lee Kwanggyu, *Overseas Koreans*, 9-10. Also see, Hyun Sook Kim, "Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts" in *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, eds. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (London: Routledge Press, 1998), 175-201; Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Secrecy, Shame, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). In Korean language, see Chŏng Migyŏng, "Nabbŭn nyŏndŭl ŭi sumgyŏjin yŏksa [The Hidden History of 'Bad Women']," *Yŏngŏ yŏngmunhak yŏngu* 49, no. 3 (2007): 309-330.

¹⁰⁵ South Korea's first international commercial airline, Korean Air, was founded in 1962, replacing South Korea's first airline Korean National Airlines established in 1948 that had mostly served regional transports.

The second account stresses geopolitical forces and recounts immigration as a consequence of international politics. That is, modern Korean migration and migration policy are treated as a result of the imperial fight for hegemony in East Asia during the long nineteenth century and the decades of Japanese colonization. Trade dramatically increased with the opening of the ports at Inch'ŏn, Wŏnsan, and Pusan in 1876, and significant political changes occurred including the foreign aggressions onto the peninsula by the U.S. and France in 1882, and Britain in 1884. As well, various territorial disputes were being waged in the Northeast. In 1879 Japan annexed into its domain the Ryukyu kingdom, one of China's tributaries at that time. Also, Russia threatened China's northern borders with territorial border disputes over Manchuria and the Ili Valley. In the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Japan's reclaiming of the Kwantung Peninsula and gaining concessions to half of the Sakhalin Islands further aggravated the geopolitical situation.

The residual logic of international politics affects how Korean migration history is understood. In the process, this account forgets the very subjects of migration history, and migrants are no longer treated as actors and unable to determine their own fate. The migrants' unique lives and experiences are ensconced in history that is tied to that of the Korean nation. Lee Kwanggyu is a leading scholar of migration history and ethnic studies whose work exemplifies the logic of this second account. His career has spanned three decades as an anthropologist at Seoul National University and former head of the Overseas Korean Foundation from 1999 to 2005. His numerous publications narrate the general movement of overseas Koreans, gauging the numbers that left the country due to

push and pull factors. Lee determines *post facto* why and how Koreans migrated. Therefore, his work cites international events like the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the beginning of Japanese colonization (1910), the establishment of Manchukuo (1932) as well as other activities in Russia, China, Japan and the U.S. as the main reasons why changes in migration policy and regulations occurred.¹⁰⁶

Similar to Lee Kwanggyu's arguments about push and pull factors, Wayne Patterson's numerous publications on Korean migration, particularly about Koreans in Hawaii also depicts the fate of displaced Koreans as determined by the U.S., Russian, and Japanese political interests and policy decisions. Patterson admits in his 1988 monograph that his study "has been constructed mainly from sources generated by elites in Washington, Hawaii, Japan, and Korea."¹⁰⁷ He ends the book by writing:

All of these issues are connected – Korean-American relations, the aims and methods of the Hawaiian sugar planters, the decline and fall of Yi dynasty Korea, Japanese imperialism and foreign policy toward Korea,

¹⁰⁶ His publications concerning overseas Koreans include: Lee Kwanggyu [Yi Kwanggyu], *Cheil Hangugin: saenghwal silt'aerül chungsim ūro* [Korean Residents in Japan: Reality of their Everyday Lives] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1983); *Chaemi Hangugin: Ch'ōngch'ejōk chōbkūn* [Korean Americans: Approach to Identity] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1989); *Chaeoe Hanin ūi illyuhakchōk yōngu* [Anthropological Study on Overseas Koreans] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1997); *Chaeoe tongp'o* [Overseas Koreans] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 2000); *Chaeso Hanin: illyuhakchōk chōbkūn* [Korean Russians: Anthropological Approach] (Seoul: Chimmundang, 1993); *Choguk ūn chigūm* [Motherland Today] (Kyōnggi-do, P'aju-si: Chimmundang, 2006); *Hanminjok ūi segyesajōk somyōng* [Ethnic Koreans in World History] (Seoul: Sōul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1994); *Kukjehwa sidae ūi Hanminjok ūi chillo* [Ethnic Koreans' Routes in the Global Era] (Seoul: Sōul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1997); *Kyōktonggi ūi Chungguk Chosōnjok* [Turbulent Times of *Chosōnjok*] (Seoul: Paeksan Sōdang, 2002); *Overseas Koreans* (Seoul: Chimmundang, 2000); *Sabetsu o ikiru zainichi Chōsenjin* [Korean Residents in Japan Living through Discrimination] (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō); *Segye ūi Hanminjok* [Overseas Koreans in the World] (Seoul: Sōul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1995). His publications *Overseas Koreans* is an English translation of the same book in Korean *Cheoe tongp'o*. Lee was also chief editor of the ten-volume series *Segye ūi Hanminjok*. This list does not include his even more numerous journal and newspaper publications.

¹⁰⁷ Patterson, *The Korean Frontier in America*, 183.

and Japanese-American relations at the turn of the century. And they all have as a common thread the immigration of Koreans to the Territory of Hawaii in the United States between 1903 and 1905.¹⁰⁸

Although he touches upon the extenuating circumstances of the conditions on the peninsula such as weak government and mismanagement, Patterson argues that ultimately Japan and the U.S. were in control of immigration policies starting in 1901 when U.S. policy became politically aligned with Japan's desire to control Korea.¹⁰⁹

Following the last chapter, however, he appends twenty-two pages of individuals' oral history vignettes from early Korean migrant settlers to Hawaii, a methodological testament to the struggle of writing a history of overseas Koreans that is generated solely from "official" sources. Do migrants' experiences and voices appear in Lee and Patterson's studies? In the few instances that they do, in what context are they presented?

The third account includes biographies of patriots abroad. Narratives recount the work of patriotic Koreans who went overseas to fight against Japanese imperialism and extol their patriotic activities in Russia, China, Japan, and the U.S. Oftentimes, these narratives focus upon the contributions and life stories of individuals such as Yu Kiljun, An Ch'angho (1878 – 1938), Sŏ Chaep'il (1863?-1951), Syngman Rhee (1875-1965), Sŏ Kwangbŏm, and others.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 182.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 70-72, 128-135, 181.

¹¹⁰ Kim Indök, *Sikminji sidae chaeil Chosŏnin undong yŏngu* [Study on the Independence Movement of Koreans in Japan during the colonial Period] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn); O Se Eung, *Dr. Philip Jaisohn's Reform Movement, 1896-1898: A Critical Appraisal of the Independence Club* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995); Jacqueline Pak, *An Ch'angho (1878-1938) and the Nationalist Origins of Korean Democracy* (Ph.D. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1999); Hyung-chan Kim, *Tosan Ahn Ch'ang-Ho: A Profile of a Prophetic Patriot* (Los Angeles, Academia Koreana, 1996);

The three major accounts of migration history complement one another. The chronologies of Koreans abroad in the modern period provide the sociology of “push” and “pull” factors that forced people to migrate, as victims of their time. International studies and political science accounts configure power relations amongst the great political powers of China, Japan, U.S., and Russia as those which most influenced Korea’s internal and external affairs at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Finally, biographies portray patriotic heroes and nationalist activities of exiles. As part of master narratives, migrants are represented as having been forced to move under unendurable circumstances. Still others left their homes voluntarily. Whatever the case be, the important point is that they maintained a distinct sense of self informed by their connections to their home villages, local neighborhoods, or the homeland (*moguk*). It is no wonder that most accounts and periodizations of overseas Koreans begin in the troubled era of the nineteenth century. Such a time and setting of their departure certainly predetermined the forlorn tone of the field of Korean migration studies.

Although I cite a variety of works in several disciplines, each study with its own purpose and discipline-specific methodology, in this dissertation, I focus upon ideas articulated specifically in several publications dealing with overseas Koreans. One set of publications describes the socio-cultural connection among Koreans abroad and discusses

Yõnse taehakkyo kukhak yõnguwõn [Yonsei University Institute of Korean Studies, ed], *Miju Hanin õi minjok undong* [Korean Independence Movement of Koreans in America] (Seoul: Hyeon, 2003); Yi Yõn-bok, *Hanminjok tongnip undongsa yõngu* [A Study on the History of the Overseas Ethnic Koreans’ Independence Movement] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowõn, 2004); Yun Pyõngsõk, *Haeoe tongp’o wõllyu: Hanin, Koryõin, Chosõnjok õi minjok undong* [Survey of Overseas Koreans: Korean Independence Movement in the Russia and China] (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2005); Yun Pyõnguk, *Nara pakkesõ nara ch’ajatne: miju Hanin tongnip undongsa õi chaeinsik* [Getting Korea Back outside that You Lost Inside: Rethinking the Korean Independence movement in the U.S.] (Seoul: Pagyõngsa, 2006).

their identity as linked to the strong force of ethnic identification to a homogeneous Korean nation. Many scholars, foremost among them Lee Kwanggyu, believe that in Korea, the affiliation of ethnic identity and the filiation of its people to the nation-state are one and the same, unlike ethnic affiliations in other parts of the world such as the U.S., Canada, or Brazil, precisely because of Korea's long history of foreign aggression and suffering.¹¹¹ In other words, originary myths tell stories of beginnings, but they also function to identify all Koreans as blood-related, and therefore, as part of one large family.

A three-volume series published by Kukmin [Kungmin] University historians also focus on national affiliation. While they trace the build-up of national consciousness that arose from loss of sovereignty and forced migration, they hone in how this very consciousness dissipated after liberation when the Korean state was unable to repatriate them back to their homeland. Led by Chang Seok Heung [Chang Sŏkhŭng], the Kookmin University team of scholars treat the unresolved issues concerning postwar repatriation and read the “historicality” of the two and a half million un-repatriated Koreans since 1945 as intricately linked to the national issue of resolving the “present task” of dealing with the history of Japan's war of aggression.¹¹² This project of repatriation connects with other interest groups in South Korea: a group of scholars and

¹¹¹ Lee Kwanggyu, interview by author, Seoul, June 2005.

¹¹² Kungmin taehakkyo Hangukhak yŏnguso (Kukmin University Center for Korean Studies), *Haebang hu haeoe Hanin ūi kwihwan munje yŏngu* [A Study on the Problem of Post-liberation Repatriation of Overseas Koreans] vol. 1; *Haebang hu chungguk chiyŏk Hanin ūi kwihwan munje yŏngu* [A Study on the Post-liberation Repatriation of Koreans in China] vol. 2; *Haebang hu haeoe Hanin ūi kwihwan kwa chŏngch'ak* [A Study of Post-liberation Repatriation and Settlement of Overseas Koreans] vol. 3 (Seoul: Kukmin University Press, 2003). For the shortened article of this project in English, see Chang Seok Heung, “Overseas Migration of Koreans in the Colonial Period and the Historicality of Repatriation,” *Korea Journal* 44, vol. 4 (2004), 5-29. Quoted terms are borrowed terms from the English shortened article of their four-volume study.

public advisors who seek irredentist and geo-economic expansion through its mission to network with Koreans in diaspora on the one hand, and on the other, activists who call for governmental involvement and recognition of diasporic people as part of the national collective, people who have been largely ignored by the South Korean state. For example, since its founding in 1999, Korean International Network (hereafter, KIN) has been active in demanding the South Korean government to recognize and aid those Koreans left behind and forgotten both by the Japanese and the Korean states. In particular, they have been raising awareness, fundraising, and lobbying government organizations to compensate Koreans living in destitute conditions in various parts of the world, but most notably in the Sakhalin Islands and Utoro district of Osaka, Japan.¹¹³ In all categories of inquiry and activism – intellectual, economic, political, and non-governmental – national belonging and Korean identity remain central to their arguments, missions, and demands.

A third set of publications commemorate centennials and other anniversaries of Koreans living abroad. At a time when Korea has established itself as a successful economic force in the world economy, insecurities still exist as China rises again into hegemonic power, Japan debates the taking up of arms, and Russia begins to challenge anew the U.S.'s position in the world. Korea claims its overseas communities as an international human resource, one that can be called upon to uphold a “Korean” position throughout the world. This is one reason many books are published with the same message of maintaining Korean national consciousness. Taken together, South Korean scholarship valorizes the meaning of “ethnos” and “homeland” as the foci of nationalist

¹¹³ Please see KIN's website: <http://www.kin.or.kr/index.php>

consciousness. Furthermore, government policies support an agenda that works toward maintaining overseas Koreans' identity as ethnic Koreans and offers support for the strengthening of relations with the homeland, as well as the utilization of overseas Koreans positions/power to assist state development.¹¹⁴

Pioneering Overseas Koreans as National Resource

South Korean migration history and policy-related public opinion pose the question of how we fit overseas Koreans' communities into a history of progress, and their responses are framed within the master narrative of the nation. From a nation-centered perspective, overseas Koreans are viewed as critical components of the larger nationalist project. First, as pioneers (*kaech'ŏkja*) abroad, they are exemplary subjects who have suffered the most, depending upon the conditions under which they left the peninsula or the conditions into which they entered a destination country. A discussion about the overseas Korean's sorrowful suffering is offered in Song Kŏnho's "Miguk pangmun ki" [Records from a Trip to America], originally published in *Madang*.¹¹⁵ Other examples include Kang Man-gil's travelogue to the former Soviet Republic and a text about inter-generational children of Korean heritage in New York.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Yi Chonghun, "Kukjŏng ūi t'ŭlesŏ pon chaeoe tongp'o chŏngch'aek" [Overseas Koreans Policy from the Perspective of the State], *Chaeoe tongp'o chŏnmunga ch'och'ŏng wŏk'ŭshop* [Conference Proceedings from Workshop of Invited Specialists of Overseas Koreans, November 18] (Seoul: Overseas Koreans Foundation, 1998).

¹¹⁵ Song Kŏnho, *P'yŏngnon chip: Han nara han kyŏre rŭl hyanghayŏ* [Collection of Essays: Toward One Country, One People] (Seoul: P'ulpit, 1989). Originally published in *Madang* 1983, vol. 11. I thank John Duncan for this citation.

¹¹⁶ Kang Mangil, *Kang Mangil yŏksa kihaeng, hoesang ūi yŏlch'a rŭl t'ago: Koryŏin kangje iju kŭ t'onghan ūi kil ūl kada* [Kang Mangil's Travelogue, On a Train of Historical Reminiscence: Passage through the Great Sorrow of the Koryŏin's Forced Movement] (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1999); and Rainbow

Second, Koreans abroad provide a unique resource (*chasan*) for the future and they hold the potential to be the vanguard (*sönbongdae*), to serve as guides (*annaaja*), diplomats (*oegyogwan*), interlocutors (*oegyosajök*), or as advance guards (*ch'ömbbyöng*) to the world.¹¹⁷ Yi Kuhong, current President of OKF and former head of the Research Institute for Koreans Abroad (*Chaeoe Hanin yönguhoe*) pronounces, “above all, overseas Koreans are the people who can contribute as pioneers of the globalizing era.”¹¹⁸ But this all depends upon the correct position of these overseas Koreans maintaining citizens’ consciousness as Koreans (*simin üisik*), national consciousness (*kungmin üisik*), and most importantly, ethnonational consciousness (*minjok üisik*).

Lee Kwanggyu describes ethnonational consciousness as Korean peoples’ self-perceived identification that extends beyond the boundaries of South Korea. The terminology used in Lee’s 1997 *Kukjehwa sidae üi Hanminjok üi chillo* [Korean people’s routes in an era of globalization] contrasts with the terms in his 2000 English publication, *Overseas Koreans*. In the former, he describes three paradigms of consciousness, while in the latter, he distinguishes between ethnic and national identity. He defines national identity as the attitude toward host countries and ethnic identity as the attitude toward Korea that overseas Koreans maintain. In sum, the terms of his arguments concerning “identity” are essentialist, ahistorical, overlapping, and confusing.

As he has written, “our Korean race (*paedal minjok*) should unite around the legacy of Tangun...then, we would galvanize our strength to create communal

Center of New York and Fragments Missionary, *Ijung munhwa kajöng chanyödül üi mirae rül ch'ajasö* [In Search of the Future for Children of Intercultural Families] (Seoul: Chinhüng, 1995).

¹¹⁷ *Haeoe tongp'o* [Koreans Abroad] (Seoul: Chaeoe kyop'o munje yönguso, 1996), 46.

¹¹⁸ Yi Kuhong, *Haeoe Hanin yöngu, ch'angganhoe* [Studies of Koreans Abroad, Inaugural Issue] (Seoul: Chaeoe Hanin yönguhoe, 1990), i-ii.

consciousness, fated toward the prosperity of this community. This is the meaning of *minjok üisik* that transcends the local region of residence.”¹¹⁹ Lee’s definition naturalizes mythical origins, understanding the Korean people as blood-related kin, and combines these ideas with ethnic Koreans abroad to construct a reified notion of ethnic consciousness. Ethnic consciousness is considered not only by Korean scholars but the public opinion at large. For example, the Korean Gallup Research Organization (Nippon Research Center, ROMIR) carried out a survey entitled *Hanminjok kongdongch’e üisik chosa* [Survey of Overseas Koreans community consciousness] to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Korea’s independence in 1995. This survey questioned/interviewed 400 overseas Koreans from the largest overseas communities – the U.S., Japan, and C.I.S. – including men and women ages 20 to 60. Chinese counterparts decided not to participate in the poll at the last minute, but no reason was given as to why, nor were there any methodological explanations.¹²⁰

North Korean discourse also attempts to mobilize its overseas Koreans toward its nation-building project with a specific line of patriotic nationalism. That is, North Korean narratives attempt to gain the empathy of overseas Koreans by focusing on the mutual resentment of Japanese colonization and loss of sovereignty. The U.S.’s continuous occupation of the Southern half of the peninsula since the time of division means that South Korea has still not become a sovereign state. North Korean policies recognized problems and issues faced by overseas Koreans’ following the end of the

¹¹⁹ Lee Kwanggyu, *Hanminjok üi segyesajök somyông*, 73.

¹²⁰ Hanguk gaellöp chosa yönguso [Korean Gallop Poll (Nippon Research Center)], *Hanminjok kongdongch’e üisik chosa* [Survey of Overseas Koreans community consciousness] (Seoul: Kongboch’e, 1995).

peninsular war, much earlier than the South did. Their solution was to incorporate them as citizens in 1954 starting with Koreans in Japan, emphasizing the latter's duties as "overseas citizens of North Korea" (*haeoe Chosŏn inmin konghwaguk simin*). Kim Il Sung's famous speech on the "Overseas Koreans' Issue" attempted to resolve social discrimination suffered by Japanese Koreans.¹²¹ According to this narrative, all migrants who moved before 1945 are categorized as "survival" immigrants while those who migrated after 1945 were considered "forcible" immigrants. For the latter forced migrants, Kim Il Sung charges the South Korean government of selling off their own people for technology, money, and other profits from foreign countries in exchange for Korean working hands. In sum, North Korea links overseas' Korean's plight to North Korea's struggle against imperialism before 1945 and against capitalism for national liberation, autonomy, and self-reliance after 1945. In the South as well as in the North, then, the historiography of Korean migration is guided by the general histories of modern Korea, dictated by a cause-and-effect logic, always addressing the nation, and the need to cultivate national consciousness.

Recent changes in the social make-up of South Korea have brought about a small but growing public sector that is critically assessing conceptions of homogeneity and ethnicism (*ilminjuŭi*). In one example, Kwŏn Hyŏk-t'ae calls upon South Korean academic and public opinion to portray and understand Japanese Koreans outside of the three filters – as "half-Koreans" (*pantchok pari*), "reds" (*ppalgaengi*), and "wealthy"

¹²¹ *Widaehan suryŏng Kim Il Sung tongji ūi pulmyŏl ūi hyŏngmyŏng ōbchŏk 18: haeoe kyop'o munje ūi pinnanŭn haegyŏl* [Immortal Revolutionary Achievement of Great Leader Kim Il Sung Volume 18: Brilliant Solutions to the Problem of Overseas Koreans] (P'yongyang: Chosŏn rodongdang ch'ulp'ansa, 1996).

(*puja*). South Korean media have relied upon these paradigmatic confines to represent Japanese Koreans since the colonial period. Kwŏn supports the increasing view that Korean society cannot continue to understand Japanese Koreans as “not fully realized” because they cannot speak Korean, as only partially represented by the exemplary few “successful” Korean Residents in Japan, or as “others” who are pejoratively labeled “communists” because of their North Korean state affiliations.¹²²

The idea of “homogeneity” itself is starting to be questioned in public forums. For example, Yi Kwang hun rhetorically asks, “are we really a homogeneous people?”¹²³ In another example, the growing number of international marriages in South Korea necessarily calls for changes in exclusive policies and cultural attitudes vis-à-vis Korean citizenship and belonging. As of 2006, there were a documented 397,000 mixed-race marriages, albeit mostly in the countryside, which means that twelve in 100 or twelve percent of the South Korean population were in international marriages. Also, 630,000 foreigners were registered as resident aliens in 2007.¹²⁴

It is important to understand North and South Korea’s decisions to incorporate its overseas communities into the larger geo-political configuration of the nation and state-building process in the post-colonial period, as newly liberated and independent states. An examination of the construction of master narratives of the nation and the relationship

¹²² Kwŏn Hyeok-t’ae [Kwŏn Hyŏkt’ae], “Chaeil Chosŏnin’ wa Hanguk Sahoe: Hanguk sahoe nŭn chaeil Chosŏnin ūl öttök’ae ‘p’yosang’ hae wannŭnga?” [“Resident Koreans” And Korean Society: How Has Korean Society “Represented” Resident Koreans?], *Hanguk yŏksa sahoe yŏngu* (2006): 37-63.

¹²³ Yi Kwang-hun, “Uri ga kwayŏn tanil minjok ilka?” [Are We Really a Homogeneous Ethnic People?] *Sunday China* (2007); <http://www.sundaychina.net/main/bbs/tb.php/SundayColumn/83>. (Accessed October 17 2007).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

of national history with migration history makes apparent the connection with overseas Koreans that both states desire to maintain.

With the project of national recognition in mind, one clearly sees a relational dynamic between Korean national history (*kuksa*) and migration history (*iminsa*). First, both topics intimately involve national and state development. The field of Korean migration history developed after the war, in particular the 1970s and 1980s when a majority of texts were published simultaneous to the time when Korea was in the midst of building up its geo-political standing and economic status. Studies on Koreans abroad began in the 1970s and continued into the 1980s, a period intense state-led development had boosted Korea from the poorest ten countries in the world to one of the miracle “four tigers” or Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs).¹²⁵ Although the Research Institute on Koreans Abroad (*Haeoe kyop’o munje yǒnguso*) has been and still continues to publish monthly journals since 1964, this research institute has mainly dealt with the Japanese Koreans’ social discrimination issues in its first two decades of publication. Yi Ku-hong is co-founder and director of this research institute concerning overseas Koreans, the oldest organization still in existence today dealing with the issues concerning overseas Koreans until Yi replaced Lee Kwanggyu as head of the OKF in 2005.

Second, the writing of migration history remains subservient to the need and tasks of national history. In other words, situating overseas Koreans as blood-related kin and

¹²⁵ Marking the miracle rise to economic success, Korea’s per capital income rose from \$100 in 1966 to \$10,543 in 1996, accepted into the OECD the same year. Samuel Kim, “Korea’s Globalization Drive: An Assessment,” *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies* 10 (2000): 83-88. <http://www.fathom.com/feature/121551/> (Accessed April 8, 2004). The GDP per capital in 2007 was \$24,800, as cited by the CIA’s World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ks.html> (accessed on August 18, 2008).

fellow compatriots means that Koreans abroad become implicated in an ethnonation outside the nation. In this sense, the nationally-conscious self extends beyond the physical boundaries of Korea, inter-connected as kin-folk compatriots at each destination country.

Master narratives of the nation are, of course, not unique to Korea. In a comparative study of four Western European countries, Stefan Berger overviews the strong influence the war and the postwar positions of nation-states, as victors or losers, had on the subsequent relationship between history writing and national identity formation. He finds that national paradigms were an important force in state development, national credos, and cultural identity. However, starting in the 1960s and 1970s, we began to see that nationalism was only one modern orientation of sentiment and self-identification, and the nation-state only one structure of political, cultural, and social organization. He writes, "...whereas the old national paradigms worked on the basis of 'othering' and inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, the new histories have steadfastly opposed excluding certain stories in order to make the overall story a homogeneous one...Instead of producing national master narratives, historians ought to transcend the idea of one national history and arrive at a radical plurality of histories in and beyond the nation-state. The historical master narrative needs to be pluralized in order to arrive at more tolerant and playful forms of cultural identity."¹²⁶

Dirk Hoerder expands upon Berger's arguments further in space and time by examining peoples on the move and cultures in contact from the last thousand years. He

¹²⁶ Berger, Stefan, "A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present," *Journal of Modern History* 77 (2005): 677-678.

provides myriads of examples of how people from Asia, Africa and Europe interacted from the Iberian Peninsula to the South Seas and how seafaring traders formed mixed societies along the coasts of the globe. Traders, natives, merchants, religious figures, peasants, and slaves alike came together and intermixed in these coastal communities. Hoerder makes a simple observation from the outset of his survey: “genetically ‘pure’ or culturally self-contained peoples are merely myths, and continuities from times immemorial are but ephemeral self-constructions of ethnic identities. Ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism, the catchwords of the 1990s, have been societal practice throughout history.”¹²⁷

The idea that modern narrative of nations and nationalism are quasi-natural and enduring form of collective identity has been revised from various angles: as novel and imagined rather than natural;¹²⁸ as defensive and derivative discourse rather than indigenous;¹²⁹ and as chauvinistic and teleological rather than central.¹³⁰ There have also been growing pluralistic visions for a Korean nation. As recently as 2006, conferences supporting multicultural and multiethnic Korea have taken place. In July 2007, a ten-part special report by The Korea Herald was entitled “Multicultural and Multiethnic Korea”. Several months later in October, a conference entitled “The Making of a Multiethnic Society in South Korea” was held at Berkley University. Both were responses to the increase in foreign migrant workers and international marriages in South Korea. Also

¹²⁷ Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 2.

¹²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Earnst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

¹²⁹ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)

¹³⁰ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

South Korea signed the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in August 1996, a year after CERD was inaugurated in 1995, and on their behalf, human rights activists have been and continue to lobby actively the Korean government. But even at these venues, understanding of overseas Koreans or multiethnic Korea remains embedded within the desire to maintain the proud Korean heritage and bloodline of Korean forefathers dating back to Tangun. Diaspora has rarely been used discursively or as historical model in these accounts, until recently. Chönnam University recently created the Korea research Group for Global Korean Business and Culture (*Segye Hanin sanggongin yönhaphoe munhwa yönguwön*) that sponsors annual expositions to promote global networking of Korean diaspora, but it does not discuss diaspora historically, conceptually, or experientially. It is a concept for economic networking and business connections. The forum held its sixth festival in October 2008.

Chronotrope(s) of Diaspora: Reformulation of Korean National Identity

After Kim Young Sam's globalization policies were enacted in mid-1990s, there was a difference in tone, vocabulary, and purpose in writing about Koreans abroad which culminated in the enactment of the Overseas Koreans Act in late 1999, an apex point of change, converging together issues of self-identification, migration history, and the politics of migration policy-making. In this sense, I would like to consider Korea's migration history within a different chronotrope altogether: a Korean diaspora. A chronotrope is medical term referring to a substance affecting the rate or timing of rhythmic movements, such as heart beats. It combines the idea of time (chrono) and

affect (tropic, meaning “turn toward, having an affinity for, or affecting”). Diaspora as resource functions as a chronotope, inserting affective strategies through artistic activities and cultural production into the sense of linear time, derivative discourse, and progressive telos of history that dominates the field of Korean migration studies.

A revision of Korean migration history in terms of a Korean diasporic framework could provide the plural narratives that Berger calls for by examining cultural interaction, ethnic intermixing of peoples, and border-crossings from early times and the modern age of empires to the late nineteenth century and from early twentieth centuries’ nation-state system to the contemporary period. This heuristic shift affects the understanding of migration in space and in time. Spatially, diaspora implicates not only the nation-states of North and South Korea and its relations with neighboring Pacific Rim countries such as China, Russia, Japan, and the U.S., but also with the over one hundred countries where overseas Koreans reside in the Americas, Europe, Australia, and Africa. Even as the focus of this project examines the largest and oldest communities of Koreans residing abroad, the spatial distribution necessarily expands the discussion of Koreans abroad into the more minor and remote regions. The recognition of “minor transnationalism” traverses the networks and movements of people, ideas, and culture from major to minor regions, and vice versa, but is also inclusive of minor-to-minor activities.¹³¹ Evidently, the expansion of the spatial field of migration history recognizes the importance of recognizing minor communities of Koreans residing abroad and in so doing, implicates oppressive hierarchies that dominate the field of Korean migration history. The next

¹³¹ See Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, eds., *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

section depicting earlier times of intermixing societies helps show a history of cultural interaction as part of this spatial expansion.

II. History of Early Migration in and around the Korean Peninsula

By the time of the Warring States Period (403 – 221 B.C.), there was interaction between immigrants from the Northern Chinese States of Yen, Ch'i, and Chao who moved into Ancient Chosŏn.¹³² Evidence of interaction lies in the fact that bronze techniques and earthenware that were used in Ancient Chosŏn were not from China but derived from Sytho-Siberian methods that were used in Northeast Asia.¹³³ Also, while Buddhism is traditionally noted to have been introduced during Koguryŏ (56 – 668), when the former Ch'in Dynasty (351-394) sent an envoy to Koguryŏ in 372, Yi Pyŏng-do and Han Woo-keun both note that Korean Buddhism stems from the seminomatic tribes of Central and North Asia, with whom Ancient Chosŏn shared racial, linguistic, and cultural affinities.¹³⁴ Robert Buswell, indeed, highlights the unique cosmopolitan atmosphere of this northern Chinese frontier as the Former Ch'in's hegemony over eastern Turkestan allowed for the growth in religious, cultural, political, and commercial interactivity among Indian, Iranian, Hellenistic, and Chinese Cultures.¹³⁵

This historiographical survey of migration spans chronologically in time from the Three Kingdoms era (56 B.C.E. – 668 A.C.E.) when written records show evidence of

¹³² Woo-keun Han, *The History of Korea*, ed. Grafton K. Mintz, trans. Kyung-shik Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 14-16.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 9; Yi Pyŏng-do and Kim Chae-wŏn, *Hanguksa I: kodaie p'yŏn* [Korean History I: Premodern Era] (Seoul: 1962), 11.

¹³⁴ Robert E. Buswell Jr., *The Korean Approach to Zen: the Collected Works of Chinul*, trans. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 4.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

cultural, ethnic and political interaction through the Koryŏ (918 – 1392) and Chosŏn (1392 – 1910) dynasty and follows the drastic changes in population density and migrations during the colonial era and the postwar period into the global era of the dispersal of Koreans today. Starting in the seventh century, records show migrations in and surrounding the peninsula were vast in scope and large in number, reflecting dynamic aspects of movement that occurred before the modern period. Maritime trade cycles, travel routes of tributary duties, and wayfarers' seafaring inroads of earlier times supported cultural interactions and exchange amongst what today we know as Korean, Chinese, Jurchens, Mongols, Uighurs, Miao, and Japanese peoples.

In the following section on migrations during the Three Kingdoms and later periods, I recount an earlier time of cultural interaction through secondary readings of travelogues, a survey of dynastic records, and modern historiography. By doing so, I explore the question of how the entity and place of today's Korea maintains the idea of its being the most homogeneous people given its history of inter-regional migrations, intercultural activities, and inter-ethnic mixing in earlier times.

Sillans in Tang China

The Tang dynasty (618-907) maintained a large population that included foreigners. Sillan residents were among the most numerous, having acculturated themselves into Chinese life since the early Tang period. At the end of the Three Kingdoms era, when Silla defeated Paekche in 660 and Koguryŏ in 668, members of both Paekche and Koguryŏ ruling families and courts were transplanted into Tang China and

incorporated into its society. As well, Silla embassies were a constant presence at the capital in accordance with the tributary system. During the thirty-six year period from 703 through 738, some forty-five Sillan tributes were received by Tang, indicating that there were some years when more than one embassy was dispatched.¹³⁶

A key figure who brings light to these goings-on in East Asia is the ninth century Japanese monk Ennin (794 – 864). In Edwin O. Reischauer’s narrative of *Ennin’s Travels in Tang China*, the author devoted a chapter to the world of maritime trade and commercial economy which was, according to Ennin, dominated by Sillan tradesmen and sea merchants. Ennin’s diaries recount his sea travels from 838 to 847, a time he cites as the “first great period of cultural borrowing.” In fact, Ennin’s personal diary provides a window into one of the first communities of Sillan settlers in China. From the second century on, there are recordings of limited trade that had existed between Asia and the Near East when seafarers who claimed to represent the Roman Emperor traveled by sea along the southern Chinese borders.¹³⁷ What sparse amount of trade and number of communities that existed before the Tang transformed dramatically with Tang’s vast growth in and income from maritime trade that brought about a booming economy as well as other transformations within its social and political institutions. China’s tributary system at that time not only required official tributes, exchange of goods, and contact with “others,” but also resulted in tremendous cultural interactions. Reischauer opines that Ennin was “the last major figure in this first great period of cultural borrowing” and

¹³⁶ Reischauer, Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin’s Travels in T’ang China* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955), 276. I am grateful to John Duncan for introducing me to this source.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 274.

of shared learning from Tang to Silla and Asuka Japan on such topics as Buddhism, Confucianism, and governance.¹³⁸ He details how Koreans were pivotal to facilitating Ennin's travels into China. Thus, the Japanese monk was privy to witness the dramatic phase of maritime commerce that Sillans engaged in during the (Unified) Silla Dynasty [668 – 935], especially during his extended stays in Silla's coastal settlements en route to his destination inland regions.¹³⁹

The fact that Sillan Inns and Buddhist cloisters were established along the tributary route provides further evidence of the numerous tributes.¹⁴⁰ In addition to court officials, lower civil servants, and translators who led these embassies, there were scholars, monks, and junior members of the Sillan court who also accompanied the official tribute. Ennin recounts that some of these men would eventually settle in China where many served as Imperial guards for the Tang court, and some eventually passed the Chinese civil service examinations.¹⁴¹ In sum, Sillans who made official tributary trips to Tang's central courts would most likely return to Silla, but several carved out impressive careers for themselves through official channels.

After the demise of the Kogoryŏ and Paekche Kingdoms in the late seventh century, some subjects from the defeated regions migrated to Tang such as the famed General Gao Xianzhi (d. January 24, 756) of Koguryŏ descent who served under Tang during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712 – 756). Scholars argue that had it not been for non-Chinese commanders like Gao and Turk soldiers, Tang expansion into Central

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Although Ennin himself does not encounter Korean embassies en route to the capital located at Chang'an (present day Xi'an), he does meet tributes going back from China to Korea.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 280.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Asia during the eighth century would not have been possible.¹⁴² Also, many Paekche subjects went to Japan before and after 660.¹⁴³ Some Sillan monks who accompanied the embassaries also settled permanently in China, several becoming famous leaders in Tang Buddhist sects. Sillan monks accompanied important Tang monks on their religious journeys from Tang China to India. There is even an account of a French scholar who in 1908 discovered a fragment of the travelogue a monk of Korean origin, Hye Ch'o (c. Hui-chao). Some time around the year 723, Hye Ch'o went by sea from Tang to India and returned about six years later by way of Central Asia. Ennin makes a comparative note between the nine successful Korean monks versus the one Japanese who are recorded to have made the perilous trip to the birthplace of Buddha at this time in late seventh and early eighth centuries.¹⁴⁴

Ennin mentions little in his account about the level of Tang involvement in sea trade in the earlier centuries even though it is well known that Tang dynasties prospered as a result of sea trade that had become a mutually beneficial process of exchange. This mutual exchange signified that, on the one hand, it was only with Tang's wealth and riches that world commerce would not have reached as great proportions at such an early time in history. At the same time, maritime trade was equally important for circulation, trade, and knowledge exchange, all the features that allowed Tang the levels of economic growth and cultural efflorescence.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² S. Frederick Starr, ed., *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland* (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 2004), 38-39.

¹⁴³ Jonathan W. Best, *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), see especially 149-201.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 278-279.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Aviraphol and Cushman point out that while it was not until the sixteenth century when European adventurers and trading companies reach the waters of Southeast Asia, Asian tradesmen had already been actively navigating these maritime routes for centuries.¹⁴⁶ Reischauer goes so far as to suggest that the *modern* era began with the growth of world trade during the Tang dynasty, making European incorporation into this world trade a significant subsection of the modern era. According to his periodization, then, the long and tumultuous period of social upheaval in Asia during the late nineteenth century also signifies the end of the modern age of world maritime commerce.¹⁴⁷

Sillans on the Chinese Coast and Introduction of Buddhism into Silla

Unlike records from dynastic histories that tell the stories of soldiers, courtiers, and monks, the activities of the seafaring tradesmen and mercantilists are far more difficult to trace or assemble together into any complete picture. In Leonard Blussé's reading of one Chinese maritime tradesman's letters in the late seventh century, he makes the following observation: "While no enduring world civilization has bequeathed such voluminous historical records to posterity as China's, the kinds of Chinese records that have been preserved in China tell us very little about the people involved in overseas trade...they [tradesmen] have a history, but it has not been written yet."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Sarasin Aviraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1977) and Jennifer Wayne Cushman, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1975).

¹⁴⁷ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 275.

¹⁴⁸ Leonard Blussé, "The Vicissitudes of Maritime Trade: Letter from the Ocean *Hang* Merchant, Li Kunhe, to the Dutch Authorities in Batavia (1803-1809)," *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and The Chinese*, edited by Anthony Reid, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin Pty Ltd., 1996), 148-163.

However sparsely recorded, the lot of Sillan trading communities that existed along the southern coast of the Shantung Peninsula and the lower parts of the Huai River¹⁴⁹ document Sillans' settled status on the coast. Reischauer presents several layers of evidence to lay claim to these settlements. First, one large Sillan community in the town of Lian-shui-xian was so large that they had their own Sillan ward under their General Manager (c. *zong guan*). After hearing that some sixty Sillan sailors were hired at one time in the year 839 around this area, Ennin himself went to visit this town and met its General Manager for the first time in 845.¹⁵⁰

Second, Ennin discusses Sillans' monastic communities, or Buddhist cloisters, that served a similar function as port cities did for tradesmen and tribute embassies. The Mount Chi Cloister is repeatedly mentioned as a coastal meeting point, or as "a bit of Silla transplanted to the shores of China."¹⁵¹ One of Ennin's own patrons, Chang Yǒng, was both a headman and the local Sillan interpreter at this cloister. Third, Ennin recounts his observation of a national Sillan holiday celebration on the fifteenth day of the eighth month which also happens to mark the day Silla defeated Koguryō in 668. Fourth, Sillans' use of donkeys, horses, and a wagon shows material evidence that Sillans were not just roaming rovers, but settlers of some sort on Tang land. Finally, Ennin revealed that some of the coastal wayfarers of Sillan stock, who were transporting charcoal, had settled there for such a long time that they no longer spoke Korean. This he observed during an incident in which Sillans were duped by non-Korean speaking Japanese

¹⁴⁹ The Huai River is located in between the great Yellow and Yangtze Rivers.

¹⁵⁰ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 280.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 279-280, 282.

wayfarers who proclaimed they were “Sillan” with no contestation from the Sillan settlers.¹⁵²

Robert Buswell considers the Unified Silla Kingdom the golden age of Buddhist scholasticism when major approaches to doctrine developed during this period. Further evidence of religio-cultural exchange is documented through monk’s travels and studies. Buddhism is assumed to have been introduced into Silla when King Fu Chien of the Former Ch’in Dynasty (r. 357-384) Koguryō contemporary King Sosurim (r. 371-383) developed close ties.¹⁵³ Fu Chien dispatched the high priest Sundo (c. Shun-tao) to the Koguryō court in 372. Soon after, the Serindian monk Maranant’a arrived in Paekche by ship from Eastern Chin. Although Buswell notes the paucity of records from this time, there is evidence that letters were exchanged between Korean and Chinese monks.¹⁵⁴ The Paekche monk Kyōmik (fl. sixth century) is said to have traveled to India and founded the *Vinaya* school upon his return to the peninsula where he eventually translated 172 fascicles of texts.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, as a result of their training and inculcation of Buddhism, Koguryō and Paekche sent Buddhist missionary teams to Nara Japan carrying scriptures and Buddhist images. Buswell notes that Paekche made their propagation a national effort, and Buddhist iconographers, architects, and artisans were also dispatched. He writes, “thus the rudiments of Chinese culture and civilization were

¹⁵² Ibid., 284-285.

¹⁵³ Robert E. Buswell Jr., *The Korean Approach to Zen*, 4

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 6.

transmitted to the Japanese and the foundations were laid for the rich Buddhist culture of the Asuka and Nara periods.”¹⁵⁶

Chang Pogo: Korean Entrepreneur at Sea

The famous story of the maritime merchant Chang Pogo (b.? – d. 841) also provides more information about the strength of maritime trade in the latter part of the first millenium. Recorded in Korea’s oldest extant records *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms) and *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), Chang is extolled as a merchant prince who controlled the maritime trade in East Asia during his time.¹⁵⁷ Although Ennin never officially mentioned Chang directly in his diary, his presence is undeniable since Chang was the master/teacher of several of Ennin’s Sillan friends, including his patron and local translator Chang Yǒng.

Chang Pogo is famous for having made his fortune after he migrated to Tang, very possibly becoming a headman of one of the Sillan wards, much like his compatriots Chang and Sōl. He eventually made his way back to the peninsula in 828 and set up base at the southwestern corner of the peninsula at Wando Island. During his time in China, he reportedly discovered that Sillans were being taken to Tang as slaves and attempted to prevent abductions. The King of Silla appointed him guard of sea trade routes, and soon thereafter, Chang was appointed Commissioner of *Ch’ōnghaejin*, the administrative center of Wando Island. Chang was also a patron of the Mount Chi Cloister, most likely

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ilyōn [Iryōn], *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea], translated by Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), and Peter H. Lee, et al, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 1: *From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

in his effort to provide protective spirits for his ships and to inculcate his soldiers with religious belief. He supposedly endowed the cloister with an estate that yielded an annual income of 500 Chinese bushels of rice. Interestingly, a Korean guise did not always protect his passageway, as local Chinese officials still denied Ennin a longer stay in China even when Korean communities officially extended a welcome to him and his Japanese entourage, a hint at the differing level of relations Tang maintained with Silla versus Japan.¹⁵⁸

State Policy in the Three Kingdoms and Later Silla Periods

If such communities and cloisters existed with the knowledge of regional Chinese guard officials, local provinces, or perhaps even the court, why did the Tang court never attempt to regulate these foreigners under their own rule? Reischauer claims Sillan, Muslim, and other foreign communities along the eastern and southeastern coasts enjoyed extraterritoriality to some level and maintained autonomous status.¹⁵⁹ In the case of the Sillan communities, the unit of self-government was the ward, with the General Managers acting as head of these wards. Interpreters were next up in the socio-political hierarchy.

Ennin makes his own estimations about the autonomous status of the Sillan communities that Tang tacitly allowed. As a result of their autonomy, Ennin tried to find protection among coastal Sillans or attempt to pass as Sillan when Chinese authorities forced him to return to Nara or when he was wandering without official approval.

¹⁵⁸ Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 289.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 286.

Reischauer surmises that Silla's relative autonomy is also the reason why Ennin had attained patronage with the Sillan tradesman Chang Yōng in order to stay longer than expected or allowed, as part of a returning embassy from Nara.¹⁶⁰

Also as part of these coastal wards, Sillan sailors and navigators seem to have been, in large part, the main shipmen who facilitated trade and travel. There may have been Japanese, Tang, or other foreign presence gauging the waters for trade and commerce, but Ennin's diary clearly labeled several of the ships and merchants as Sillan. In the context in which these Sillan subjects appear, Reischauer hypothesizes that there were far more Sillans than the records indicate. Ennin details some of the catastrophic excursions by sea along the Shantung coast on Japanese ships, as opposed to the speed and efficiency with which Sillan ships transported him up and down the same coast and eventually back home. Even on Nara's own vessels themselves, Ennin's record indicate that there were some sixty Sillan helmsmen and sailors who were employed by Nara tributes in order to facilitate the main party's timely arrival and safe return home to and from Tang.¹⁶¹

Koryō (918 – 1392) and Yüan (1271 – 1368) Dynasty

In the age of empire, large and powerful polities sought to expand their territory beyond established borders, often across seas and halfway across the world in order to attain socio-political legitimacy or to expropriate scarce material and human resources. What were the conditions like in the latter part of the Unified Silla Kingdom and early

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 286-287.

Koryŏ Dynasty? What are some of the precedents of multicultural activity in these earlier times? Why and where were borders established, how were they maintained, and what circumstances reconfigured their expansion/retraction in the Chosŏn era, especially during the long nineteenth century of dramatic change and movement? When did migration become officially sanctioned and encouraged or discouraged and illegal?

In the latter part of the Koryŏ dynasty, the Mongol invasions (1231 – 1271) and their subsequent domination of Koryŏ (1271 – 1368) lasted over a century. The first seven years of attacks forced the Koryŏ court to move its capital to Kanghwa Island, and the Three Special Patrols (k. *sambyŏlch'o*) resisted with sudden forays and harrying tactics from their southwestern base of Chindo Island. The horse-riding Mongol raids and unrelenting fire attacks, however, destroyed most of the peninsula. Ultimately, the Koryŏ court finally ceded power to Mongolian forces after the Three Special Patrols were defeated by the combined Mongol-Koryŏ attack in 1271.

Peter Yun argues that the political situation of East Asia under Mongolian domination were unique in many aspects.¹⁶² The Yüan dynasty expanded its reach beyond East Asian borders and the sphere of Chinese influence prior to Mongolian rule, creating the conditions for unprecedented movements of people, goods, and ideas. In its defeat, many Koryŏ people were taken back to Mongolia in official capacities, while still others were enslaved or became indentured servants. To provide an example of the numbers of people who moved, more than 20,000 Koryŏ nationals from the Yüan capital of T'a-tu joined in the fight to suppress the Khitan rebel Chang Shi-ch'eng in 1354.

¹⁶² Peter I. Yun, "Foreigners in the Koryŏ Ruling Stratum during the Period of Mongol Domination" (M.A. Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992).

From this figure, Yun estimates that the total number of Koryŏ people in T'a-tu would have been much higher.¹⁶³ Moreover, Koryŏ subjects resided not only in the capital region, but also in Liao-yang, for example, where the Yüan court established a general administration for Koryŏ troops and civilians in Shen-yang and other places in the northeast. Movements did not consist solely of out-migrations. They included both out- and in-migrations. As Koryŏ became incorporated into the Yüan dynasty, so did many foreigners also enter and settle in Koryŏ including the Mongols, Khitans, Central Asians, Chinese, Jurchens, and others.¹⁶⁴

Border Crossing and Maintenance of Identity

A survey of foreigners' movements into Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties proves effective on two points concerning the idea of one's ethnic sense of self. One is the gradual process in which people moved about relatively freely in the Koryŏ dynasty as opposed to the more stringent controls over borders and differentiating of "others" during the Chosŏn. Second, the idea that Koreans comprise of one of the most homogeneous people proves difficult according to multiple historical sources. Contrary to arguments for racial homogeneity and mono-ethnicism in the modern period, Peter Yun presents evidence of the social acceptance of foreigners into Koryŏ ruling stratum which suggests that Koryŏ aristocrats "viewed their state in the cosmopolitan imperial order."¹⁶⁵ Rather than ethnic concerns, foreigners were accepted as long as Koryŏ's basic social class

¹⁶³ Ibid., 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Yun, "Foreigners in the Koryŏ Ruling Stratum," 68.

system was not threatened by their presence. Furthermore, when Yüan dynasty began to disintegrate, Koryŏ chose to side with the Ming for political reasons, as part of the cosmopolitan imperial order, and not because of any racial factor. Yun goes on to argue:

In view of great successes of a number of foreigners in late Koryŏ, it seems that the members of the late Koryŏ officialdom had little racial or class prejudices against foreigners...It appears that the strict racial exclusiveness of the Chosŏn dynasty and modern Korea must have come about after the demise of the Koryŏ dynasty and the founding of Chosŏn which closed its borders and tightly controlled any international exchange of ideas and movements of people.¹⁶⁶

Similarly, John Duncan finds no official records that substantiate the idea that racial purity and bloodline were significant factors in elite Koreans' sense of identity. In his examination of documented cases of foreigners' incorporation into the late Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasty, he argues that their identity was rather configured more along political and cultural registers.¹⁶⁷ Duncan clearly shows that while there may not have been a strong separation of races, there was a distinct sense of belonging to a larger political and cultural collectivity at this time. Herman Ooms has argued along similar terms that in the early modern period, the Japanese did not necessarily think themselves racially linked to the Yamato race as many claim today. It is more certain that the identity of archipelagic

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 68-69.

¹⁶⁷ John B. Duncan, "Hyanghwain: Migration and Assimilation in Chosŏn Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (2000): 102. Although there are inroads being made into the everyday folk of the later Chosŏn period through oral traditions and folk songs, Yun and Duncan's findings are from official records of the dynasties. Thus, the sense of elites' identity may not necessarily reflect that of the lower stratum (*p'yŏngmin*).

peoples during the Tokugawa period was based upon a sense of collectivity, or more so of difference from others in faraway places such as Ming China and Chosŏn.¹⁶⁸

This is not to argue that there was no sense of national consciousness. The founder of Koryŏ dynasty Wang Kŏn (King T'aejo: r. 918-943) set the tone of the new dynasty with his famous Ten Injunctions (k. *hunyo sipjo*). In his Ten Injunctions, T'aejo stressed to his people that they should not imitate Chinese ways because they occupied a different location and thus had a different character. As well, Wang Kŏn discouraged any replication of the barbaric customs of the Khitan Liao people who were located directly north of Koryŏ.¹⁶⁹

This new sense of distinction, however, did not mean that there was no intermixing of cultures. Yun and Duncan provide many examples of foreigners' continuously entered into Koryŏ officialdom, and as well, former Koryŏ slaves who were given political positions. Starting with Ssang Ki (c. Shuang Chi) of the mid-tenth century, outsiders were welcomed and incorporated into offices of the Koryŏ dynasty for their military, literacy and administrative skills. Later, some even started their own descent groups, or their sons and daughters married into prominent Koryŏ families in order to incorporate themselves fully within the Koryŏ elite. After decades of military dictatorship, economic instability, and foreign invasions by the Mongols, Khitans, Jurchens, and Japanese pirates, Yun senses that the basic stance of the late Koryŏ ruling stratum was pragmatism. It was a time, as Duncan similarly concludes, when Koryŏ

¹⁶⁸ Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁶⁹ Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 102.

elites valued cultured and skilled foreigners. Whereas the higher-level cultured elite and generals were accepted into Koryŏ society for their capabilities, most foreign military men were rejected due to their vulgarity and boorishness.¹⁷⁰

Ming (1368 – 1644), Qing (1644 – 1911), and Chosŏn (1392-1910) Dynasty

Gradual socio-political shifts were further exacerbated by internal uprisings, domestic political rifts, foreign incursions, and opening of the ports in the late nineteenth century. What Hideyoshi failed to do in the late sixteenth century, Meiji leaders succeeded in accomplishing three hundred years later with their military victories over China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905). At the turn of the century, Japan's successful incursions into continental lands and expropriation of resources transformed the Northeast Asian Order. Even with the final effort to proclaim autonomy through the establishment of the Taehan Empire (1896-1904),¹⁷¹ Japan's military victories ended the longest recorded dynasty of Chosŏn and then began the thirty-six year period of Korea's colonization under Japan. The age-old tributary system in which Korea had sent goodwill envoys for hundreds of years to China was now replaced by a new East Asian order in which China was demoted and many more political actors became involved within an international arena.¹⁷²

At the same time, new forms of thought entered into Korean discourse through a reconstitution of structures and a rediscovery of the old such as national essence (*kuksu*),

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 103-104. Yun, "Foreigners in the Koryŏ Ruling Stratum," 67.

¹⁷¹ Kim Dong-no, et al., eds., *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006).

¹⁷² Andre Schmid, "Rediscovering Manchuria: Sin Ch'aeho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea," *Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 1, (1997): 26-46.

ethnic nation (*minjok*), and national soul (*kukhon*). These changes reflected some of the larger shifts in the long century of transformations that also reformulated the way Koreans would view themselves and their place in this new world order.

In this context, there were far fewer foreigners who were accepted into the ruling stratum in comparison to the continuous stream that entered during the Koryŏ dynasty. In addition to Koryŏ political context, there were also other factors such as the prolonged peace in China under the Ming who maintained strict border controls, especially their blockage of seafaring trade routes. Perhaps they were returning to what was considered part of their homeland in order to try to eke out a living as semi-nomads. Duncan speculates that they moved to Chosŏn to escape famine and other political turmoil in Manchuria, or that they sought better economic opportunities.¹⁷³ A strong contingent of those who migrated into the peninsula at this time such as the Jurchen (*Yain*) and the Japanese (*Wae*) were categorically labeled *hyanghwain* (c. *xianghuaren*).¹⁷⁴ Duncan finds that a sense of difference was still largely political and cultural and not strongly defined by blood. In this sense, his arguments concerning the incorporation and assimilation of the *hyanghwain* differ from previous twentieth century historiography which upheld the belief that foreigners in Chosŏn society existed only as a small group of men brought in to serve the royal guard at the capital.¹⁷⁵

It is true that the Ming rulers set strict border controls. The Ming dynasty's founder and first emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-1398) banned all private sea trade

¹⁷³ Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 106-107.

¹⁷⁴ Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 205. Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, eds., *Hanguksa* 22 (2000), 265-366.

¹⁷⁵ Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 105.

with foreign countries in 1371. Further bans with increasingly drastic penalties were ordered in 1433, 1449, and from 1452 until 1567 when most bans were lifted. Contrary to popular opinion that considered all *wako* as Japanese pirates who ravaged Chinese coasts during the mid-sixteenth century, Robert Innes illustrates with the story of Wang Chi of Anhwei Province that by the middle of the sixteenth century, pirating along Chinese coasts was a multinational enterprise.¹⁷⁶

Throughout the Ming, then, the only permissible trade occurred within the framework of the tributary system of interstate relations. As a result of the Ming ban on private sea trade, the people living on Chinese coastal cities participated in a smuggling ring that was burgeoning by the 1540s.¹⁷⁷ As for the Qing (1644-1911), they established laws during the earlier part of their reign that set aside as sacred their Manchu homeland in the Manchurian frontier. Yet, these very lands became legally accessible to foreign cultivators during the latter Qing when the frontier was opened up for agricultural cultivation and maritime trade.

Even with strict Ming border policies in effect, recent scholarship on early Chosŏn policies shows that frontier regions in early Chosŏn were loosely defined. In fact, Chosŏn officials strategically attempted to incorporate potential foreign threats with incentives. By granting outsiders such as the Jurchen to the north and the Japanese to the east trading privileges, tax and corvée exemptions, and honorary titles, Chosŏn was able

¹⁷⁶ Robert LeRoy Innes, *The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980), 37, and Anthony Reid, "Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, edited by Anthony Reid, (Sydney, Australia: Allen and Unwin Pty Ltd., 1996), 31.

¹⁷⁷ Innes, *The Door Ajar*, 37-54.

to hold these foreigners at bay.¹⁷⁸ By means of adopting Korean surnames, intermarriage with indigenous people, and privileges that excised them from taxes and corvée labor, the *hyanghwain* were actively assimilated into the society at-large. Records document that large numbers of indigenous people were marrying the Jurchen and Wae in order to benefit from these privileges and exemptions.¹⁷⁹

Duncan questions the meaning of racial distinction and ethnic consciousness from the Koryŏ era to the early and mid-Chosŏn periods. What he finds is that a Korean sense of identity was defined more in terms of cultural and political factors than by racial or ethnic ones. Similar to Koryŏ elites' self-perception, the Chosŏn elite also distinguished their dynasty as wholly separate from the Chinese kingdoms. Fifteenth and sixteenth century figures such as Yang Sŏngji, Pyŏn Kyeryang, Kwŏn Nam, and Yi Ik (Sŏngho) credited Tangun as the first ruler of an independent Korea, making secondary the Kija origins myth since Kija was a legendary statesman from China's Chou dynasty.¹⁸⁰ However, in the later Chosŏn period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, changes in elite consciousness took place as definitions of native and Other became narrowed. As a result of such changes, far fewer foreigners were allowed entry into the elite stratum. Several reasons may have occasioned this.

¹⁷⁸ Kenneth Robinson, "From Raiders to Traders: Border Security and Border Control in Early Chosŏn, 1392-1450," *Korean Studies* 16 (1992): 94-115. Cited in Duncan, "*Hyanghwain*," 106-107.

¹⁷⁹ In terms policies of assimilation and migration during Chosŏn rule, the *hangwae* who were classified as *Wae* Japanese became fully absorbed into the Chosŏn polity. *Ibid.*, 108-109.

¹⁸⁰ Duncan, "*Hyanghwain*," 106. See also Young-woo Han, "Kija Worship in the Koryŏ and Early Yi Dynasties: A Cultural Symbol in the Relationship between Korea and China," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, edited by Wm Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 349-374.

First, the narrowing definition of cultural identity that began in the latter half of the Chosŏn Dynasty was triggered by the tightening of resources at the court in the dynastic center that was inundated with newly-elevated officials.¹⁸¹ Second, even though Confucianism was made the state ideology soon after the Koryŏ – Chosŏn transition, Martina Deuchler argues that the “Confucian revolution” of the Chosŏn dynasty actually took two hundred years to realize, gradually solidifying the ideological underpinning of Confucianism in the latter half of the dynasty.¹⁸² In the late Chosŏn dynasty, the records show far fewer cases of *hyanghwain*’s incorporation, resulting from a far more strict differentiation of descent lines and racial make-up. Duncan concludes that by the end of the eighteenth century, the Chosŏn court had mostly abandoned its previous policy of assimilation policies toward foreigners. If their activities were recorded, they were mostly of the newly incoming Han Chinese (k. *Hanin*), those Ming loyalists who fled Qing rule (1644-1911). The policies of late Chosŏn worked to ferret out the descendents of *hyanghwain* in order to curtail their previously-held privileges, and in so doing, to lay claim over these Chinese people as their own. Although these policies were not actualized (thus, the foreigners maintained certain distinctions), they nonetheless show stronger forces of ethnic and racial distinctions that were creating shifts in identity by this time. In sum, Chosŏn underwent dynamic changes throughout the latter half of the dynasty at a time when there was a tightening of resources and limited space at the center

¹⁸¹ Duncan, “*Hyanghwain*,” 111.

¹⁸² Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 200.

for officials who passed the civil service examination system or bought themselves into official posts.

Border Policies of Late Chosŏn

Chosŏn's policy toward foreigners increasingly became more strict, and this change was officially reflected in the archive as their naming changed from *hyanghwain* to *hwangjoin*.¹⁸³ From the sixteenth to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, transformations in Chosŏn's social and political domains equally influenced changes in cultural conceptions. A loosely-defined policy of assimilation of foreign migrants into the country was replaced by an exclusive policy that determined more specific conditions for incorporation into Chosŏn state such that by the eighteenth century, only the Han Chinese were accepted. As a result, the Jurchens, Mongols, Khitans, and other barbarians from the north were altogether excluded from entering into Chosŏn ruling social stratum.

Duncan points to several reasons why the conditions for assimilation of foreigners became increasingly rigid. Fundamental changes within the interstate order of Northeast Asia affected not only Chosŏn but also the Qing dynasty.¹⁸⁴ By the late eighteenth century, the Chosŏn court's decree of patrilineality and the use of the family genealogy registry (k. *chokbo*) made Chosŏn subjects more conscious of ethnicity. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Duncan estimates that Chosŏn's underpopulation may have contributed to the active policy of assimilating foreign migrants into Korea. However, by

¹⁸³ There were no differences in the meanings, only a linguistic marker reflecting their changed status.

¹⁸⁴ Key-hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

the eighteenth and certainly by the nineteenth century, overpopulation of the country as well as rising tensions among the states in the region began to affect migration policy. The Qing dynasty also went through a social reordering itself simultaneous to the time when their multi-ethnic state was established around four main ethnicities of Mongols, Uighurs, Koreans, and Manchus that was in addition to the Han majority.

In terms of Qing border policy of the seventeenth century, the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661 – 1772) consecrated the homeland of the imperial Manchurian ancestors and decreed an official ban in 1677 against settling or cultivating the Manchu homeland, north of Mount Changbai (k. Changbaeksan) and bordering the Tumen and Yalu Rivers. As descendants of the Nuchen tribes, the Manchus established the Qing Dynasty. In 1635, the ruler Huang Taiji (r. 1626-1643), son of Nurhaci (r. 1616-1626), named the Nuchen homeland of northeast China Manchuria by taking the posthumous Buddhist name of his father, Manchu, in commemoration of the founder of the new dynasty.¹⁸⁵ However, Korean peasants who lived along the river waters continued to cultivate the land illegally, crossing the rivers in the morning to work and returning in the evening back to Chosŏn territory. The two states agreed to draw the line between Qing and Chosŏn along the natural border of Paektu Mountains (c. Baitoushan) in 1712.

Andre Schmid provides a detailed discussion about the events that decided this border demarcation and its repercussions, carried out by Manchu emissary Mukedeng and two Korean officials Pak Kwŏn and Yi Sŏnbu. A stele was erected and a fence built to

¹⁸⁵ Satō Teisho, ed., *Manshū teikoku taiken* [Survey of the Manchurian Empire] (Tokyo: Seibundo shinkosha, 1937), 65-66, cited in In Taek Chung, “The Korean Minority in Manchuria, 1900-1937” (Ph.D. Dissertation, American University, 1966).

mark the distinct border line between the two countries more than one hundred years before markers and fences were used in Europe.¹⁸⁶ This border demarcation eventually transformed day-laboring practices to seasonal crossings according to agricultural seasons, coming to work the land in the spring and going back in the autumn. Ultimately, some Chosŏn people ended up permanently settling in regions north of the Yalu River.¹⁸⁷

III. Modern Migrations

The modern movement of people in and around the peninsula began in the late nineteenth century when natural calamities forced large numbers of the people to be “pushed” out of their homes. They fled to the north in the aftermath of natural disasters, famine, loss of land and life, and the rising cost of goods, and therefore, these movements are characterized as economic migrations carried out mostly by farmers and laborers. The first modern international treaty also changed conditions that influenced the movements of Koreans abroad.

According to Hobsbawn, the age of empire is the period of the late nineteenth century (1876-1914) when unprecedented peace and social stability in the western world afforded small bodies of men the capacity to rule over vast empires. The two world wars

¹⁸⁶ Andre Schmid, “Looking North toward Manchuria,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 225-228. See also Sin Kisŏk, “Kando kwisok munje” [The Kando Question], *Chungang taehakkyo samsimnyŏn kinyŏm nonmunjip* [A Collection of Essays in Commemoration of Chungang University’s 30th Anniversary] (Seoul: Chungang taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 1955), 31, cited in Chung, “The Korean Minority in Manchuria,” 13.

¹⁸⁷ “Report on the Comprehensive Investigation of Changbai Mountain,” compiled by Jilin Railway Station under Manchukuo Railway Administration [長白山統合調査報告書, 滿鐵吉林鐵路局編], 1943, as cited in Huang You-fu, “The History of Migration of Koreans into China,” *Studies of Koreans Abroad* 3 (1993): 181. This special volume of the journal is a conference volume from the “Overseas Koreans in the Global Context” that took place in November 1992 at Seoul National University. It was published in both English and Korean. Although I refer to both versions, I will footnote the English translation because footnotes are only provided in this version, the reasons for which are not known to the author.

and numerous revolutions of the twentieth-century largely marked manifestations of the anti-systemic forces of resistance to empire. These wars brought about the very demise of the century and with it, the end of a liberal bourgeois society as it had developed during the long nineteenth century.¹⁸⁸ During the latter time of imperial and colonial conquests, the Chosŏn dynasty became incorporated into the world system of circulation of capital, international trade, and global flows of culture. The management of money, growing trade, encounter with science and technology, and changes in social relations and status consciousness fundamentally transformed Chosŏn's social make-up internally and altered Chosŏn's political position internationally. The people found themselves having to adjust, and Chosŏn had to reckon with the dawn of the modern.

Open Ports Period

The year 1876 marks the “open ports period” when Chosŏn dynasty signed its first international treaty, became incorporated into the market system of foreign trade and commerce, and established its first official emigration office, *yuminwŏn*.¹⁸⁹ Chosŏn's staunch isolationist policy in dealing with foreigners, especially the West, had already been challenged with the Catholic persecutions of the 1800s, the expulsion of the French fleet in 1866, and the sinking of U.S. trading vessel *General Sherman* in 1871. Finally, after Chosŏn's attack on Japan's gunboat *Unyŏ* in September 1875, Japan used this incident as leverage to force Korea into a treaty relationship. In 1876, Chosŏn signed the

¹⁸⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1876-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 7.

¹⁸⁹ Japan opened three ports in 1876: Pusan, Inch'ŏn, and Wŏnsan. This was followed by five more port openings in 1877.

Kanghwa Treaty on terms favorable to Japan, a reason why the treaty is often repudiated by Korean nationalist scholars as a coercive contractual agreement. The treaty would further transform Chosŏn's relationship with Qing, given the calculated arguments made by the Japanese diplomat, Mori Yurei at the time of the signing, in which he contested Chinese suzerainty over Chosŏn.¹⁹⁰

In the aftermath of Chosŏn's opening, it signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, also known as Chemulp'o Treaty, with the U.S. (1883), followed by similar treaties with Britain (1883), Germany (1883), Italy (1884), Russia (1884), France (1886), and Austria-Hungary (1889) with the hope of using its "good office" status with Western states to keep Japan at bay.¹⁹¹

Historical records show that most of the movements of Koreans at this time went northward to China and Russia. While movements across the Qing/Chosŏn border were not legally sanctioned, they continued even as Qing frontier guards patrolled the borders and as the Chosŏn court decreed death by decapitation to those found crossing illegally. By 1845, the tensions along the river border eased, allowing passageway for more Koreans.¹⁹² Shortly thereafter, during the decade from 1860 to 1870 many floods devastated the peninsula, pushing peasants northward to find other means of livelihood.¹⁹³ The devastation of the famine in northern Hamgyŏng province was so

¹⁹⁰ M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), 109-170.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² In 1867, the Qing state opened the Yalu River valley to Chinese settlers, and in 1878, the prohibition against the movement of Chinese women north of the Great Wall was revoked. Chung, "The Korean Minority in Manchuria," 15.

¹⁹³ *Killim chiji* [Geographic Records of Jilin], vol. 47, cited in Huang You-fu, "The History of Migration of Koreans into China," 182.

severe that Koreans crossed the river in defiance of the law, and even the government officer in charge of border administration, O Yun-jung, issued land certificates which legalized the status of the settlers from the Chosŏn side.¹⁹⁴ By 1867, a thousand Chosŏn subjects had settled in Huichun County; by October 1969, ten thousand had migrated north, and more than a thousand Korean families had settled in Jian County by 1870. Most engaged in agriculture, ginseng cultivation, deer and marten hunting, and panning.¹⁹⁵

Although border crossing was not officially sanctioned, few Koreans left, and the sources show that the number of Koreans in Manchuria increased. Two conflicting narratives emerge however as to how these numbers grew. In one Chinese scholar's sources, Huang You-Fu, indicates that as tensions continued to increase along the Heilong (r. Amur) and Ussuri Rivers between China and Russia, the Qing state lifted its previous ban on the region in 1885, sanctioning legal migration of Koreans into China, reserving a certain area north of the Tumen River for Korean cultivation, part of Qing's defense strategy against Russian aggression. The Treaty of Aigun and the Treaty of Peking established the modern borders between China and Russia when the two governments signed the treaties in 1858 and 1860 respectively, allotting the Russians an area of a million square kilometers north of the Heilong River and east of the Ussuri River.¹⁹⁶ At the time of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Russia dispatched several thousand soldiers from Vladivostok into Manchuria who drove out corrupt Chinese officials.

¹⁹⁴ Chung, "The Korean Minority in Manchuria," 16.

¹⁹⁵ Ch'oe Chongbŏm, *Kangbuk kirok* [Diaries from North of the River], 1872, cited in Huang You-fu, "The History of Migration of Koreans into China," 182.

¹⁹⁶ Wu Dazhen, *Ke Zhe ziding nianpu* [A Chronicle of Ke Zhai], 1879, cited in Huang You-fu, "The History of Migration of Koreans into China," 183.

These Russian efforts were supported by the Chosŏn government. After the Russian defeat, the Japanese imposed the Protectorate Treaty on Chosŏn in 1905 and proclaimed the Kando issue would be negotiated directly between Japan and China.¹⁹⁷

In In-Teak Chung's discussion of the Koreans in Manchuria at this time, on the other hand, in 1882 and 1883, the Chinese authorities drove many Korean out of the area after finding numerous well-organized Korean communities that existed against Qing laws. Those who did not leave were subject to heavy taxation, obedience to Chinese law, and conformity to Chinese customs, especially in dress, essentially becoming Qing subjects. While Chosŏn was seriously considering a recall of all Korean immigrants in Manchuria, a group of Korean settlers officially disputed that the border marshland area known as Kando (c. Jiandao) was a Korean, not Chinese, territory and had every right to settle there as Koreans. The Chosŏn government dispatched an investigation team that concluded that the petition of the Korean settlers was true, thereupon sending a diplomatic note to the Qing. The note, however, was rejected by the Chinese side, and a diplomatic dispute would ensue and last for almost twenty-six years until the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The dispute would finally be resolved with the Kando Agreement signed between Japan and China in 1909. It recognized China's claim that the Tumen River was the correct border between Korea and China and in return, Japan received railway rights. As well, it contained seven articles giving Korean residents in Kando residential and property rights.¹⁹⁸ Whether the case can be made that China opened its Yalu River valley to Koreans in 1885 as part of defensive strategy against

¹⁹⁷ Chung, "The Korean Minority in Manchuria," 19.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16-21.

Russia, or that a territorial dispute ensued between Korea and China, Korean immigrants to Manchuria had reached 65,000 by 1894 and increased in Yanbian (k. Yŏnbyŏn) to 78,000 by 1904 and 202,070 in 1909.¹⁹⁹ The issue of accuracy in statistics is the result of several factors. The political exigent circumstances of illegal sojourners, or refugees during the colonial period, the number of naturalized Koreans, and as well, the haphazard nature in which Korean paupers carried out their insecure lives, moving from one place to another. One also cannot discount the agencies that carry out such surveys have their own political interests represented in the resulting numbers.

In this same volume of *Studies of Koreans Abroad*, Huang You-Fu and Ma Qui-Cheng, both from Central University of Nationalities, provide the population of Koreans in Manchuria during the same time, but with a huge discrepancy in numbers. For example, according to Ma's source, Koreans numbered 37,000 in 1897, 50,000 in 1904 and 184,000 in 1909. Ma's sources were published in Yanbian in 1986, but the citation itself is incomprehensible in its English translation. Again, the Korean article does not include any footnotes.²⁰⁰

Koreans began to move into the Maritime Provinces and Russia at the same time as they migrated to Manchuria for similar reasons of poverty, famine, and starvation mostly from northern Hamgyŏng and P'yŏngan Provinces. From 1863 until 1896, 6,500 Koreans had settled mostly in the Southeast Ussuri region, opened up as a result of the 1860 Peking Treaty that allotted Russia land east of the Ussuri River. This increased to

¹⁹⁹ *Zaiman Chōsenjin gaikyō* [A Survey of Koreans in Manchuria], Nihon gaimushō [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan], 1933, 96-7, cited in Huang, "The History of Migration of Koreans into China," 184.

²⁰⁰ Ma Qui-Cheng, "The Historical Heritage of Chinese Koreans," *Studies of Koreans Abroad* 3 (1993): 212.

23,000 in the Maritime Provinces by the late 1890s. By 1910, over 50,000 Koreans were recorded to have settled in some 104 Korean villages, mostly making their living in agriculture. While most resided in the South Ussuri area, some others moved in the Amur and trans-Baikal areas as well as cities such as Ussuriisk, Vladivostok, Nikolayevsk, and as far north as Khabarovsk and Kamchatka peninsula.²⁰¹

A key characteristic about Koreans in the Commonwealth of Independent States (hereafter CIS) today is that there exist three distinct groups whose migration history and therefore sense of self differ significantly.²⁰² First, the majority of CIS Koreans are referred to as continental Koreans (k. *taeryuk* or *k'ūn nara Koryō saram*). Their ancestors migrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and became subjected to Stalin's forced deportation of ethnic Koreans into Central Asia in 1937. The defining historical moment in the lives of these Koreans is unequivocally the 1937 deportation, either as survivors or descendents of those who experienced the uprooting. A second group of Sakhalin Koreans entered the Soviet Union after the 1937 deportations of Koreans from the Far East, forcibly mobilized by the Japanese to work on the all-out war front as imperial subjects. Most Sakhalin Koreans came from the southern part of the peninsula. In actuality, there were Koreans residing in the northern part of the Sakhalin islands since the 1860s and 1870s, but of the 1,767 Koreans (as of 1932), 1,115 were deported in 1937. The six hundred of so who remained were joined by more

²⁰¹ Rosa Dzharylgasinova, "Ethnocultural Development of Koreans of the Former USSR: Traditions and Innovations," In *Studies of Koreans Abroad* 3 (1993): 99-100.

²⁰² CIS was founded in 1991 by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, a reorganization of twelve republics that followed the fall of the Soviet Union. In addition to these, the republics of CIS include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia. This organization does not include the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Koreans who arrived after 1937, drafted to work in coal production or lumber processing in Sakhalin for Japanese war efforts.²⁰³

The Sakhalin case of Korean migrants is part of an impending repatriation movement that is on-going today, due to their non-nationality status, a result of their abandonment by not only the Japanese but also the Korean government after the war in 1945. Most recently, KIN has worked toward compensation issues for coal mine workers who never received pension from either the Korean or Japanese government, and non-governmental networking continues today as KIN members continue to take field trips to Korean communities on the island. An official program to repatriate Sakhalin Koreans ran from 1992 until 2000 during which time 1,352 were repatriated to South Korea, and Yi Sunhyōng's *Sahallin kwihwanja* is a study of sixty-four repatriated Sakhalin Koreans in their 80s and 90s.²⁰⁴

Finally, the third group consists of the North Korean CIS Koreans whose migration into the Soviet Union occurred after the division of the peninsula. This group includes higher echelon North Koreans who defected and live in exile with Soviet Union citizenship, renouncing North Korean communism and supporting Stalin's socialist vision. There were those who were sent to Russia as political prisoners and later found freedom in the republics, and finally, farmers who sought political asylum in the Soviet Union. While the first group of continental CIS Koreans make up a large majority, the

²⁰³ Yi Sunhyōng, *Sahallin kwihwanja* [Returners from Sakhalin] (Seoul: Sōul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2004), 11.

²⁰⁴ Yi Sunhyōng, *Sahallin kwihwanja*, 18.

in-group distinctions are important characteristics that factor greatly into CIS Koreans' overall understanding of themselves.

In 1883, the Chemulp'o Treaty forged amity between the U.S. and Korea, with article VI allowing "subjects of Chosen...to visit the United States...to reside and rent premises, purchase land, or to construct residences or warehouses, in all part of the country..." Whereas the original opening was negotiated by Commodore R. Shufeldt, U.S. Navy, in May of 1882, the ratifications were effected a year later in Chemulp'o (today's Inch'ŏn) by Minister of the U.S., L.H. Foote, the treaty is therefore called the Shufeldt or Chemulp'o Treaty.²⁰⁵ Soon thereafter, the first diplomatic envoys and Korean students stepped foot on American soil in 1883 and 1884, and the first Korean legation was eventually established in Washington. D.C. From 1896 to 1902, an estimated fifty Korean students, political exiles, ginseng merchants, and traders had arrived on continental American shores.²⁰⁶ However, it would not be until labor disputes among immigrant (mostly Chinese and Japanese) workers of Hawaiian sugarcane plantations that brought the first wave of 7,000 Koreans onto the U.S. territory of Hawaii in 1903. In order to set up this first mass group of migrants to the U.S., Wayne Patterson provides a detailed account of the actors in the U.S. and Korea who made this possible: namely Horace Allen and banker David Deshler who had exclusive control over the enterprise of recruiting emigrants. To facilitate the process, the *Yuminwŏn* (Office of

²⁰⁵ "The Opening of Corea," *New York Times*, July 9, 1883. See also Bong-youn Choy, *Koreans in America* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 46-47.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 69-72.

Emigration), the first Korean governmental office to deal with migration issues, the East-West Development Company, and the Deshler Bank were established.²⁰⁷

In the following year, there was also an estimated 1,400 Koreans who were contracted to work on Mexican agricultural fields. Their downtrodden existence was discovered by a ginseng trader, Pak Yōng-sun, traveling through Mexico's eastern port city of Merrida in February 1905. The history of this small number of Korean migrants into Mexico, 400 of who later entered Cuba's sugar plantations fields in 1921, is a sad story of a group of migrants who were cut off from the Korean peninsula due to the Protectorate Treaty in November 1905.²⁰⁸

In sum, as the 518 years of Chosŏn dynasty drew to a close, the number of Koreans living abroad numbered over 200,000 Koreans in Manchuria, 60,000 in Russia and the Maritime Provinces, 8,400 in the U.S., and 1,300 in Mexico. As the number of Korean emigrants multiplied, the government promulgated a law in July, 1906 requiring all emigrants to sanction their departure with the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry, a policy that the Government-General continued after 1910.²⁰⁹ The reasons for leaving the peninsula during the open ports period were largely economic, but this would change fundamentally during the colonial period.

²⁰⁷ Wayne Patterson, *The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawaii, 1896-1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 39-58.

²⁰⁸ Kim Wōnyong's text is published as a hand-written text in pure Korean script, and pages ten through twenty-seven deals with Koreans in Mexico and Cuba. Kim Wōngyong published the same text in English *Koreans in America* in 1972 under his American name Warren Y. Kim. Ironically, the English text was published in Seoul while the Korean version was published in California. As with many of these earlier survey histories, there are no footnotes throughout, but Kim's text is noticeably well-rounded in research materials with a great number of details, dates, and quotes. However, as there are no citations, I am unsure of his sources. Kim Wōnyong, *Chaemi Hanin osipnyōnsa* [Fifty Year History of Koreans in America] (Reedley, CA: Charles Ho Kim, 1959), 13.

²⁰⁹ Chung, *The Korean Minority in Manchuria*, 27.

Colonial Period (1910 – 1945)

The haunting specter of the thirty-six years of Japanese colonization has become unremittingly tied to the identity of the nation, the writing of its history, the movement of its peoples, and their identity as diasporic subjects. The secondary literature is inundated with debates concerning the nature and method in which Japan carried out its colonization of Korea. These on-going debates cannot erase memories of the history of colonial violence and tragedies embodied in the migrants' experiences of colonization and loss of sovereignty. These experiences remain deeply engrained in the minds of coerced coal mine workers, mobilized soldiers, exploited factory workers, and forced-off-the-land farmers. The testimony of surviving "comfort women" continues to reopen wounds from the past each Wednesday when the few survivors lead the longest-running South Korean civil protest held at noon in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul. The stories of these migrants and conditions of their movements help ask the question of difference between migration and diaspora: does the colonial experience mark a profound differentiation of migration in times of political exigency such that the conditions of diaspora are satisfied? That is, migration may be described as voluntary, coerced, or forced, but are not the movements of colonized subjects more diasporic than migratory? And do those 2.2 million who were never repatriated back after liberation in 1945 to Korea consider their lives and identities diasporic or part of a migration that involves Korea in some way?

During this time, large numbers left Korea. Movement to Manchuria and Russia continued while emigration to other countries such as the U.S. was prohibited. The first

large wave of Korean immigrants to the U.S. ended in 1905 when Korea became a protectorate of Japan. However, 1,100 “picture brides” entered the U.S. during the colonial period through marriage and joined their husbands in Hawaii and mainland U.S. There were some 900 political refugees and students who also entered the U.S.²¹⁰ Henry Chung has made the case that the Japanese had a political stake in Korean migration patterns for two reasons: first, encouraging more Koreans to enter areas that allowed Japanese troops and administrators to be dispatched on the pretext of protecting its Korean subjects, and second, to “make room for the Japanese immigrants to Korea” to solve its own overpopulation problem.²¹¹

In Japan alone, the numbers went from only 800 Koreans in 1910 to almost two million Koreans who had moved to Japan by 1944. In the other direction, the 171, 500 Japanese settlers in 1910 had increased to 765,400 who moved into colonized Korea making up 2.9% of the 26.4 million of the peninsula’s inhabitants in 1942.²¹² By the last phase of the war from 1940 to 1944, in addition to the two million Koreans who migrated to Japan, there were 1.4 million in Manchuria, 600,000 in Siberia, and 130,000 in China, and an estimated 40,000 scattered among other countries. Some fled for political reasons. Others sought economic opportunities in areas under Japanese control outside the peninsula, and still others were forcibly mobilized for wartime labor.

²¹⁰ Kim, *Koreans in America*, 22-23.

²¹¹ Henry Chung, *The Case of Korea: A Collection of Evidence on the Japanese Domination of Korea and on the Development of the Korean Independence Movement* (New York: Flaming H. Revell Company, 1921), 115.

²¹² *Segye ūi Hanminjok* [Overseas Koreans in the World], vol. 4, edited by Kwangbok 50 chunyŏn kinyŏm saŏp wiwŏnhoe [Interim Group for Affairs of the 50 Year Anniversary of Independence] (Seoul: T’ongilwŏn, 1995), 53-54; Andrew J. Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea* (New York: John Day Company, 1944), 76. See also Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 483-485.

Migration history texts narrate how Japan expropriated Korean land by introducing a system of land registration and private land tenure that forced many farmers off their land, disturbing the relations of agricultural production between landlords and tenants. Further, they imposed higher land taxes and promoted the growth of an absentee landlord class charging exorbitant rents. In addition, the Japanese undertook an irrigation association movement in order to increase rice production. Korea not only became a source of revenue for colonial enterprise but also became their main food-provider. Korean nationalist scholars forward the idea that the “rice for cotton” trade was part of Japanese colonial designs since the late nineteenth century, whereas Western scholars claims the economic logic of Korean rice for Japanese cotton “followed the flag” during the 35 years between the opening and colonization: specifically from 1876 to 1882 as Japanese monopoly, from 1884 to 1894 as Sino-Japanese competition, and from 1894 to 1910 as Japanese dominance. Kirk Larsen research complicates this picture with the larger discussion about land trade routes with China and sea trade routes with the West.²¹³

Changes in land ownership rights caused for the dissolution of mid- to small-scale landlords, independent farmers, and independent small-scale farmers, thus increasing the number of small-scale *tenant* farmers as well as increasing land possession and strengthening the managing power of landowners.²¹⁴ The irrigation association

²¹³ Kirk Larsen, *Traditions, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea 1850-1910* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

²¹⁴ Kang Mangil, *Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalsa yŏngu* [A History of daily life of the poor during the colonial period] (Seoul: Ch’angjaksŏ, 1987), 9-10. Pang Kie-Chung and Michael D. Shin, *Landlords, Peasants and Intellectuals in Modern Korea* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Series, Cornell University, 2005).

movement further debilitated mid-strata farmers and mid- to small-size landlord class, creating for yet more small-scale tenants, many of whom were forced off their land.²¹⁵

In his study of the everyday life of poor folk, Kang Mangil introduces the emergence of a mobile population of farmers (*yingong ingu*): a special group of mobile, lower status people who were kicked off their land, deprived of livelihood and unemployed. When Japanese colonial policies began to take effect and dispossessed most of rural Korea, impoverished “forced-off-the-land farmers” (*mirô naegi inong*) were either forced to migrate or to retreat into the mountains to become “slash-and-burn” farmers, neither settled nor nomadic.²¹⁶ Although there was some dissolution of the agricultural sector with the emergence of urban centers before Japan’s annexation, Kang maintains that these farmers-cum-paupers were not considered a major social issue until colonization processes took shape. In effect, according to Kang, from the time of the farmers’ riots of 1884 until 1905, traditional relations between landlords and tenants continued – that relation which allowed farmers the right to possess land. And one must remember that even by 1930, eighty percent (15.56 million) of the total (19.7 million) Korean population was still part of the agricultural sector.²¹⁷ Among them, half did not possess their own farmlands, 100,000 were the urban poor, and many more were factory day workers, not to mention the over ten percent of the male population that was unemployed.²¹⁸ In conclusion, Kang portrays the daily life of poor rural folk during the

²¹⁵ Kang, *Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalsa yongu*, 27-28.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

²¹⁷ The 1.2 million slash-and-burn farmers are not included as part of these figures. *Ibid.*, 18.

²¹⁸ Kang’s sources are the *Tonga* and *Chosŏn ilbo* during the colonial period.

colonial period that left them no choice but to move, oftentimes aligning themselves with patriotic movements outside the peninsula.

The Japanese penetration took place both in the countryside and the urban centers. In the Manchurian-Korean border city of Sinŭiju or the port city of Inch'ŏn, the Japanese took over most of the land holdings despite being a minority presence in terms of the population.²¹⁹ In Inch'ŏn, while over half the population was Korean, only eleven percent of the land was owned by Koreans, most of it held as collateral by Japanese banks. Japanese domination in the agricultural sector was further exacerbated by their industrial and commercial expansion on the peninsula. For example, the number of Japanese owned factories increased almost tenfold from 185 in 1911 to 1,519 in 1922, and industrial investment in the same period increased from 9,816,000 *yen* to 157,743,717 *yen*.²²⁰ Japan's holdings in the banking sector further explain why Koreans were forced out of the peninsula. For example, the Japanese population of less than 400,000 in 1922, a mere five percent of the total population, maintained bank deposits totaling more than 200 million of the total bank deposits of 300 million *yen*. They also held a 400 million share of the 600 million total loans made by banks.²²¹ Finally, a rare sociological survey from the colonial period by a Korean scholar also provides us with a glimpse of the economic hardships that drove Koreans into Manchuria. When asked the

²¹⁹ Of the 632,178 *p'yŏng* of land in Sinŭiju, 608,853 were owned by the Japanese and the Government-General. The traditional unit of measurement *p'yŏng* equals 3.3 meters. *Tonga ilbo*, March 13, 1924, cited in Chung, *The Korean Minority in Manchuria*, 34-35.

²²⁰ *Tonga ilbo*, March 16, 1924, cited in Chung, *The Korean Minority in Manchuria*, 35.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

question “What made you come to Manchuria?” in 1931, an overwhelming 186 out of 201 informants’ reply was related to pressures of colonial expansion.²²²

In a nutshell, more and more farmlands as well as industrial and commercial enterprises were taken over by the Japanese, and an increasing proportion of Korean farmers either became sharecroppers who paid exorbitant rents, or they were forced to move from the countryside to the cities and from urban centers to foreign lands. Farmers from the northern provinces went mainly to Manchuria, China, and Siberia while those from southern provinces tended to go to Japan. In addition, Koreans were conscripted to work in factories, mines, and the war front, as soldiers and as sex slaves. The general nature of this national narrative shows that movement from 1910 through 1937 consisted of displaced farmers and urban folk who migrated out of the country to find better economic opportunities, whereas the later 1937 – 1944 migrations coerced Korean colonial subjects to move on behalf of the Japanese empire.

As part of master narrative of the nation, the work of nationalist scholars across generations such as Yi Pyŏng-do, Son Chint’ae, Chung In Teak, Pang Kie-Chung, and others, as well as the archive of this period demonstrate that even as revisionist history is being written, the hold of a master narrative of the struggle, suffering, and overcoming of the nation takes precedence.

²²² Yi Hungu, *Manju wa Chosŏnin* (P’yŏngyang: Sungsil chŏnmun hakkyo kyŏngjehak yŏngusil, 1932), 102-103, cited in Chung, *The Korean Minority in Manchuria*, 36.

Mass Migration (1960s – 1990s)

Although there was some repatriation in the years following liberation in 1945, by the 1960s, the outflow resumed, with large numbers of people leaving South Korea to far-away destination countries such as the U.S., Germany, Brazil, and more recently to Australia, the Philippines, and Canada. The momentum of *chet'ŭgi* movement and the longer distances covered in the postwar period swung the pendulum of migration's purpose and meaning into another era.

In 2003, Koreans in America celebrated the centennial anniversary of the first group of 7,226 Koreans who migrated to the U.S. to work the sugarcane fields in Hawaii.²²³ The majority of Koreans entered the U.S. after the 1964 Voting Rights Act and the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 abolished the previously established national quotas.²²⁴ The number of Korean population in the U.S. jumped from an estimated 25,000 in 1960 to over one million in 2000.²²⁵ The history of Koreans in America is discussed in the Whitney Biennial that focuses on immigration and nationalism in the U.S., redirecting the discussion from the postcolonial paradigms of orientalism and colonialism within an Asia-centered context to Asian Americans' cultural activities in the U.S.

²²³ Many celebrations and conferences marked the occasion, and the Korean American United Foundation and the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States expressly sponsored the following from this side of the Pacific: The Korean Experience in Hawaii Conference (May 2001), Koreans in North America Conference (May 2002), 100 Years of Korean Immigration to the US (2002) in Los Angeles. These two groups also supported several book publications such as *Miju Hanin imin 100 nyŏnsa* 2002. Many ceremonies and publications also marked this event in South Korea.

²²⁴ The 1924 Chinese Exclusion Act that only restricted Chinese from entering the U.S. would later set the precedent for all Asians' exclusion from U.S. immigration laws. Those who did enter the U.S. between 1951- 1964, especially after the Walter-McCarren Act in 1952 mostly consisted of "war brides," orphans, and students

²²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Census 1940, 1970, 2000.

The 1960s ushered in structural changes to the Korean economy and society, one that the newly self-appointed President and General Park Chung Hee carried out for the benefit of national and economic development. Part of the problem was overpopulation of the labor force, coupled with South Korea's need for technology resources and education. Therefore, Park quickly established several labor migration contracts with Germany, Brazil, and later Australia. For Brazil, there was just a few years window of time from 1962 – 1968 during which Koreans arrived at their destination farmlands. But many gave up farming and legally entered the city of Sao Paolo and Rio de Janeiro where they took up work in Brazil's textile industry.²²⁶

As for West Germany, almost 18,000 Koreans left for Germany between 1963 and 1977 – the 8,395 men employed as coal miners and the 10,371 women as nurses. These numbers account for the fifteen year period from 1963 to 1977 that marked the height of Korean contract migrations to Germany. Park Chung Hee met with West German head of state Heinrich Luebke in 1960, and in their exchange, the idea of labor contract migration was originally proposed in the following manner: to send South Korean workers in return for Germany technology. Whereas official coal miners' labor contract was signed in December 1963, Korean nurses began migrating to Germany from 1965 to 1969 through personal ties between two Korean doctors and German hospitals. The first flow of nurses who migrated to Germany from 1965 to 1969 was negotiated by two Korean doctors, Yi Sugil and Yi Chongsu. Then the first official labor contract was

²²⁶ Lee Kwanggyu, *Overseas Koreans*, 95-97.

negotiated in 1969. Both coal miners and nurses were contracted to stay to work for three years, but most opted to stay on in Germany after the contracts had expired.²²⁷

Though there was hardly any attention paid to these sparse few who left for Germany, in recent writing of the history of the German Koreans, the particular dangers and insufferable conditions involved in coal-mining played favorably into the nationalistic narrative in several publications on this topic.²²⁸ The history of German Koreans also made news when a small “German Village” was created along Korea’s southwestern coast of Namhae County, South Kyöngsang Province in 2005. In 2008, a second German village consisting of thirty households has just been commissioned in Tangjin, South Ch’ungch’ön County.²²⁹ Their return highlights a trend in South Korean overseas Koreans’ policy that encourages economic investment from Koreans abroad through attractive jobs, favorable tax and land benefits, and the idea of return to a nostalgic past.

The pendulum’s swing noticeably ushered in a shift in opinion also, from that of pitiful overseas Koreans as repository of suffering to their active roles as vanguard for the nation. This shift reflects a period of changing South Korean views in the early 1990s

²²⁷ Lee Kwanggyu, *Segye üi Hanminjok: Yuröp* [Koreans in the World: Europe], vol. 7 (Seoul: T’ongilwön, 1996), 75-76, 164. *Yuröb Haninsa: P’ürangsü wa Togil chungsim üro* [History of Koreans in Europe: Focus on France and Germany], ed. Han-Yuröb yönguhoe, Overseas Koreans Foundation (Seoul: Tahae, 1999), 400-403. In the latter edited text, there are no authors listed or mentioned in the compendium.

²²⁸ Kim Yongch’öl, *Togil arirang* [German *Arirang*] (Kyönggi-do, koyang-shi: Essay), 2006; *P’adok kwangbu 30 nyönsa* [30 Year History of German Korean Coal Miners] (Seoul: Chaedok Hanin Glück auf ch’inmokhoe), 1997; Pak Ch’angyöng, *Togil ro gan saramdul: p’adok kwangbu wa kanhosa e kwan han kirok* [Koreans Who Went to Germany: Essays on Korean Coalminers and Nurses] (Seoul: Nunpit), 2003.

²²⁹ Norimitsu Onishi, “In a Corner of South Korea, a Taste of German Living,” *New York Times*, August 9, 2005 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/09/international/asia/09korea.html>), accessed July 27, 2009). In fall 2009, South Korean director Sung-Hyung Cho will debut her second documentary titled “Home from Home” that centers upon the first “German Village” of Namhae County.

that occurred along several registers. First, the end of the Cold War (outside of a still-divided Korea) brought about political realignments on a global scale that led to a general thawing of relations between North and South Korea. The momentous climax of this thaw was the much-anticipated North and South Korean Summit of 2000 between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il, after the earlier planned summit between Kim Young Sam and Kim Il Sung was foiled by the elder Kim's sudden death in summer 1994 just weeks before the meeting). Another, albeit smaller, marker was the fact that it was not until September 17, 1991 that both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of Korea became member-states of the United Nations that was founded in 1945.

Second, major economic shifts created for the emergence of multinational corporations, and such changes in economic relations globalized South Korean capital (again) and made South Korean firms themselves transnational investors. These shifts are important not only in terms of South Korea's relationship to its overseas communities and its incorporation of "returnee" Koreans from abroad, but also in terms of the growing presence of foreign migrant workers in recent times.

Third, globalization or *segye-hwa* and its ensuing government policies have effected significant changes in how South Korea views its overseas Koreans. Samuel Kim defines globalization as "a series of complex, independent yet interrelated processes of stretching, intensifying, and accelerating worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of human relations and transactions such that events, decisions and activities in one part of the world have immediate consequences for individuals, groups, and states in other parts

of the world.”²³⁰ The Kim Young Sam administration decided in early 1995 to keep the Romanized form for globalization, *seg_yehwa*, and specified one official connotation of *seg_yehwa* and the ethnic nation stating that, “globalization must be underpinned by Koreanization.”²³¹ Similar to another analyst’s call to “reconnect” with the 55 million overseas, President Kim’s statement envisions a potential strength to be found in overseas Koreans in its globalization drive.²³² More than simple economic liberalization that Westerners interpret as “globalization,” *seg_yehwa* has a far more comprehensive reach into politics, society, and culture.

North Korea and its Overseas Koreans Movement

In North Korea, Kim Il Sung’s Juche (self-reliance) ideology associates overseas Koreans under the yoke of imperialism and Japanese colonization. In North Korea’s narrative of migration history, the meaning of “push” and “pull” factors implicates “survival migration” and “forced migration” respectively, and people moved for two basic reasons: those who left their homeland to seek a means of living abroad in order to survive and those who were forced to leave because of imperialists who drove them out.²³³ In the words of Kim Il Sung:

²³⁰ Samuel Kim, “Korea’s Globalization Drive: An Assessment,” 83-84.

²³¹ Kim Young Sam, *Korea’s Quest for Reform and Globalization: Selected Speeches of President Kim Young Sam* (Seoul: The Presidential Secretariat, Republic of Korea, 1995), 273.

²³² Chun Kyōng-soo, “Policy for Five Million Overseas Koreans,” *Korea Focus* 2, no. 6 (1994): 59-65.

²³³ Yoon In-Jin, “A Comparison of the South and North Korean Policy of Overseas Koreans,” *Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin* 16, no. 1 and 2 (2007): 80-99. This is an English translation of the original Korean essay. Yoon In-Jin, “Nambukhan chaeo tongp’o chōngch’aek pigyo,” *Hanguk sahoe* 6, no. 1 (2005): 33-71.

Overseas Koreans' problems are a special part of the set of national problems as a whole, created out of the international migration of numerous people, victimized by imperialists who forcefully took national sovereignty and committed barbarian political oppression and coercive economic pillage against a weak and small nation.²³⁴

In terms of policy, North Korea took direct interest in protecting the vulnerable position of Koreans in Japan, recognizing overseas nationals as citizens of North Korea in 1954 and launching the *haeoe tongp'o undong* or Overseas Koreans' Movement by encouraging Koreans in Japan to affiliate with the North Korean state.²³⁵ On May 25, 1955, the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (k. *Ch'ongnyŏn*; j. *Sōren*) was established. In the 1960s and 1970s, North Korea attempted to expand its network of relations with overseas Koreans in North America and Europe, and toward this end, proclaimed the Nationality Act in 1963 that unilaterally granted overseas Koreans privileges and duties as nationals of North Korea.²³⁶ As part of their campaign for overseas Koreans citizens, North Korea initiated organizations and held pan-national rallies. One of the most important overseas organizations is the Korean Congress for Democracy and Reunification, established in Tokyo 1973, a branch of which also was

²³⁴ *Widaehan suryŏng Kim Il Sung tongji ūi pulmyŏl ūi hyŏngmyŏng ōpchŏk 18: haeoe kyop'o munje ūi pitnanŭn haegyŏl* [Immortal Revolutionary Achievement of Great Leader Kim Il Sung Volume 18: Brilliant Solutions to the Problem of Overseas Koreans] (P'yongyang: Chosŏn rodongdang ch'ulp'ansa, 1996), 16.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

formed in the U.S. the following year.²³⁷ In this manner, North Korea took keen interest in its overseas Koreans as part of its national corpus much earlier than South Korea, demanding of its citizens at home and abroad to carry out their duties of maintaining the economic, political and most importantly the ideological system of North Korea and its leader Kim Il Sung.²³⁸

However, in the 1960s, the North and South began to challenge one another in its competition to win over overseas Koreans' loyalty and relations with the homeland, as South Korea established its first immigration laws of the postwar period in 1962 and as Japan and South Korea normalized relations in 1965. The South's relationship with Korean nationals in Japan changed, and those who were able to provide evidence as South Korean nationals received permanent resident status and received certain benefits of the South Korean state such as travel rights, documents, and state-sanctioned belonging. Of course, most *Ch'ongnyŏn* did not qualify since they held North Korean citizenship. In 1982, a different type of permanent residence or "exceptional permanent residence" was offered by South Korea to the rest of Koreans in Japan that did not require their need to establish South Korean nationality. This, of course, was denounced by the North who called it another example of how the South was "selling out the nation" and

²³⁷ Son Kiman, "Pukhan ūi haeoe tongp'o chŏngch'aek e kwanhan yŏngu" [A Study on North Korea's Policy toward overseas Koreans] (M.A. Thesis, Kyŏngnam University, 2001), 140, cited in Kim Ji Eun, "A Study of North Korea's Policy on Korean Diaspora" (M.A. Thesis, Korea University, 2006), 29.

²³⁸ Kim Il Sung's plans are laid out in several speeches and texts. Kim Il Sung, *Chosŏn haeoe tongp'o undong e taehayŏ* [Regarding North Korea's Overseas Koreans' Movement] (P'yŏngyang: Chosŏn rodongdang ch'ulp'ansa, 1985); *Widaehan suryŏng Kim Il Sung tongji ūi pulmyŏl ūi hyŏngmyŏng ōbchŏk 18: haeoe kyop'o munje ūi pitnanŭn haekyŏl* [Immortal Revolutionary Achievement of Great Leader Kim Il Sung Volume 18: Brilliant Solutions to the Problem of Overseas Koreans] (P'yŏngyang: Chosŏn rodongdang ch'ulp'ansa, 1997-1999); Choguksa, eds., *Suryŏngnim kwa haeoe tongp'o* [The Great Leader and Overseas Koreans] (Tokyo: Kuwŏl sŏbang, 1992). These texts were recently published, but the secondary sources do not specify when the speeches and texts were originally written.

insisted that those with North Korean citizenship maintain it.²³⁹ In fact, North Korea even “elected” seven Ch’ongnyŏn members as representatives to its National Assembly in 1969.²⁴⁰

By the 1990s, the Seoul Olympic Games of 1988 had taken place, and South Korea’s new image told the story of a fast rising economy and strongly developing state. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant that South Korea also began to normalize relations with not only socialist countries but also with its overseas communities in these regions. In order to prevent South Korea from entering into these regions and engaging with these communities of ethnic Koreans, North Korea attempted to create pro-North Korea organizations and sponsored rallies and events inviting overseas Koreans to North Korea. However, North Korea’s relations with its overseas compatriots diminished with its own flailing economy that diminished its ability to provide resources to its overseas communities, resulting in closures of embassies and consulates as well as the North Korea-focused national education facilities abroad. Furthermore, the devastating famines of the late 1990s resulted rather in ethnic Korean overseas communities working to save North Korea from impending economic downfall. To aid the North’s humanitarian crisis, ethnic Koreans abroad raised monies, sent foodstuffs, and increased business investments into North Korea.

North Korea’s inability to carry out its mission to unite North Korea with its overseas Koreans’ communities in a meaningful way has opened up an opportunity. This is what Yoon In Jin argues in his comparison of the North and South’s migration policy.

²³⁹ Yoon, “A Comparison of the South and North Korean Policy of Overseas Koreans,” 82.

²⁴⁰ Son, “Pukhan ŭi haeoe tongp’o chŏngch’aek e kwanhan yŏngu.”

With the passing of the baton to South Korea, Yoon believes it is South Korea's "responsibility" to seize upon North Korea's crisis to unite overseas Koreans beyond political fault lines and to engage in policy that will advance the common interests of both the welfare of the Korean state and the overseas Koreans' communities. As Yoon sees it, South Korea finds three main problems with North Korea's campaign to incorporate overseas Korean populations: first, it is led by the government; second, it focuses on the political and economic participation of overseas Koreans for North Korean state development; and third, it is an elitist, top-down approach. What is ironic from the perspective of a U.S. Korean's perspective is that the very indictments that South Korean scholars charge of North Korea's migration policy are identical to my own critique of South Korean migration policy.²⁴¹

IV. Conclusion

As part of a historiography presenting the history of migration history in and around the peninsula, I have attempted to delineate the contours of the field of Korean migration, *iminsa*, as that which is written and being rewritten in light of the modern Korean nationalist project of overcoming its long history of suffering. On the one hand, I have provided a historiography of Korean migration discussing how the relationship between national and migration history has influenced major approaches to writing Korean migration history. On the other hand, I have also provided an overall interpretation of movements of people in and around the peninsula since the seventh

²⁴¹ Yoon, "A Comparison of the South and North Korean Policy of Overseas Koreans," 84; Kim, "A Study of North Korea's Policy on Korean Diaspora," 31.

century until modern and contemporary times in order to show that movements in this region have historically had multi-cultural and multi-ethnic characteristics. It is my hope that such a re-interpretation of Korean migration can provide some distance away from the hegemonic formulations constituted by the history of suffering that has dominated Korean migration history.

Chapter 3

Postwar Policy toward Overseas Koreans: Globalization, Cultural Identity

Construction, and the Ideology of *Tongp'o* as “Co-Ethnics”

The policy of overseas Koreans refers to the goals, decisions, and activities of the Korean government to establish and improve relationships between overseas Koreans and their homeland. Through its policy, the government can set the definition and rights and duties of overseas Koreans, protect the rights and interests of overseas Koreans in their host countries, strengthen ties and interrelationships between overseas Koreans and the homeland, and utilize overseas Koreans for the development of the homeland. For this reason, researchers and policy makers need to take the policy of overseas Koreans very seriously.²⁴²

Three major forces guide migration policy-making in the postwar period: globalization, cultural identity construction, and the ideological motivations of *tongp'o* as fellow Korean compatriots or co-ethnics. I find that these three forces support my larger arguments concerning hegemonic or dominant narratives of homogeneity and pure-blood relations that work to support the modern project of overcoming Korea's long and arduous history of suffering wherein ethnic Koreans abroad or co-ethnics play an important role. South Korea has begun to rethink its national self-image and identity in

²⁴² Yoon In Jin, “Comparison of the South and North Korean Policy of Overseas Koreans,” presented at the International Conference on the Korean Diaspora and Strategies of Global Korean Network, Korea University, October 11, 2002. A translation of this paper was published in Korean in 2005. Yoon Injin, “Nam Pukhan chaeoe tongp'o chŏngch'aek ūi pigyo,” *Hanguk sahoe* 6, no. 1 (2005): 33-71.

the midst of recent debates over changes in policies and legal codes concerning overseas Koreans' status and various considerations of belonging as co-ethnics, especially in relation to the Overseas Koreans Act (*haeoe tongp'o pŏb*, OKA). The use of diaspora has also made its entrée into South Korean academic discourse, inculcated first and foremost to globalize the network with overseas Koreans for economic gains and to capitalize upon the expanding network by utilizing the political and cultural capital of ethnic Koreans abroad for national development. Yoon In Jin's quote from the "International Conference on the Korean Diaspora and Strategies of Global Korean Network" that begins this chapter indicates just how important co-ethnic ties to homeland are for governmental, non-governmental, academic, and business-minded audiences alike. In this context, this chapter focuses on how transformations of policy have and still are influencing ideas of cultural identity in the context of globalization and the ethnonationalist ideological drive behind the meaning of *tongp'o* as co-ethnics.

I. Postwar South Korea's Cultural Policy and Cultural Identity Construction

The strategy to expand the global network to incorporate co-ethnics is part of a longer history of postwar South Korea's cultural policy that has been instrumental for the construction of its cultural identity. Developing Korean cultural identity has been the crucible of South Korea's cultural policy since the postwar period. The regulation, cultivation, and rejuvenation of cultural identity have been sought within the experiences of Korea's colonization, division, and in the era of *segyehwa*. Haksoon Yim writes that "since the establishment of the first republic of 1948, the foremost challenge of Korean

cultural policy has been to resolve the issue of cultural identity.”²⁴³ Similarly, Yersu Kim observed in the 1970s that the construction of cultural identity provided perhaps the most significant rationale for cultural policy.²⁴⁴ According to Yim, since the late 1940s until the turn of the century, South Korea’s cultural identity was intimately tied to the understanding, defining, and implementation of culture on a policy level in three phases: as “traditional” in response to foreign imperialism, especially Japanese colonization, as anti-communist in response to the division and in context of the Cold War, and as global since the age of what Haksoon Yim calls the “open culture period” of the late 1990. Before discussing these shifts in cultural policy, what exactly does it mean to “resolve the issues of cultural identity” or to construct cultural identity in terms of cultural policy?

Cultural policy objectives are inextricably linked with issues of cultural identity, be they to incorporate the multiple European countries into one European Union, to inculcate narratives of multiculturalism or cultural diversity in countries such as the U.S. and Brazil, to establish and support cultural practices of ethnic minorities such as those in China, or to maintain ideas of cultural homogeneity and sense of tradition such as the case in Korea and Japan. The differing features and varying shifts in cultural identity depend upon each country’s unique historical precedence and experience. In postwar Korea, issues of cultural identity stem from the influx of Western culture, colonialism and Japanese attempts to distort Korean culture, division of the state into antagonistic

²⁴³ Haksoon Yim [Im Haksun], “Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8, no. 1 (2002): 37.

²⁴⁴ Yersu Kim, *Cultural Policy in the Republic of Korea*, (UNESCO, 1976), as cited in Haksoon Kim, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea,” 37.

regimes, and the effects of globalization and subsequent paradigm shifts that accompany the growth of a Korean cultural industry in the larger economy.

By cultural industry, I mean profit generated from the consumption of culture in the form of the arts, media (television, radio, print, music), technology (web2.0, online resources, gaming), design, and other audio-visual media create for an industry with economic impact and policy ramifications. I am not referring to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkeimer's "cultural industry" in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In their critique of culture, they combined the German idealist notion of "culture," following Herder, and the Marxist economic concepts of commodification, commodity exchange, worker alienation, and capitalist concentration of "industry" to draw upon the false dichotomy between ideology and capitalism. Their idea of cultural industry served to shift attention away from what culture was to cultural forms, and from the cultural product itself to the relationship between the cultural producers and consumers.²⁴⁵

Prior to the *segzehwa* era, cultural policies overall supported an anti-Japanese, anti-North Korea (thereby anti-communist), and anti-West stance. Yim asserts that South Korea was impacted negatively as a result of the inflow of Western culture such as commercialism, materialism, violence and sexuality that was in opposition to what she depicts as a Korean traditional culture based upon ethical morality, self-cultivation, and the spiritual life.²⁴⁶ Moreover, the fear that Korean traditions would be lost to foreign

²⁴⁵ Max Horkeimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1944), pp. 120-168. See also, Nicholas Garnham, "From Cultural to Creative Industries: An Analysis of the Implications of the "Creative Industries" Approach to Arts and Media Policy making in the United Kingdom," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 11, no. 1 (2005): 17, (http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/692631_770849120_713728697.pdf, accessed on 12 August 2008).

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

influence leading to moral decay and cultural homogenization motivated the government to regulate what was deemed “sound” and “unsound” culture.²⁴⁷ The paradigmatic shift of *segyehwa* or globalization created a watershed in terms of cultural policy in South Korea. In this context, the cultural policies of the first four postwar administrations under Syngman Rhee (First Republic 1948-1960), Park Chunghee (Third and Fourth Republic 1961-1979), Chun Doo Hwan (Fifth Republic 1981-1988), and Roh Tae Woo (Sixth Republic 1988-1993) are qualitatively different from the civilian administrations of Kim Young Sam (Kim Yöngsam 1993-1998) and Kim Dae Jung’s (1998-2003). Under Rhee, Park, Chun and Roh’s administrations, cultural policy supported the “sound” culture of folk arts and traditional cultural forms as well as contemporary and high-brow art. I am using the term “high-brow” or “high art” as a descriptive category in this section according to how the government classified the cultural sectors of society. While Rhee upheld the importance of national culture for state development, Park was the first to institute in 1973 the “first five-year master plan for cultural development” from 1974-1979. During this period, 70% of the total public expenditure on the cultural sector was distributed into folk arts and traditional culture.²⁴⁸ Chun was better able to fund the contemporary arts to make culture more accessible to the people in his two plans for cultural policy including “the new plan for cultural development” in 1981 and “the cultural plan in the six five-year plan for economic and social development” in 1986. The main objectives of Chun’s cultural policy were: establishing cultural identity, promoting the excellence of the arts, improving cultural welfare, promoting regional

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 43-44.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 40.

culture, and expanding cultural exchange with other countries (Ministry of Information and Culture, 1981, 1986).²⁴⁹ Roh's catchphrase for his "ten year master plan for cultural development" was "culture for all people" (*taejung ūi munhwa*).²⁵⁰ The goals of Roh's cultural policies were the same as Chun's except that in relation to previous governments, Roh stressed for the first time the need to promote international exchange and cultural policy for reunification between North and South Korea.²⁵¹

One consequence of this difference resulted in the rapprochement with communist states. The Roh Tae Woo administration's Declaration of 7 July 1988 signaled the *Nordpolitik* that opened the borders and increased contact between South Korea and Korean emigrants in China, the former Soviet Union, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and others.²⁵² Prior to Roh's Declaration, the over 300 Chinese Koreans who were allowed entry back to South Korea came via third-state countries such as Hong Kong. They were issued temporary travel certificates, not visas on their Chinese passports. Following the shift in policy in 1988, the number of Chinese Koreans increased twenty-fold from 1,660 in 1988 to 36,135 in 1991.²⁵³

Some of these returnees were invited by the South Korean state since they were either former independence activists or their descendants, and this group was generally treated as Korean nationals.²⁵⁴ At this time, the South Korean government issued a

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 40-41.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 41.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Chulwoo Lee, "'Us' and 'Them' in Korean Law: the Creation, Accommodation, and Exclusion of Outsiders in South Korea," in *East Asian Law: Universal Norms and Local Cultures*, ed. Arthur Rosett, Lucie Cheng, and Margaret Y.K. Woo (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 107-108.

²⁵³ Ibid., 108.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

“national adjudication” (*kukchŏk panjŏng*) procedure to provide the invited returnees “permanent resident returnees” (*yŏngju kwigukcha*) status. Eventually, the government also extended this “permanent resident returnee” status to other categories of Chinese Koreans, namely lineal ancestors or descendants in South Korea, Chinese Korean women married to Korean farmers, and some fifty people who had entered Korea between 1985 and 1991 to meet their families and had remained. Those who were not invited and came through other unofficial channels were not accommodated as ethnic Korean compatriots but were rather treated as aliens. The increasing number of the “alien” returnees in the late 1980s left open the definition of nationality of overseas Koreans, reflecting the ambivalence of the South Korean state regarding the question of how to understand co-ethnics who left the country before the Republic of Korea was established in 1948. The growing presence of Korean Chinese in South Korea, then, marks a beginning point that sparked the larger debates surrounding the OKA.

If the four postwar administrations’ cultural policy regulated concerns over “sound” and “unsound” cultural content, Kim Young Sam’s *segzehwa* policies and Kim Dae Jung’s “sunshine” policy were qualitatively different. Stringent regulations were replaced with a more open, creative, and global outlook upon culture and the industries of Korean cultural production. Kim and Kim’s cultural policies shifted support from traditional forms and high art to popular culture and the cultural practices of everyday or daily life of the people, encouraging individual creativity and self-identity construction in order to improve the quality of their lives. Kim Young Sam’s slogan “Creation of the New Korea” (*sae Hanguk ũi ch’angjak*) signaled a new era inculcating the creativity of

the people, regional culture, cultural industries and cultural tourism, unification, and most distinctly, the globalization of Korean culture. His 1993 “new five-year plan for promoting cultural development,” 1996 “master plan for cultural welfare,” and 1997 “cultural vision 2000” promoted these objectives.²⁵⁵ The development of regional cultural industry was one reason why Kwangju became the site of South Korea’s first biennial in 1995. Also in 1995, the South Korean government established the Cultural Industry Bureau within the Ministry of Culture and Sports. In another example, after South Korea’s cinema opened its market to Hollywood’s direct distribution in 1988 under pressure from the U.S. to liberalize media and audio-visual sectors. In late 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. attempted to develop a market-led foreign communications policy by incorporating the cultural industries into the framework of the free trade negotiations under Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT). In 1994, the WTO meeting included the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the first multilateral trade agreement covering services as opposed to goods and the central instrument bringing media and cultural flows under the influence of free trade disciplines. The free trade platform generally imposed general obligations not to discriminate against foreign suppliers, to minimize domestic regulation, and to avoid the “trade-distortive” effects of subsidies.²⁵⁶ As a result, the local Korean cinema market tanked in the early 1990s.

²⁵⁵ Haksoon Yim, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea,” 41.

²⁵⁶ Des Freedman, “Cultural Policy-making in the Free Trade Era: an Evaluation of the Impact of Current World Trade Organization Negotiations on Audio-visual Industries,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 9, no. 3 (2003): 286, 289, (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1028663032000161704>, accessed on 12 August 2008).

In December 1995, a new Motion Picture Promotion Law introduced the Film Promotion Fund to facilitate the financing of film production and eased many rules and regulations governing film exports and co-production with foreign companies.²⁵⁷ The box-office hit *Jurassic Park* ironically demonstrated to the South Korean government the mutual interest between the art, in this case film, and commerce. The Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology submitted a report to Kim Young Sam highlighting the fact that the revenue from *Jurassic Park* was equal to the foreign sale of 1.5 million Hyundai cars and encouraged the government to incorporate media production as a national industry.²⁵⁸

Kim Dae Jung's cultural policy reinforced the importance of cultural identity that his predecessors established. In comparison to all previous governments, Kim's four comprehensive plans of cultural policy including the 1998 "plan for cultural policy of the new government," the 1999 "five-year plan for the development of cultural industries," the 2000 "vision 21 for cultural industries," and the 2001 "vision 21 for cultural industries in a digital society" reinforced the need for cultural industries in a digital society and for cooperation and exchange with North Korea.²⁵⁹ In 2001, his administration designated "cultural technology" as one of the six key technologies that would drive Korea's economy into the twenty-first century. As part of its commitment, the government established the Korea Culture and Content Agency in 2001 under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with an annual budget of \$90 million during its first

²⁵⁷ Kim Dongho, *Hanguk yŏnghwa chŏngch'aeksa* [History of Korean Film Policy] (Seoul: Nanam, 2005), cited in Shim, "Globalization and Cinema Regionalization in East Asia," 243.

²⁵⁸ Shim Doobo, "Globalization and Cinema Regionalization in East Asia," *Korea Journal* Winter (2006): 242-243.

²⁵⁹ Haksoon Yim, "Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea," 41.

year alone.²⁶⁰ Moreover, his “sunshine” policy towards North Korea not only developed proactive policies for reunification but invested money into these plans in order to realize the goal of warming relations between the North and South. Starting with Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung, the political economy of creative societies and the growth of South Korea’s cultural industries in the age of globalization not only opened up trade barriers but also began to recognize the economic value of the cultural industries as key to stimulate national growth and pride and to globalize its image.²⁶¹

Recent academic and political debates have ensued regarding the turn from cultural to creative industry or societies. As Nicholas Garnham has noted about the U.K. context, the change in labels is not a neutral one, but one that followed the change from state regulation to market-driven conditions across a whole range of public provisions in the era of free trade. In the South Korean case, while this shift in moniker from *munhwa saengsan* (cultural industry) to *ch’angjak sahoe* (creative societies) has not become a discursively recognizable practice, one may underscore that the shift from state to market in terms of cultural policy and cultural production has not wholly disregarded the state as can be evidenced in the following changes resulting from South Korea’s version of *segzehwa*.²⁶²

South Korea’s culture industry accounted for 2.5% of the gross domestic product in 2006.²⁶³ Since Korea’s first art auction was inaugurated in 1998 and until 2007, the

²⁶⁰ Shim, “Globalization and Cinema Regionalization in East Asia,” 246.

²⁶¹ Haksoon Yim, “Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea,” 46.

²⁶² Nicholas Garnham, “From Cultural to Creative Industries,” 16.

²⁶³ This rate is lower compared to other OECD member states such as Britain’s 7.6%, Japan’s 5.9% and U.S.’s 5.8%. Lee Hyo-sik, “Culture Industry Output Takes 2.5% GDP,” *Korea Times*, (<http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www.news/inclue/print/asp?newsIdx...>, accessed on 13 January 2009).

value of artworks by contemporary Korean artists has risen higher than blue-chip stocks such as those of Samsung Electronics.²⁶⁴ At its peak, Korea's largest art auction house, Seoul Auction sold Park Soo-Keun's [Pak Sugŭn] (1914-1965) painting "A Wash Place" to an unidentified bidder for a record 4.5 billion wŏn (\$3.6 million) in May 2007. The National Assembly approved in early 2009 a 20% capital gains tax on works by dead artists costing over 60 billion wŏn (\$48.24 million). In one example, the former head of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Kim Yun-soo [Kim Yunsu] purchased during her six year tenure from 2002 to 2008 a 600 million wŏn (\$482,400) painting by the French artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1986) in 2005.²⁶⁵ In sum, South Korean cultural policies were utilized instrumentally in the first four postwar administrations to regulate its cultural identity, and starting in the civilian governments of Kim and Kim, to reap economic benefits.

II. Globalization: *Segyehwa* and Overseas Koreans

I have historicized in Chapter Two internationalization-cum-globalization since great periods of cultural interaction of the Tang and Silla to the modern period and mass migrations of recent times. I also highlighted the political impact of *seggyehwa* or globalization discourses in terms of both the meaning of *tongp'o* since the 1990s and the process of thaw between North and South Korea that together represented the beginnings of a deterritorialized national community among Koreans. In this section, I discuss how

²⁶⁴ "Korean Artworks More Valuable than Blue Chip Stocks," *Digital Chosunilbo* (English edition), (<http://english.chosun.com/egi-bin/printNews?id=200901120008>, accessed 12 January 2009).

²⁶⁵ Lee Eunjoo, "Tax Takes its Toll on Art World," *Joongang Daily* (January 3, 2009), (<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/print.asp>, accessed 5 January 2009).

segzehwa continues to wield wide political, socio-economic, and cultural impact on South Korean thinking concerning policy on overseas Koreans, particularly focusing on the controversy surrounding the Overseas Korean Act.

President Kim Young Sam formally outlined his plans for globalization in November 1994 following the APEC summit in Australia. At that time, South Korea signed the Sydney Declaration, and the executive branch of the South Korean government underwent major reorganization to accommodate changing policies.²⁶⁶ Globalization, in general, refers to the internationalization of economic relations and open or free trade. However, South Korea's version of globalization differs on two levels. First, *segzehwa* evokes a strong national sentiment and overseas Korean communities have become an important component to a global South Korea. Second, South Korea's plan for globalization was a state-enhancing, top-down strategy that did not rely purely upon market principles but was controlled by state-capital collusion between the government and the *chaebol* or industrial conglomerates.²⁶⁷ To convey how omnipresent the term *segzehwa* is and how commonly it is (mis)used by politicians, policymakers, businessmen, academics, journalists, and the public, Kim likens the use of *segzehwa* with the term that has brazenly guided North Korea's government policy for over sixty years – *juch'e* or self-reliance.²⁶⁸

Segzehwa policies have not only predicated South Korea's inclusion into global structures of exchange such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation and

²⁶⁶ Samuel S. Kim, *Korea's Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 83.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Development (OECD) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) but also effected significant changes in how South Korea views its overseas Koreans. Kim's administration decided in early 1995 to keep the romanized form for globalization, *segzehwa*, and specified one official connotation of *segzehwa* and the ethnic nation stating that "globalization must be underpinned by Koreanization."²⁶⁹ Resounding calls to reconnect with the overseas Korean communities, President Kim's statement for globalization envisioned "Koreanization" on an international scale, tapping into the potential strength to be found in overseas Koreans in its globalization drive.²⁷⁰ More than simple economic liberalization that economists interpret as globalization, *segzehwa* has had a far more comprehensive reach into politics, society, and culture.

Segzehwa represents a "deterritorialized national community among Koreans" wherein South Korea's distinct globalization strategy, approach and policies are connected as much to psycho-cultural ties between its overseas communities and the "homeland" as they are to market demands.²⁷¹ In this sense, Park emphasizes the integrative aspect of linguistic tropes of emphasizing the inclusive concept of *tongp'o* over *kyop'o*. Indeed, sociologists discuss a recent trend to bring about new forms of nation-building through the political or legal incorporation of diasporic populations.²⁷² The shift in public opinions from pitiful to vanguard overseas Koreans never took its focus off of the nation: the modern nation-state building of the nineteenth and twentieth

²⁶⁹ Kim Young Sam, *Korea's Quest for Reform and Globalization: Selected Speeches of President Kim Young Sam* (Seoul: The Presidential Secretariat, The Republic of Korea, 1995), 273.

²⁷⁰ Kyöngsoo Chun, "Policy for Five Million Overseas Koreans," *Korea Focus* 2. no. 6 (1994): 59-65.

²⁷¹ Hyung-ok Park, "*Segzehwa*," 3.

²⁷² Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc, eds., *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach, 1994).

century and contemporary globalization projects both partook in the internationalizing of Korea that remained at the same time committed to maintaining a self-same nation and to the cultural essence of a homogeneous people.

In other words, nationalism and globalization are not contradictory concepts for South Korea. Gi-Wook Shin, for example, argues that Korea's globalization drive has been, from its start, embedded within a clear nationalistic agenda. He examines the processes of nationalist appropriation of globalization and the subsequent intensification of ethnic identity in reaction to globalization. Rather than what some proponents of globalization argue – that global forces supersede nations and nationalism – Shin recognizes the close connection between globalization and nationalism.²⁷³ That is to say, the Korean nation-state is substantiated by an ethnic nationalism wherein blood (*hyŏlt'ong*) functions as a common denominator in constituting a collective sense of oneness.²⁷⁴ Hyung Il Pai and Tim Tangherlini assert that the Korean public's belief in the homogeneity of Korean people leaves very little space for alternative narratives outside of the Tangun national narrative as the originary story that can be found in *all* scholarship about Korea.²⁷⁵

A special volume of the *International Journal of Korean Studies* deals precisely with questions of belonging from a policy perspective. Former senior secretary for national security and foreign policy, Chong-Wook Chung [Chŏng Chŏnguk] suggested

²⁷³ Gi-Wook Shin, "The Paradox of Korean Globalization," Working Paper published by APARC, 1993 <http://ksp.stanford.edu/publications/20125/> (Accessed May 8, 2004).

²⁷⁴ Gi-Wook Shin, James Freda, and Gihong Yi, "The Politics of Korean Nationalism in Divided Korea," *Nations and Nationalism* 5(4): 465-484.

²⁷⁵ Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini, eds., *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1998), 4, italics mine.

one coexistence model for South Koreans overseas with his call for the “global community of Overseas Koreans.” While serving as the senior secretary for national security and foreign policy for South Korean President Kim Young Sam in 1993 and 1994, Chung was in charge of overseas Koreans’ policy. He has also served as the Korean ambassador to China previously.²⁷⁶ In Kim Young Sam’s 1992 presidential campaign, an independent office for overseas Koreans was promised, but instead of an independent office, an office was set up within the presidential secretariat (Blue House) to deal with overseas Koreans affairs – entitled Office of Overseas Koreans. This office was set up in addition to the other four offices of foreign affairs, national defense, international security, and unification which were all under Chung’s jurisdiction. Another attempt in 1995 was the Plan for the Invigoration of Overseas Korean Communities (*Chaeoe tongp’o sahoe hwalsŏnghwa jiwŏn pang’an*), designed under government auspices to establish policies vis-à-vis overseas Koreans in order to strengthen ties, with particular focus placed upon easing visa requirements and encouraging economic activities for those entering South Korea.²⁷⁷ As Chung Chungwook has clearly stated, “it is ethnicity, not citizenship, that qualifies one to be an overseas Korean.”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Chong-Wook Chung, “The Global Community of Overseas Koreans.”

²⁷⁷ Lee Chulwoo?, 2007, 100.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

Definition of South Korean Nationality

During the 1990s when the reorganization of offices and reevaluation of Koreanness was taking place, the government articulated two operating definitions of overseas Koreans. First, overseas Koreans are *chaeye kungmin*, literally translated as overseas Korean nationals, or those who retain Korean citizenship but reside overseas on a permanent basis. As legal citizens of the Republic of Korea, they are subject to the same legal rights that the Korean constitution provides for each of its citizens. A second group of overseas Koreans constitute those who reside in foreign countries permanently and have foreign citizenship, *oeguk kukchŏk tongp'o*. While no legal distinction can be made, there is a qualitative difference between the two groups. Overseas Korean nationals are those who for the most part have homes, families, and “roots” in South Korea but are residing or have resided abroad on a short-term basis. The term *kyomin*, overseas citizens, is synonymous with the concept of *chaeye kungmin*. On the other hand, Koreans of foreign nationality are those who have permanent resident or citizenship in a foreign state with a view toward settlement there. They may still retain Korean citizenship, but have been removed from the Korean Resident Register System.²⁷⁹

Contrary to postwar North Korea’s pro-active policy to incorporate Koreans abroad into their policy, the South Korean government did not articulate a clear policy regarding its overseas Koreans until the late 1980s because of the country’s first priority to develop and rebuild its economy. The 1950s was a period of rehabilitation and recovery from war. South Korea did establish a Nationality Act in 1948 in the First

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 105.

Republic which stipulated that if a person voluntarily acquires the nationality of another state, his/her Korean nationality shall terminate. Such legal definitions have recently been revised.

During Park Chung Hee's Third Republic (1963-1972), Park created an overseas emigration law in order to deal with South Korea's overpopulation, and vicarious labor surplus problems. The first significant group of post-war Korean labor force emigrated to Latin American agricultural farms and German coals mines and hospitals, but these policies prove the point that the government at that time was mainly concerned with economic development. One of the greatest criticisms of Park's overseas Koreans program came from the North. They charged that Park's policies were "selling its people" for profit, short-sighted, and immoral, citing that South Korea received economic compensation for sending qualified workers to foreign countries at this time. From the early 1960s to the late 1970s, 7,936 coalminers and 10,032 nurses from Korea arrived in West Germany. Their migration to Germany benefitted South Korea economically in three ways: accumulation of foreign currency through their remittance of *deutsche* mark to South Korea before the opening of domestic financial markets, improvement of domestic unemployment situation, and Germany's loan payment of 150 million DM to South Korea guaranteed by West Germany in exchange for Korean miners and nurses, providing relief to Germany's labor shortage problems.²⁸⁰ Park's migration policies, then,

²⁸⁰ Park Chan-Kyong [Pak Ch'angyöng], "Koreans Who Went to Germany," in *Togil ro kan saram düil: p'adok kwangbu wa kanhosa düil e kwanhan kirok* [Koreans Who Went to Germany: Records of Miners and Nurses Sent to Germany] (Seoul: Nunbit, 2003), 75. See also Kim Yöngjin, ed., "Togil iju üi kyöngjejök paegyöng [Economic Background of Migrations to Germany]," in *Yuröp Haninsa: P'ürangsü wa Togil üil chungsim uro* [History of Koreans in Europe: Focus on France and Europe] (Seoul: Tahae, 2003), 441-450.

set the course of national reconstruction of the nation based upon economic development and not upon cultural or emotional ties with its *tongp'o* as co-ethnics.

By the late 1970s and 1980s, the government attempted to establish ties and reconnect with ethnic Koreans abroad as a reaction to and fear of the North's by then decades-old official overseas Korean policy that maintained its affiliations with its *tongp'o*. North Korea maintained ties after the division of country, especially with the *Sōren* Japanese residents and other compatriots from socialist countries. However, the question still remains for South Korea: what is the status of those who had emigrated to other countries before the above rules came into force, or before the birth of the Republic of Korea on 15 August 1948? Moreover, should a “voluntary test” even be considered a condition to prove one's nationality considering the circumstances of those who left before 1948?²⁸¹

The 1988 Olympics was a watershed for South Korea on several fronts. In terms of its diaspora, it was a time when the government seriously began to formulate a means to re-connecting with its diaspora. Thawing of Cold War tensions, re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1990 and China, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan in 1992, and the establishment of the first civilian government in 1993 helped integrate overseas Koreans communities as a salient feature of Korea's national plans. In 1996, a high-level policy-making body was set up with the Prime Minister Kim Jong-Pil serving as chair. The following year in 1997, the Overseas Koreans Foundation [OKF]

²⁸¹ Lee Chulwoo [Yi Ch'ōlwu], Jeong Inseop [Chōng Insōp], No Yeongdon [No Yōngdon], Seok Donghyeon [Sōk Tonghyōn], and others have and continue to publish legal arguments concerning the definition of nationality. Chulwoo Lee, “‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in Korean Law,” 106-137.

was established, and the concept of diaspora and South Korea's overseas communities finally started to matter for the state in terms of cultural policy. However, in its initial phase and in terms of funding the mandate, few resources were invested. Chung cites, for example, that in 2000, there were only thirty-five personnel and its annual budget was less than fourteen million won. Approximately eight million *wŏn* supported various overseas Koreans activities; seven million went to Japan, and the W830,000 remaining got budgeted everywhere else.²⁸²

Lee Chulwoo explains that in the aftermath of the Kim Young Sam administration's decision to amend the Nationality Act so as *not* to allow dual nationality for overseas Koreans, the government tried to appease overseas Koreans anger by improving their visa status, relaxing foreign exchange and property rights restrictions, as well as by establishing the OKF to encourage overseas Koreans in cultural and educational spheres.²⁸³ The dual nationality law was ruled out recently by the South Korean parliament because of issues regarding the rights of those living on the land.²⁸⁴ However, in February 2009, parliament granted all Korean citizens aged 19 or older, almost 2.4 million Korean nationals including embassy and legation officials, resident company workers abroad, students and other short-term visitors, voting rights in presidential and parliamentary elections starting in 2012. This bill also includes the

²⁸² Chung, "The Global Community of Overseas Koreans," 85.

²⁸³ See Kim Pyŏngch'ŏn, "Kim Young Sam chŏngbu ũi chaeoe tongp'o chŏngch'aek [The Overseas Koreans Policy of the Kim Young Sam Government]," *Chaeoe Hanin yŏngu* [Studies of Koreans Abroad] 8 (1999): 317-358.

²⁸⁴ Yi Chonghun, "Chaeoe tongp'o chŏngch'aek ũi kwaje wa chaeoe tongp'o kibonbŏp ũi chejŏng munje [Tasks of Overseas Koreans Policy and the Problem of Making the Basic Law for Overseas Koreans]," *Ipbŏp chosa yŏngu* [Legislation Studies] 249 (1998): 146-172, as cited in Lee Chulwoo, "'Us' and 'Them' in Korean Law," 109.

rights of those ethnic Korean who hold permanent residency and long-term visas in their residing countries, as well as those foreigners who become naturalized Korean citizens.²⁸⁵

Overseas Koreans Act

The 1990s was an era of changing attitudes and policy regarding South Korea and its *chaeye tongp'o*, and the decade culminated with the controversial Act on Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans (Overseas Korean Act or OKA). Lee Chulwoo states that the OKA was enacted in response to overseas Koreans' grievances against the South Korean government for their apparent lack of interest and care for the communities abroad, particularly in response to such charges by those in North America after the 1992 Los Angeles Disturbance.²⁸⁶ Signed into law on 3 December 1999, this legal provision was a formidable attempt by the South Korean government to build new communities of affiliation with its diasporic population. It also represented another important condition of *segye-hwa* on a policy level. The controversy surrounding this law stemmed from the OKA's discriminatory stance: OKA provides the benefits and rights to overseas Koreans whose Korean heritage had to be validated either with their own or their parents' (current or previous) ROK citizenship by providing a copy of the *hojok* or family registry. Legally, this stipulation meant that the law only applied to those who left Korea after

²⁸⁵ "Overseas Koreans to be Granted Voting Rights," *Korea Newsreview*, 29, no. 8 (1998). Ahn Hyorim, "Momentum Builds for Overseas Koreans' Suffrage," *The Korea Herald* (April 24, 2007), 4; Ahn Hyorim, "Voting Rights Belong to All Citizens," *The Korea Herald* (April 24, 2007), 4; "Voting Rights Granted to Overseas Koreans," KBS World, January 30, 2009, (http://rki.kbs.co.kr/English/news/news_commentary_detail.htm?No=14753, accessed on February 30, 2009).

²⁸⁶ Lee Chulwoo, "'Us' and 'Them' in Korean Law," 109.

1948, the year the Republic of Korea was formally established. In reality, this law ultimately excluded almost half of the overseas Korean population, by refusing to recognize as “overseas compatriots” the 2.4 million Koreans in China and the former Soviet Union out of the 5.6 million Korean emigrants in total at the time. Some Chinese Koreans residing in South Korea joined hands with some sixty-one NGOs in social protest against the government’s (midnight late-session) signing of this law. As a result, the Constitutional Court ruled for a revision of the OKA so as to abide by the “equality principle,” Article 11 (section 1) of the Korean Constitution. Some of these “supplementary measures” included the relaxation of entry qualifications and the expansion in scope of eligibility to apply for Korean nationality.²⁸⁷ The revisions were made official when the National Assembly passed the revised version of the OKA on 9 February 2004.

To resolve these problems, nationalist critics called for the extension of the Act to cover all ethnic groups, while universal critics called for the elimination of OKA altogether. Nationalist critics such as No Yōngdon argue that South Korea at its core has a strong ancestral or ethnic foundation, and this should be reflected in how it differentiates its kin-foreigners, *chaeye kungmin*, or ethnic Koreans with foreign nationalities, *oeguk kukchōk simin*, from other foreign residents.²⁸⁸ Scholars and policymakers in this camp asserted that a country such as South Korea wherein historical circumstances of colonization and the Cold War displaced their people to China, Japan,

²⁸⁷ Lee Chulwoo, “‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in Korean Law,” 111. See also Jung-Sun Park and Paul Y. Chang, “Contention in the Formation of National and Ethnic Identities in Global Context: The Case of the Overseas Korean Act,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 1-27.

²⁸⁸ No Yōngdon, “Chaejung Hanin ūi kukchōk e kwanhan yōngu [A Study of the Nationality of Koreans in China],” *Kukchebōphakhoe nonchong* [Korean Journal of International Law] 44, no. 2 (1999), 87-88.

and the CIS, with many forced to leave or not allowed to return after Korea's independence, such an ethnicity-based law is not only legitimate but owed to those ethnic Koreans abroad should they choose to return to their kin-state. Such arguments illustrate how hegemonic narratives enter into politics and policy-making of the state. That is to say, the foci on homogeneity and pure-blood relations justify the logic behind ethnonationalist policies concerning its diasporic populations.

In opposition to these perspectives, universal critics such as Chŏng Insŏp and Lee Chulwoo find it pertinent to address issues and needs beyond immediate cases concerning those who voluntarily emigrated abroad or were unable to repatriate. In this camp, they believe the OKA should emphasize improving conditions and relations with second- and third-generation overseas Koreans through education of Korean culture and creating a sense of Korean diasporic community around the world.²⁸⁹ Should the focus still be on former first generation citizens, at most, they should have the privileges of entry and exit to Korea through lenient visa requirements, similar to countries such as Germany and Israel, yet still be limited on property, voting, working and length of stay, similar to the laws that apply to any other foreigner. Some further argue that the OKA does not particularly contain more rights or leniency toward co-ethnics than those that were already available through the Aliens Land Act of 1998 that allows property ownership in

²⁸⁹ Chŏng Insŏp, "Uri kukchŏkbŏp sang ch'oech'o kungmin hwakchŏng kijun e kwanhan kŏmt'o [A Review of the Initial Criteria for Defining Korean Nationals Under Korean Nationality Law]," *Kukchebŏphakhoe nonchong* 43, no. 2 (1998), 243-246; "Chaeoe tongp'o ūi ch'uribguk kwa pŏpchŏk chiwi e kwanhan pŏmnyul ūi naeyong kwa munjechŏm [The Content and problems of the Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans], *Sŏul kukjebŏp yŏngu* [Seoul International Law Journal] 6, no. 2 (1999), 315-316, as cited in Lee Chulwoo, "'Us' and 'Them' in Korean Law," 107.

South Korea and benefits of the F-4 visa or 2002 Domicile Registration Act that permitted access to large financial transactions and the national health insurance program.

In a sociological study of the debates surrounding the OKA, Park and Chang argue that while the OKA utilizes legal categories to define Korean identity through ethnic Korean peoples' formal connection to the South Korean nation-state, it also entails the construction of a Korean identity based on "primordial" ethnic ties that are always already subject to political manipulation and social negotiations.²⁹⁰ Their fascinating case study of Korean Chinese or *Chosŏnjok* workers in Korea reveals a dialectic between the laws and those subjected to the laws. That is to say, diasporic communities, civic organizations, and NGOs appropriate the presumably unquestionable primordial identity as much as the state utilizes notions and definitions of ethnic identity instrumentally, each side working for its own economic gain and socio-political benefit.

Globalizing forces of a market economy have required the Korean state to mobilize two economic niches of its overseas community: the Korean Americans with English-proficiency as transnational business representatives and Chinese Korean laborers with Korean proficiency to fill the semi- and unskilled fields of employment that South Koreans no longer desire.²⁹¹ Korean Americans have long been lobbying the Korean government for laws to secure their property (and other economic) rights in South Korea. Yet, of all the excluded groups from the OKA, the Korean Chinese have the most vested interests in South Korea's economy. It is not by accident that Korean residents in Japan and Korean Russians have been far less involved in the OKA debates. Park and

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 254.

Chang argue that the Korean Chinese attempt to separate themselves both from the Chinese and South Korean states in order to construct a new identity as *Chosŏnjok* based on territorial rights and primordial ties is one attempt at new identity affiliation from below, formed by dire economic needs as well as personal identity claims.²⁹² Their arguments highlight how globalization and diaspora combine to obfuscate the ethnonationalistic goal of privileging fellow ethnic Koreans who, in turn, may utilize the OKA for their own benefit that lies outside of ethnic Korean ties to the homeland.

III. *Tongp'o* as Co-Ethnics and the Ethnonationalist Imperative

In addition to the legislation and policy-making in the context of *segzehwa* and the neoliberal logic of cultural identity construction, migration policy-making in postwar Korea also reflect attitude changes toward its diaspora in terms of the moral and emotional bonds between *tongp'o* as co-ethnics.

The Sixth Annual Korean Diaspora Forum was held at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (*Oegugŏ taehakkyo*) on June 13, 2005. The forum served as a launch party for the recently published book *Koryŏin: Past and Present* (Koryŏin: Kwagŏ wa Hyŏnjae) by Lim Young-Sam [Im Yongsam]. By *Koryŏin*, Lim is referring specifically to Korean Russians and ethnic Koreans in the C.I.S. The author invited me to this forum when I first met him at a closed-session presentation of the findings of his research to the Ministry of Trade and Culture. He and his co-author were reporting back to the Ministry for their support of field research. The publication itself was funded by Lim Young-Sam

²⁹² Ibid.

[Im Yöngsam], an indication of the large personal investment Im feels toward informing the Korean people of the *Koryöin*'s past suffering and current status. One of the oldest diasporic sites (1865-2005), *Koryöin* were commemorating 140 years of migrations to Russia and the CIS in 2005. In my meetings with Professor Kim, I recognize a deep commitment toward the history of the *Koryöin*. However, on top of these feelings, the “investigation to fact-find” (*silje chosa*) inundated the duration of his talk and the book. Equally explicit in his arguments was the moral and national responsibility of the Korean state to recuperate these lost Koreans' identity.

Lim found that Korea represents the idea of a “historical homeland” (*yöksajök choguk*), and not merely “homeland” (*choguk*) for the more than 750,000 *Koryöin*.²⁹³ This book advertises itself as a fact-finding study from five years of research in the region, documenting the lived realities and oral histories of these people.²⁹⁴ He states that “when these people state proudly that they are ethnic Koreans, he (Lim) feels a sense of pride.” Lim then suggests that it is high time for some of the people from these areas who have “succeeded” to come visit Korea, and that he himself has started this movement by sponsoring one of the subjects he interviewed out of his own pocket.²⁹⁵ The call for re-connection was broached after a lengthy discussion concerning the amount of land *Koryöin* occupy and how expansive their resources may be for a future de-territorialized Korea. This is just one example of the many centennial offerings and other anniversaries marking the history of Koreans abroad. If not the history of migration, in

²⁹³ Presentation at Ministry of Trade and Culture, Seoul, June 13, 2005.

²⁹⁴ Lim helped establish a homepage with his research findings at: <http://www.koryosaram.co.kr>

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

what other ways would these events be considered significant repercussions of *segvehwa*?

Amongst other meetings I attended during my research abroad, the symposiums, conference, and festivals organized by the Korean International Network were most memorable for several reasons. First, the founder and director (*samu ch'ongjang*), Pae Tökho, is a former student activist and young leader fighting for uniform justice and recognition for those forgotten communities of Koreans abroad. KIN's overall mission is a program of incorporating the ethnic Korean communities within the larger global village (*chiguch'on*), bearing pressure first and foremost on the South Korean government to take responsibility for those overseas Koreans who were not accounted for in the recent legal changes of OKA. Their most recent campaign is lobbying the Korean parliament on behalf of a small village Uturo in Osaka, Japan. They request that the government provide compensation or a reparation program for this group of displaced victims in the Kansai region. Overall, KIN's campaigns often highlight the most destitute cases of overseas Koreans.

Second, KIN's grassroots activities allow for creative endeavors to the mission involved in resolving problematic issues concerning overseas Koreans. In the conference that took place at the Korean parliament on May 11, 2005, for example, KIN sponsored an International Symposium and the "Arirang Cultural Festival for the Development and Repatriation (*kwihyang*) of Chosŏnjok Society in the era of Northeast Asia." I attended the international symposium and of the speakers, the economist Il Nam Kim spoke about the laboring practices of Chosŏnjok workers in South Korea. The most important

characteristic of the Chosŏkjok in South Korea are to cultivate Chosŏnjok social leaders and exemplary subjects, to educate South Koreans about Chosŏnjok-owned land resources in China; and with the money these Chosŏnjok earn in South Korea, to encourage their off spring to be educated abroad, most likely in South Korea, so that these children can become our future resources (*mirae ūi chasan*). It is imperative that a study of cultural production and Korean diasporic artists combine the variables of policy-driven work carried out by organizations such as RIKA, KIN, OKF that are further used to construct identities, needs, and goals for global communities of Koreans abroad, international networks working in collaboration with the state toward ethnic solidarity. In so doing, there is the possibility of extending, however tenuous, a bridge between the major areas of ethnic Koreans abroad to the peninsula and vice versa.

IV. Conclusion

The goals of *segyehwa*, cultural policy in postwar South Korean identity construction, the ideology of *tongp'o* as co-ethnics, and definition of nationality in postwar policy on overseas Koreans uphold the unbroken ties between Koreans in diaspora and Koreans in the homeland as ethnically bound by their shared sense of history, blood relations, kinship ties, and experience of displacement and suffering or success and eminent status as exemplary Koreans abroad. However tenuous these ties may be for those who are residing abroad in diaspora, the Korean state, various nongovernmental groups, civic organizations, and even commercial enterprises have been

active in attempting to align Korea's policy, business, and ideology on overseas Koreans with those communities residing abroad.

In some cases, such as with the construction of a "German Village," various forces came together successfully to create not only a "home from home" for those returning émigrés from Germany but also a tourist attraction for Korean people and a social issue for South Korean director Sung-Hyung Cho to make a documentary about this village in Namhae County.²⁹⁶ There have been reports that two American Towns are under construction, one in Namhae and the other in Muan county, but the South Korean government is intending on stipulating U.S. Koreans give up their U.S. citizenship and become South Korean citizens in order to retire to this village.²⁹⁷ This is precisely an example of a contact zone wherein the South Korean state, commercial enterprise (in this case housing contracts), local government, tourism bureaus, overseas Koreans, and cultural production must negotiate terms of its existence, illustrating how enmeshed policy and ideology are to the survival and reinforcement of the nation-state and its master narrative.

²⁹⁶ This film debuts in fall of 2009. Please see: <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/festival/film-review-home-from-home-1003942698.story>; For a short clip of *Home from Home*, <http://imdb.com/name/nm1776064>

²⁹⁷ Please see, <http://www.eng.muan.go.kr>; and <http://briandeutsch.blogspot.com/2008/07/muans-american-town.html>

Part II: Prologue

Art History and the Nation

The master narrative conditions the writing of Korean history and defines the parameters within which to examine the history in and around the peninsula, and the history of art and artists does not lie outside of the master narrative. Rather, the understanding of modern Korean art remains contingent upon this history. The existing literature makes an *a posteriori* claim that the period of modern art is closely associated with the social and political events of the country; therefore, the periodization of modern Korean art shadows the modern history of Korea.

Art historian and former curator of Korea's National Museum of Contemporary Art, Jae-Ryung Roe, locates her survey of modern Korean art history in the open ports period (1876-1905) as the time when Korea gradually became exposed to the international art community, and 1910 – 1965 as the time when modern art developed significantly in Korea. By starting with this contentious and unstable period, her survey locates the beginning of modern Korean art history with the struggles of Korean socio-political history. In particular, she develops those strains between *tonghyanghwa* (Eastern-style painting) and *sŏhyanghwa* (Western-style painting) artists. *Tongyanghwa* refers to landscape and portrait paintings of the late Chosŏn period, whereas *Sŏyanghwa*

included painting realized with new materials and different techniques and aesthetics.²⁹⁸ During the colonial period, the antagonism between *tonghyanghwa* and *sōhyanghwa* clearly became an influential cultural debate.²⁹⁹ In the post-civil war period, this strain eventually created its own antecedents: the conservative “rightists” artists who looked to Western Europe and the U.S. as models for liberated Korea and the “leftists” artists who were more influenced by the Soviet Union.

Contrary to Roe’s locating the late nineteenth to 1965 as the period of modern Korean art, art historian Youngna Kim demarcates 1910 as the beginning of modern art. Kim configures 1910-1945 as the modern period, and 1945 as the beginning of contemporary art in Korea.³⁰⁰ While Kim assesses that it was during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when modern art filtered to Korea specifically by means of Korean dispatched envoys that visited China and Japan, she specifically cites 1910 as the year when a former court clerk named Ko Huidong (1889-1965) went to Tokyo to study Western oil painting.³⁰¹ For Kim, modern art is specifically a concept of Western abstract forms veering away from traditional Asian landscapes and realist representation of objects.³⁰² One must remember that some Western curators such as John Clark, privilege modern art as immanently Western. Clark states that as a category, “modern Asian art does not exist in the world and would be, in most instances, useless as a concept.

²⁹⁸ Jae-Ryung Roe (No Chaeryōng), “International Abstraction in a National Context: Abstract Painting in Korea, 1910-1965,” in *Asian Traditions/Modern Expression: Asian American Artists and Abstraction, 1945-1970*, ed. Jeffrey Wechsler (Rutgers: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1997), 42.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Youngna Kim, “Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture,” in *Modernity in Asian Art*, ed. John Clark (Broadway, NSW, Australia: Wild Peony, 1993), 153-168.

³⁰¹ *Tokyo Bijutsu Gakko Ichiran* (Bulletin of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, 1909-1910), 92. Also Lee Kyung-sung (Yi, Kyōng-sōng), *Hanguk kūndae misul yōngu* [A Study of Modern Korean Art] (Seoul: Tonghwa ch’ulp’an kongsa, 1974), 91. As noted in Kim, “Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture,” 153.

³⁰² Ibid., 154.

The term ‘modern Asian art’ will serve more as the marking of a field.”³⁰³ One of the remaining objects of this introductory period was the American painter Hubert Vos who visited Seoul during the end of his Asian tour and painted a portrait of King Kojong and a landscape of Seoul in the 1890s.³⁰⁴

I question why it is that modern art in Korea began, for Kim Youngna and others, when Ho went to study in Japan. In other words, why does the modern begin with Japanese colonization of Korea? Kim cites that other Korean painters such as Kim Kwanho (1890-?), Yi Chöngu (1899-1981), Na, Hyesök (1896-1946), and sculptor Kim Pokjin (1904-1941) went to study art in Japan during the 1910s, but there are no depictions of their studies during the first decade of colonization, nor of their social conditions and means of livelihood after graduation that may have affected some of these privileged artists who studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Art.³⁰⁵

Affiliations: Schools of Artists

The understanding of modern art in Korea depended upon not only the style or school in which one worked but also upon one’s artistic affiliations. Korean art historians narrate the history of these affiliations, their political fall-outs, dissolutions, and regroupings. I outline this history as a reference point for later discussions in the analytical chapters and in light of my methodological exercise in examining the social production of art. In so doing, I am not drawing necessarily from their factional disputes,

³⁰³ John Clark, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Broadway, NSW, Australia: Wild Peony, 1993. 1993), 11.

³⁰⁴ Kim, “Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture,” 155.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

as has been emphasized as a major reason why Koreans could not develop into an independent modern nation-state.³⁰⁶

After the country's annexation in 1905, two major art groups began to emerge, split along political lines: academic collaborationists and progressive nationalists.³⁰⁷ In large, the academic conservatives remained within formalist landscape paintings in monochromatic schemas, while the progressive group painted figures, flowers, and still life, often using decorative colors. The leaders of both camps were graduates of *Sohwa Misulwôn* (School of Painting and Calligraphy), the very first modern art school in Korea founded in 1911, and graduates such as Kim Unho (1892-1978), Yi Sangbŏm (1887-1972), No Suhyŏn (1899-1980), and Yi Yŏngu (1904-1952) later became important leaders in the art world.³⁰⁸

In the aftermath of the March First Independence Movement of 1919, the incorporation of the "Cultural Policy" proved effective in expanding the field of activities for colonial subjects. Michael Robinson examines some of the substantive elements of policy changes that affected the cultural production of artists for radio broadcasting in one example.³⁰⁹ Also around this time, an internationalist cultural movement established itself as the Korean Artists Proletariat Federation (1925-1935, hereafter KAPF). Moreover, communism became a strong social force among cultural elites, especially in

³⁰⁶ C.I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism: 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

³⁰⁷ Kim, "Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture," 158.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Michael E. Robinson, "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and Colonial Modernity in Korea, 1924-1945," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, eds. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 52-70.

the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution.³¹⁰ Though KAPF may not have endured as a wide-spread full-fledged cultural movement, it generated a larger debate about realism and social function of art.

As a result of change in cultural policy at this time, the first bona-fide annual fine arts exhibition in Korea was established in 1921. *Hyôppjôn* (Society Exhibition) was sponsored by the Society of Painting and Calligraphy.³¹¹ Following this 1922 exhibition, the Government General officially supported the founding of *Sônjôn* (Korean Exhibition), also called the Chosôn Art Exhibition. Kim simply notes that *Hyôppjôn* survived for fifteen consecutive years (1922-1936) whereas *Sônjôn* continued until 1944. Most likely, the start of Japanese occupation in Manchuria and the “total war” gave reason for the Japanese censorship board to force an end to *Hyôppjôn*’s yearly exhibition.³¹² *Sônjôn*’s public exhibition of artwork was the first of its kind, allowing Koreans to view paintings within a public space and not in the usual place such as a collector’s home or an artist’s studio. Newspapers ran articles on Western-style art and techniques featuring commentaries by journalists, writers or anonymous viewers.³¹³

Some speculate that *Sônjôn* ran as the Korean counterpart to Japan’s annual *Teiten* (Imperial Exhibition) and in direct political opposition to *Hyôppjôn*’s mission.³¹⁴ Under the guise of cultural openness, the Japanese used a divide-and-conquer tactic within the cultural arena. However, Kim’s line of reasoning demonstrates again how a master narrative can influence the cultural community and the writing of art history. The

³¹⁰ The Korean Communist party was founded in 1920.

³¹¹ Kim, “Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture,” 159.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 160.

nationalist discourse of Japanese aggression and exploitation runs colored strains within Kim Youngna's own linear account of modern art history. Her account reads seamlessly and posits an unquestioned position of Korea's history of suffering. Yet still, the debate over *Hyônjôn/Sônjôn* is on-going to this day.³¹⁵

In the 1930s, Korean artists began to participate directly in Tokyo avant-garde exhibitions such as the Second Section Exhibition (j. *Nikakai Tenrankai*, 1914), Artists' Association Exhibition (j. *Jiyu Bijutsuka Kyokai Tenrankai*, 1937), and the Independent Art Exhibition (j. *Dokuritsu Bijutsu Kyokai Tenrankai*, 1930).³¹⁶ Most of the Korean participants were students who studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. However, there were also some artists who attended more liberal, private art schools such as the Pacific School of Fine Arts (j. *Taiheiyo Bijutsu Gakko*), Cultural Arts School (j. *Bunka Gakuin*), and Imperial School of Fine Arts (j. *Teikoku Bijutsu Gakko*, later *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku*).³¹⁷ Leading abstract artists of the period, Kim Hwangi (Kim Whan-ki, 1913-1974) and Yu Yongguk (b. 1916) were two Korean artists who attended the more liberal schools. By the late 1930's and early 1940's, tighter Japanese colonial censors took hold on the peninsula, and as a result, nationalistic Korean artists studying abroad in Tokyo began to mobilize calls for Korean independence in their own fashion. They established the White Bull Association and held as many as six exhibitions in Seoul. Soon, though,

³¹⁵ "Development of Modern Art and its Problems: Debates in Art History [Kundae misul ūi chôngae wa chaengchôm: misulsa taet'oron]," *Wolgan Misul* 24 (November 1990): 110-117. Cited in Kim, "Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture," 164.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

they were forced to change names and to suspend all extra-curricular activities. In the end, they were forced to disband not long after and ultimately to suspend all activities.³¹⁸

Interim Period, the Civil War, and its Aftermath.

In the interim period (1945-1950), the country officially became divided in 1948 and entered into a state of confusion and turmoil with an impending civil war looming in the dawn. Such conditions, however, did not deter universities from founding colleges of fine arts which provided an institutional means of educating a new generation of artists. A conservative academicism (representative of figurative painting) dominated the 1950s Korean art world and became institutionalized through the *Taehan Minguk Misul Taejŏn* (Korean Art Exhibition, hereafter *Kukchŏn*), inaugurated in 1949 by the Ministry of Culture and Education.³¹⁹ *Kukchŏn* took from the practice of *Hyŏpchŏn* and *Sŏnjŏn*, eventually becoming the only major venue in which artists could show work and receive public recognition. Korean art historians posit that *Kukchŏn* was a system which policed art and provided official sanction only for “rightists” artists during the first decade of American occupation of Korea.³²⁰ In imitating the format of *Sŏnjŏn*, this exhibition was a means for the government’s intervention of and surveillance over artistic activities in the postwar period. Roe describes that *Kukchŏn* was touted as a major national event and writes about the throngs of viewers who would gather at the exhibition venue “as if on a pilgrimage.”³²¹ This institution continued its annual exhibition for almost thirty years,

³¹⁸ Ibid., 160-161.

³¹⁹ Roe, “International Abstraction in a National Context,” 44.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

finally ending in 1979 and was only interrupted during the three years of the Korean War (1950-1953).

The postwar cultural activities of progressive artists paled in comparison to the mammoth scale of conservative institutions, but nevertheless they were active. The *Sin sasil p'a* (New Realism Group) was created in 1947 by abstract painters Whanki Kim (Kim Hwangi, 1913-1974) and Young Kuk You (Yu Yöngguk, b. 1916 – 2002). After founding this group, Whanki Kim moved to Paris in the 1950s after studying in Tokyo and spent the last ten years of his life in New York.³²² Jae-Ryung Roe posits that Kim and You represent a break away from the both the academic and realist styles with their sophisticated level of abstraction, subject matter, and training in Japan. Could the idea of these two artists who were trained in Japan help to argue that artists working outside of the confines Korean colony were able to hold views altogether imaginative, subtle, yet persuasive due to their positions as exiled art students?

The peninsular war ravaged the country, and in its aftermath, the art world laid in disarray. While there were no solid art schools or particular styles that held sway, several maintained art practices. Some were still attracted to Western abstract art and imitated this model, while others depicted social realism through representation of the war and its tragedies. Alongside these two modes of art practices, there was a strong contingent who called for artists' self-examination in order to purge their work of Japanese influence.³²³

After the war, the differences between conservative academic realists and progressive abstract modernists were reconstituted anew. That is, when *Kukchön* was

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid., 45.

reestablishment in 1953, academic realists and figurative sculptures were mostly favored by exhibition jurors. As a result, the progressive modernists showed antipathy to this exhibition (and its jurors) for not accepting art works that stepped outside the confines of traditional painting methods. The progressive group remained unfazed, and they honed in on their modernists' radical forms of expressions to organize a group called the *Hyôndae Misulga Hyôphoe* (Contemporary Association of Artists) which held its first exhibition in 1957.³²⁴ This group of artists was trained partly during the all-out war period of the Pacific War and came of age in a post-colonial era marked by the U.S. occupation. Amidst the ideological battles between Left and Right, the members of this group were young, idealistic (perhaps naïve), and bombastic. They were also part of a first generation trained in Korean, not Japanese, art colleges. This group's work, thus, became the launching ground behind the first major abstract art movement in Korea, *Informel* (1956-1965).³²⁵ Going against rationale, geometric, and measured abstraction, this group painted without regard for rigorous methods or standards, and they relied on their personal intuition, oftentimes expressing their own existential anguish.³²⁶ Leaders of *Informel* were Park Seo-Bo (Pak Söbo, b. 1931) and Kim Chang-yeul also often spelled in texts as Kim Tschang-yeul (Kim Ch'angyöl, b. 1929). *Informel* held regular group exhibitions and presented mural-scale nonrepresentational paintings, encrusted with thick layers of paint that were applied with sweeping and vigorous brushstrokes. The transition from imagery and representation to large-scale gestural paintings came

³²⁴ Kim, "Modern Korean Painting and Sculpture," 164.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

suddenly for one of its leading figure, Park Seo-Bo. After returning from a year's visit to Paris in 1961, his *Primordialis* series manifests the tracing of the deformed figures, mostly in black backgrounds that ultimately discusses themes of human fate, original sin, and primordial humanity.³²⁷

Informel's entry into the cultural field of production goes straight to the debate of foreign influence on Asian art. Park Seo-Bo himself dismisses any notion that *Informel* painters were derivatives of European and American schools of painting. In retrospect, art historians have evaluated their mode of painting as a synthesis between the national and international, or in this case the West and East. Roe suggests that *Informel* was the most significant art movement in the history of modern art in Korea in the postwar period in that it was not directly influenced by art training in Japan. Thus, it is considered an autonomous movement that simultaneously participated within an international art scene. The vigor of *Informel* eventually dwindled, and by the mid-1960s, the group reached its dénouement of sorts. While the group was losing momentum, its younger (original) members started to participate in highly visible venues such as the Paris and Sao Paulo Biennials.³²⁸

International Art Exhibitions.

The 1960s marked an epochal point of departure for the internationalization of modern Korea. For South Korean artists and artistic production, there were two main causes of this shift. Nationally, *Kukchŏn* became the National (versus Korean) Art

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Roe, "International Abstraction in a National Context," 45

Exhibition and underwent structural changes during the Park Chunghee regime. The military dictator's First Republic (1963-1965) proclaimed sweeping changes. Within its cultural policies, one resulting change was that *Kukchŏn* was reorganized to unite all artists. Internationally, Korea's advent into the manufacturing and steel industries afforded its advance into an international market system on par with core nations of the world system. Korean artists and art shows became influenced by international art practices, an inevitable consequence of going abroad to show artwork at various international exhibitions and biennales. With the expanded fields of consideration in the art world, previous categories such as figuration, abstraction, and semiabstraction went into disrepute.³²⁹ These structural changes on a national and international level provided an opportunity of a lifetime to certain mid-career, marginalized artists who had been painting abstracts throughout the early postwar years. Their work received greater visibility, a visibility that marked a giant step toward institutional acceptance at home and abroad. In sum, the predominance of *Kukchŏn* that previously marginalized progressively-minded abstract painters was no longer in tact. South Korea's nationalist calls for development led to an internationalization of economic relations that transformed social relations of artists. In the end, artists of both Left and Right were welcomed entrée into an international art world, but their internal debates were not resolved.

As with all reforms, there were many disputes over jurors, prizes, and art schools, but *Kukchŏn*'s deep-seated disputes ultimately brought about the abolition of the National

³²⁹ Ibid., 44.

Art Exhibition altogether in 1981. At the same time, *Informel* was not able to maintain the momentum that earlier had captivated audiences and critics alike. There were, however, some individual standout artists, some of whom put together a Korean group show to participate in the 1958 World House Gallery in New York.³³⁰ From this point forward, many artists sent works abroad to be exhibited as the Korean representative at the Sao Paulo and Paris Biennales, as well as the Tokyo International Print Biennale and the India Triennale. The National Museum of Korea also organized large shows exhibiting national treasures which were showcased around the world.³³¹ In 1957 and 1958, the National Museum organized a Korean art exhibition that toured six major cities in America from the National Gallery in D.C. to the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in New York and the Boston Museum. This show also traveled to Europe in 1961 including stops at London, Paris, and Amsterdam.³³² In 1968, the first collection of twenty Korean artists titled “Korean Art” exhibited their work at the Tokyo National Museum from July 24 through September 15.

Starting in the 1970s, individual artists started to gain international exposure including (but not limited to) Kim Ch’angyŏl and Yi Sŏngja (b. 1918) in Paris, Lee U-fan (Yi Yuhwan, b. 1936) in Tokyo. As a reflection of the emerging Korean artists activities in Tokyo, a show titled “Korea – Five Artists” was presented at Tokyo Gallery in 1975. The economic boom of 1980s Korean industry created for the unequal distribution of wealth between the rich and poor. Such inequalities and unjust social hierarchies brought

³³⁰ Ibid., 45.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

about by the exploitation of the poor and gave way, partly, to the birth of *Minjung misul* or People's Art. *Minjung Art* expressly manifested distaste in Modernism and opposed the idea of "art for art's sake." Aesthetics was less important and wholly secondary to content. Thus, *Minjung* artists' work spoke about the conditions of peasants, urban factory workers, the exploited, and the dispossessed, particularly critiquing the wealthy capitalists through art. The major leaders included Kim Bongjun (b. 1954), Yun O (1946-1986), Im Oksang (b. 1950), and Sin Hakch'öl (b. 1954). Critics of *Minjung misul*, on the other hand, charged that the group's overtly political tones served merely as propaganda art for left-wing idealism.

The 1990s was a time not only of multiculturalism in America with its grand retrospectives of artists of color in various New York museums, galleries, and other venues. It also represented a time when Korean art emerged in a host of international exhibitions, and several key shows focused upon Korean art and Korean identity in contemporary art for Japanese audiences. In 1991, a large group of Korean artists came together for a show titled "In Search of the Korean Identity in Contemporary Korean Art" at Hanwŏn Gallery, Seoul, and a four-volume catalogue was subsequently published. In 1993, "Twelve Contemporary Artists from Korea – around arts of 1970s and 1980s" was curated for the Miyagi Museum of Art in Sendai, Japan from July 24 through September 15. This exhibition was a corresponding show for "Working with Nature – Traditional Thoughts in Contemporary Art from Korea" that was curated for the Tate Gallery in London one year prior in 1992. The "Territory of Mind – Korean Art of 1990s" [*Maŭm ũi yŏngyŏk*] was organized and held at the Contemporary Art gallery, Art Tower Mito

from July 29 to October 10, 1995. Sponsored by the Japan Foundation, it featured the work of five Korean artists. In the same year, “Circulating Currents – Japanese and Korean Contemporary Art” was presented from July 14 to August 3 at Aichi prefectural Museum of Art and Nagoya City Art Museum, featuring twenty-four Japanese and Korean artists who were born after the 1940. “An Aspect of Korean Art in the 1990s” featured twelve artists and was held from September 25 to November 17, 1996 at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo. Of course, the year 1995 also marked the first Kwangju Biennial.

Finally, two shows are significant from the early 2000s leading up to the Kwangju Biennial of 2002. “The Burgeoning Asian Century – Korean Art, Seoul in Osaka” invited nine artists to the Contemporary Art Space of Osaka (CASO) from August 21 to September 2, 2001. The “Eleven and Eleven Korea Japan Contemporary 2002” brought together eleven Korean and eleven Japanese artists to mark the co-hosted World Cup Games and to commemorate the Korea-Japan National Exchange year. From May 30 through June 30, the exhibition was presented in Sungok Museum just south of Seoul. The show then traveled to the Tokyo Gallery from July 10 through August 10, 2002.³³³

³³³ The information concerning these shows from the 1990s and 2000s derives from catalogues I collected during my research trips abroad.

Chapter 4

Cultural Production of Diasporic Art from *There*: Artists of Korean Diaspora

I. Introduction

There was the title of one of four projects exhibited at the fifth Kwangju Biennial held in South Korea in 2002. The name alludes to five of the oldest and largest overseas Korean communities: those in Brazil, China, Japan, Kazakhstan, and the United States. *There* curator, Yong Soon Min, chose twenty-four visual artists to represent the five locations, and their art work was a showcase of Korea's diasporic cultural production, given the subtitle *Sites of the Korean Diaspora*. *There* is thus an international large-scale exhibition and part of a biennial platform that provides a unique opportunity for a cross-disciplinary analysis of artists, art work, and cultural production. Although there were three components of this project including an exposition of visual art, a film festival curated by Paul Yi, and a symposium on diaspora and art, this chapter will focus on the visual artists and artwork.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Korean mainstream academic perspectives and public opinion concerning overseas Koreans project an understanding of Koreans abroad that is embedded within master narratives of the ethnic nation, a narrative that reifies a history of progress in order to overcome Korea's long and arduous "history of suffering." In this chapter, I pose the question of what exactly constitutes a history of overseas Koreans from another perspective: that of those living abroad. Can these perspectives effectively bring forth other possibilities for identity and belonging that

function alongside, against, or outside of master narratives of the nation? What models do artists provide that can help us explore such possibilities?

I draw on art work, interviews, internal documents and recordings, press coverage, art critiques, artist statements, and exhibition catalogues to unveil the multivalent positions of constructed individual, communal, and national identities. Together, they formulate a history of overseas Koreans from the perspective of those living abroad. What I have found indicates that these activities reinforce master narratives of national history, culture, and identity at the same time that they undermine them. This is what I consider a paradox of diasporic art as it pertains to Korean artists. Also, a plurality of other constructed identities manifest themselves as related to class, gender, and locale. The scale of identities discovered at the *There* exhibition brings alive movements of people on a mesolevel: “of movement facilitated by family, kind, and other social and functional networks or communities that aid in the process of migrants’ getting jobs, ascertaining cultural codes, and understanding how to adjust to and associate with all that is new.”³³⁴ The scale of identities held in tension by a paradox of diasporic art presents us with a key to understanding the question of identity and belonging in the context of Korea’s history of colonialism and war, rupture from division and Cold War legacies, and the unevenness of global modernity.

We see in the first part of the chapter that the organization, curatorial process, and tensions uncovered in the production of *There* as factors that have marked this exhibition

³³⁴ Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 19-21.

as one of the “worst in Kwangju Biennial.”³³⁵ Yet, the artists, art work, curators, and discourse produced in the *There* exhibition engaged South Korean public opinion and government policies concerning overseas Koreans in a dialectical social setting that make the fourth Kwangju Biennial and especially the *There* project the best in the history of this exhibition. The production unveils the constructed nature of national consciousness, what Naoki Sakai calls “regimes of fantasies” and cultural constructions that make up the essence of national culture and identity.³³⁶ The second half of the chapter explores the multivalent positions of the artists organized within the chronotropes of portraiture, narrative, historical memory, and absence/presence. I elucidate inter-relationships within these chronotropes as they pertain to the construction of artists’ sense of self and further analyze these interrelationships using visualizations to re-present the art work previously showcased *There*. What new relations may be conceived when retrieving visual images within a digital archive? How do these relations synergize an action-centered theory of art? And finally, can visualizations of artwork enable exchange and facilitate dialogue and discourse about identity between those who support nation-centered, singular positions and those who maintain cosmopolitan, transnational concepts of identity and belonging? If so, how influential are these cultural debates and dialogues especially within politically exigent regions such as the Korean peninsula?

³³⁵ Yun pōmmo, “Isan ūi ttang, isandoen chōnsi kihoeok (Scattered People, Scattered Exhibition)” *Space* (July 2002): 77-78.

³³⁶ Naoki Sakai, “Introduction: Nationality and the Politics of the ‘Mother Tongue’,” *Deconstructing Nationality*, edited by Naoki Sakai, Brett de Bary, and Toshio Iyotani (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2005), 1-38. I am indebted to Christopher Hanscom for introducing me to this article.

II. Kwangju: From City of Revolt to City of Culture

Talk of Kwangju may elicit one of several reactions to those who know something about South Korea and its metropolitan regions: it is the place where victims suffered and heroes arose during and after the May 18 Kwangju Uprising in 1980.³³⁷ The Kwangju Uprising of 5.18 (*o-il-p'al*) was incited when riot police cracked down on pro-democracy students in front of Chŏnnam University. The use of numbers such as 5.18 (*o-il-p'al*) has become popular practice in South Korea to demarcate historical events. This practice has even flowed into the U.S. context, for example, as the L.A. Civil Disturbance is often called 4.29 (*sa-i-ku*).

Lasting ten days, some 3,000 paratroopers sent from Seoul quelled the unrest and enforced Chun Doo Hwan's martial law decree. Given the city population of 730,000 in 1980, the small toll of the "official" figures of 500 civilian dead and 3,000 injured remain highly contested. Kwangju is also known as the home region of former President and Nobel Laureate Kim Dae Jung and as well, a rival city of Pusan, one that touts itself the center of culture, democratic struggles, and international exchange. However, the Kwangju Uprising of 5.18 unequivocally remains the event that has circumscribed the city's identity.

The lingering questions and solemn shadows of the Kwangju Uprising left an indelible scar on the people of Kwangju. Remembering and recording what happened is

³³⁷ Tae Shin Chung, "Making History in the Trench City of Kwangju: The Dialectic of Class and Cultural Conflicts in South Korea," Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1991; Jae-eui Lee, *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age*, translated by Kap Su Seol and Nick Mamatas (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 1999); and Gi-Wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang, *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18 Uprising in Korea's Past and Present* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

an on-going project that memorializes the event, making heroes of martyrs and everyday folk who took part in the fight for democracy. With such a legacy, the singed memories of Kwangju grew into what some label a “5.18 industry” supporting the publications, cultural events, public hearings and laws that were promulgated toward memorializing the tragedy.³³⁸ In a far larger (in scope) but still comparable example, Norman Finkelstein tenaciously delineates forms of the economic, ideological and moral exploitation of the Holocaust in *The Holocaust Industry*, a construct, he argues, that has accrued “dividends” in large (state of Israel) and small (individual compensation) forms by capitalizing upon victimhood.³³⁹

The transformation of 5.18 from tragedy, into the fight for democratic struggle that then prevails as a celebration of culture on a global scale is part of the process of “overcoming 5.18” that parlays the public memorial into cultural commemoration. The Kim Young Sam administration first pumped funds into events commemorating the Kwangju Uprising, and studies show that the Kwangju Biennial was initiated by the central government and supported by local governments in an effort to transform Kwangju’s image from a city of resistance to the “city of art.”³⁴⁰ The Korean government even ordered various ministries to help the Kwangju local government advertise its Biennial. Only after Kim Young Sam himself visited and officially

³³⁸ Gi-Wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang, *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18 Uprising in Korea’s Past and Present* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 26.

³³⁹ Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections of the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2000).

³⁴⁰ Kim Manhŭm, *Hanguk chŏngch’i ŭi chaeinsik: minjujuŭi chiyŏkjuŭi chibang chach’i* [Revision of Korean Politics: Democracy, Regionalism, and Regional Autonomy] (Seoul: Pulbit, 1997), 45-46. See also, Haeran Shin, “Cultural Festivals and Regional Identities in South Korea” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22 (2004): 619.

sanctioned his support for the event did major media outlets cover it.³⁴¹ In this fashion, local history aligned with the national historical task of overcoming the history of peninsular struggles.

One must remember, however, that regional identity cannot always be subsumed under national identity. Ho-Ki Kim and Park Jongil remind us of the contention between a strong regional identity and state-dominated nationalist discourse. State theorists argue that the relationship between regionalism and ethnic nationalism is constituted by the oppositional claim that strong nationalism and national identity weaken regionalism and regional identity, or vice versa, that is, strong regional or ethnic identity make nation-state building difficult. However, both theories prove to be untrue in South Korea. Kim and Park understand regionalism as a consequence of modernization and democratization and underline the multiple, thus multi-regional, claims toward national identity in Korea.³⁴² I read the launching of South Korea's first biennial in 1995 in the city of Kwangju as part of its own transformation into a city of arts and culture and as evidence of *segye* or globalization transitions taking place at a local level. The memory of 5.18 has earned a positive gainsay, and public memorial has become not only commemorative but culturally celebratory.

One historical reason why Kwangju experienced political turmoil during the late twentieth century is because it had largely been left out of industrial growth in the contemporary period. Topographically, the agricultural sector has always been strong

³⁴¹ Ibid., 623.

³⁴² Ho-Ki Kim and Park Jongil, "Renegade Region or the Center of New Nation?: Regionalism and Ethnic Nationalism during the Democratization of South Korea," in *Korean Identity: Past and Present* (Unpublished Conference Volume, Yonsei and Stanford Universities, 2004).

due to the regional soil conditions. Scholars often note that the people of the southern Chölla region, on the whole, did not participate in the 1919 March First Movement, one that had mobilized an estimated one million Koreans in their outcry for independence from Japanese colonization because they had profited from rice production that was in high demand. However, in the postwar period and especially during Park Chung Hee's export-oriented industrialization drive of the 1960s and 1970s, Kwangju and surrounding region's urbanization did not progress in comparison to the rest of the country.³⁴³

By the mid-1990s, globalization or *segzehwa* discourse began to wield wide political, socio-economic, and cultural impact upon South Korean thinking and policies. As outlined in Chapter Two, *segzehwa* policies have not only sought to promote South Korea's inclusion into global structures of exchange but also effected significant changes in how South Korea views overseas Koreans. In this context, the Kwangju Biennial plays an instrumental role in bringing about this transformation both by providing an international stage to present Korean culture to the larger art world and by globalizing Kwangju.

The 2002 Kwangju Biennial

The 2002 exhibition was no exception as the show partook in the cultural commemorations of the 5.18 industry, and in tribute to the city, the Biennial's artistic director Sung Wang-kyung [Söng Wanggyöng] chose a "democratic" distributed layout to present the collection. Wan-kyung Sung is an art critic and currently a professor of art

³⁴³ Kim Manhūm, *Hanguk chöngch'i üi chaeinsik*, 277; Haeran Shin, "Cultural Festivals and Regional Identities in South Korea," 621.

criticism and curatorial studies at Inha University. Sung co-curated project one *Pause* along with Hanru Hou and Charles Esche. Hou is currently Director of Exhibitions at San Francisco Art Institute. Esche is a Senior Research Fellow at Saint Martins and Director of Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Netherlands. All Kwangju Biennial exhibitions previous to and after the 2002 show took place at the permanent biennial Exhibition Halls and surrounding park that lie on the northwest outskirts of the city. But the four projects presented in 2002 took place in different venues. The main Project One *Pause* and Project Two *There* were housed in the Exhibition Halls. To give an idea about the largeness of Project One, a total of ninety-two groups, collaborations, or individual artists presented a mixture of formats: eighteen pavilions, twenty-six alternative spaces, and various individual artists' installations within six galleries both indoors and outdoors.

Projects Three and Four, however, were located in specific locations around the city, a move considered a curious curatorial decision. Rather than the Venice Biennial's format of thirty permanent national pavilions, the Kwangju Biennial in 2002 presented four Projects, each with its own curator, theme, and layout. In addition to being in charge of the biennial as a whole, Sung alone curated Project Three *Stay of Execution*, a site-specific show exhibited in a restored Military Police building of the May 18th Liberty Memorial Park. The May 18th Liberty Park is one of two memorial parks in the New city of Sangmu (*Sangmu sindosim*), an urban renewal project in Kwangju. An architect, Kim Hyöngjung, curated Project Four *Connection* which took place in an old, non-functioning train station and an adjacent railroad located in the southeastern section of the city. This type of distributed format is different from historical precedents of biennials.

For Sung, the spatial distribution of the 2002 Kwangju Biennial across the city worked by creating counter-hegemonic structures for intercultural networking. He asserts that in this manner, the latter also became non-homogenizing structures, opposite to biennials that are accused of cultivating a culture of the spectacle and resistant to the evaluative system dictated by the cultural logic of global capital. After all, there is no art fair that precedes or follows the Kwangju Biennial that provides a make-shift market where, traditionally, most of the buying and negotiating takes place at biennial sites, such as the art fairs at the Venice Biennial. Furthermore, the concept of extending the exhibition into local areas of political significance in Kwangju presented artistic perspectives about the *hyönsil* or reality of the city. Sung emphasized the need to present the *hyönsil* on several occasions to justify his curatorial decisions, and in the Korean art world, this term is circumscribed within a historicity of the *minjung* movement.³⁴⁴ Artists involved in the democracy struggles published a quarterly journal entitled *Hyönsil kwa parön* (Reality and Utterance) for just over ten years in the 1980s and 1990s, and Sung chose many of these, now older, artists from this group for Project Three. Therefore, Kwangju's urban renewal projects became one point of recognizing the locale within an international exhibition. The cultural production of the distributed format fosters yet another method toward accessing historical memory of Kwangju in a celebratory fashion.

³⁴⁴ Sung Wang-kyung, Interview by author, Seoul, September 2006.

Situating *There*

There's production and its tensions are good starting points to analyzing how the five distinct communities that Yong Soon Min believed best visually represented the Korean diaspora are also the overseas Korean communities that South Korea desires to incorporate into a larger ethnic nation beyond the nation. Sung initially conceived of Project Two as part of the rationale for the 2002 Kwangju Biennial itself: to expand upon the localized identities of Kwangju and Asia. In addition to using "international" artists and alternative collaborations, he thought it an important idea to use Korean history, its history of migration, and the artists borne out of this movement. It helped that Sung had first met Yong Soon Min at the Havana Biennial in Cuba first during the mid-1980s and then in New York many years earlier for the "Minjung Show" at Artist Space in 1988.

It is already difficult enough to try to bring a multiple experience to the viewing of art through the biennial, but we [curators] wanted to attempt to show this multi-oriented aspect of overseas Korean (*Hanminjok*) artists. There is a certain way we [Korean people] are accustomed to seeing Korean diaspora, and we wanted to re-orient this viewpoint with an outsider's standpoint(s).³⁴⁵

Sung's attitude is indicative of a growing number of people who would like to understand difference and variety from "globalized historical experiences and

³⁴⁵ Sung Wang-kyung, Interview by author, Seoul, September 2006.

standpoints.”³⁴⁶ However, the hold of master narratives still largely confines the discourse on overseas Koreans and their identity to the consanguineous link with the nation and its long history of suffering.

Min chose artists from Almaty, Sao Paulo, Yanji, Osaka and the greater Kansai regions, and the two coasts of the U.S. to represent a Korean diaspora at the 2002 Kwangju Biennial. Coming from the same era when Theresa Hak-Kyung Cha made strides in the U.S. art world, Min also was a pioneer visual artist, and her successful art practice combines the roles of artist, curator, and teacher.³⁴⁷ Presently in the U.S., a “burst of cultural forms” are being produced by second- and third-generation immigrants who now choose professions outside of business, law, and medicine and speak English as their first language.³⁴⁸ It is also true that the diversity of Asian American artists’ gain and access to modes of artistic representation was wrought out of the cultural politics of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁴⁹ Min, however, came of age when newly arriving immigrants, such as her family that emigrated in 1960, were trying to establish themselves professionally.

In my first (of three) interview with Min,³⁵⁰ she describes the “mid-life art career lag” and loss of momentum she was experiencing, even though her vita includes numerous internationally-acclaimed awards, grants, and commissions such as the Whitney Museum’s Independent Studies Program in early 1980s and the National Studio

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Min received her B.A. from Monterey College in 1975, M.A. in 1977 and M.F.A. 1979, both from the University of California, Berkeley.

³⁴⁸ Elaine H. Kim, Margo Machida, and Sharon Mizota, eds., *Fresh Talk, Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

³⁴⁹ Ibid., xx.

³⁵⁰ They took place in fall 2003, summer 2003, and again in fall 2005.

Program of the Institute for Contemporary Art in 1991 (also known as P.S. 1). In many ways, Min is a recognized artist and currently, she is an associate professor in the Claire Trevor School of Studio Art Department at University of California, Irvine. However, this lag may likely be a backlash Min suffered within mainstream art circuits and international art markets due to her politics of representation that ascribe itself, self-admittedly, within a rubric of “identity art.”³⁵¹ Pieces such as *Half Home* (1986), *Talking Herstory* (1990), *deColonization* (1991), *Chǒngsindae* (1992), and *Defining Moments* (1994) are titles of her body of work from the 1980s and 1990s that strongly interpolate a personal narrative of Korean history and incorporate her own memory of historical events. The Korean term *chǒngsindae*, for example, literally means “volunteer corps” and refers to the “comfort women” issue, or Korean young women who were coerced into serving as military sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War (1931 – 1945).

Yong Soon Min’s own maturation as an artist directly influenced the *There* production. First, in the U.S. context, Min came of age when multiculturalism had emerged as a popular trend and suddenly lost its political effectiveness. Art critics conclude that multiculturalism hit a saturation point after Jean-Hubert Martin’s *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) show at the Pompidou in Paris, *The Other Story* (1989) and *The Decade Show* (1990) both in New York City, reaching a denouement after the 1993

³⁵¹ David Joselit, “Ring of Fire: Interview with Joe Lewis and Yong Soon Min,” *Art Journal* 57, no. 4 (1998): 87.

Whitney Biennial.³⁵² In the 1990s, then, artists of color were hit with a double-blow: multiculturalism's out-modedness in art circles, coupled with a slashing of funds in the National Endowment for the Arts and dismantling of the Arts Council in Great Britain. In other words, just at a point of entry when minority artists became visible, major funding sources dried up, and the art market itself lost interest in minority artists. The supporters of arts and cultural institutions looked toward a different direction.

The second aspect of Min's art practice is that, topically, it deals with personal memories of Korea, its history of colonization, and the division and war. Her loss of momentum, she stated, "is parallel to what is happening with the movement in Korea as well...there is a lot of questioning now of the 1980s *minjung* [people's] movement and the kind of confidence they [Korean activists] might have had about reunification [of the two Koreas] which is no longer the case now. It is so much more of a complex situation now and after my trip to North Korea, I have to question my own assumptions and political beliefs/positions. It is all a big part of this big pause...in my thinking."

South Korea was the Guest of Honor at the 2005 Frankfurt Book Fair. On this occasion, an art exhibition entitled *The Battle of Visions* solely focused on the *minjung* art movement. All invited artists were part of the *minjung* movement in Korea and participated through the publication of the journal *Ch'angjak kwa parŏn* [Reality and Utterance], except Yong Soon Min. Again, I believe this has to do the social processes

³⁵² Kobena Mercer, "Diaspora Culture and the Dialogic Imagination," in *Blackframes: Critical Perspectives on Black Independent Cinema*, edited by Mbye B. Cham and Claire Andrade-Watkins (Boston: MIT Press, 1988), 43.

and relations surround the show's production, given Min's personal relationship with the show's curator Beck Jee-sook [Paek Chisuk].³⁵³

Min mentions "the movement" in our interviews, a term that reflects both minority artists' fight for visibility in the West and Korean activists' vital struggle to realize independence, unification, democracy and justice on the peninsula. The fact that someone such as Min curated an international exhibition about artists of Koreans in diaspora inextricably places onto the plateau of a biennial the effects of both the denouement of multiculturalism in the U.S. and the *minjung* movement in South Korea. Indeed, she concludes her exhibition catalogue essay with an acknowledgement to both:

Discursive histories of earlier cultural confluences such as the Negritude movement, Harlem Renaissance, Multiculturalism, the Black Arts movement in Britain, and Minjoong [minjung] cultural movement in South Korea present viable models for the critique of new cultural formations in the diaspora. This exhibition of the artistic and cultural dimensions of the Korean diaspora can be best understood as a beneficiary of and an intervention into these enduring legacies.³⁵⁴

Even as she invokes diaspora, Min expresses concern about how this "diasporic framework displaces whatever gains multiculturalism has made."³⁵⁵ Is a diasporic orientation different because it provides a geographical expansion? Can it open up the conversation historically and comparatively? And what exactly enables diasporic art, and

³⁵³ Yong Soon Min, interview by author, Los Angeles, September 2002, May 2005.

³⁵⁴ Yong Soon Min, "Certain Latitudes," in *There: Sites of Korean Diaspora* (Gwangju: Gwangju Biennale Foundation, 2002), 58.

³⁵⁵ Moira Roth, Moira, "Traveling companions/Fractured Worlds," *Art Journal* 58, no. 2 (1999): 82.

do these artists proclaim their identity as diasporic artists? Or does Min's framework of diasporic art not resonate with the artist-participants' art practices?

Curators and Tensions

Several contradictions surface upon interviewing Sung Wan-kyung and Yong Soon Min. The first deals with the conception of Project Two itself. When Sung first asked Min to curate a show on Korean diaspora, he envisioned an anthropological approach to exploring the variety of the peoples living abroad. Although he gave Min artistic control over the conception and planning of Project Two, he imagined that it would examine the historical routes that Koreans plotted as they migrated abroad, similar to the hierarchy of periodizations that migration history texts navigate. Min did take an anthropological approach that took her research team to each of the five chosen sites abroad, but it seems that for Sung and other Korean spectators, the exhibition itself did not fully reflect the body of fieldwork carried out at the local areas of diasporic art production. For this project, Min carried out interviews with artists and field visits with local representatives at each of the five regions. The other members of her research team included the anthropologist Soo Young Chin, filmmaker Yoon Cho, and one of Min's

students. Together, they traveled to each of the five places for three weeks between August and November of 2001).³⁵⁶

The material, budgetary, and participant imbalance between Project One and the other three is another tension that manifests within the actual on-site exhibition layout of the 2002 biennial itself. In particular, one immediately notices the marginalized space of the *There* show, since it shared the main Exhibition Halls. It only took up one of the seven galleries, at the corner end of one of the exhibition halls. Although I was not able to attend the 2002 exhibition, I draw this tension from diagram maps of the exhibition layout and its description from interviews with curators. Even so, Sung continues to articulate the four projects as “democratic in its equal parts and equal importance,” even when an inequality in structure both at the exhibition space and the catalogue publication level is clearly noticeable. What this inequality does reveal is that diaspora and diasporic identities still remain within a space of shadows. Even in the realm of publications, Project One’s catalogue included two dense volumes whose translations were clear and well-done, compared to the other three projects’ catalogues. As the treatment of overseas Koreans is restricted within the confines of the nation, so too does diasporic art remain in the shadow of “international” artists.

It is as if Sung, as artistic director of the entire 2002 biennial, and Min, as the curator of Project Two, were working from different premises. That is, whereas Min aimed to show what she describes as fluidity in artists’ subjectivity, Sung envisioned the representation of a diasporic history that would incorporate the legacy of suffering and

³⁵⁶ I am grateful and indebted to Dr. Chin for allowing me access to all interview tapes from these research trips.

the unique position of a divided country. The unmet expectation meant that for Sung, the overall collection did not help us better understand overseas Koreans. The tension reflects a contradiction in perspectives because Min did not restrict the understanding of identity to be configured in sole relation to a homeland. Min's aversion toward fixity meant that she considered her curatorial decision with "no overarching vantage point from which the diaspora is to be considered."³⁵⁷

Another point of criticism stemmed from the fact that ten of the twenty-four participants were young artists from the U.S. There were two artists each from Kazakhstan, China, and Brazil, seven from Japan, ten from the U.S. and one artist from South Korea/France. The U.S.-heavy focus was a point of criticism of the *There* project waged by Korean critics and others. In fact, one of the motives behind the production of the 2004 *Korean Diaspora and Arts Symposium* in Tokyo was a response to the inadequate portrayal of Korean diasporic artists at the Kwangju's *There* exhibition in 2002.

The Kwangju Biennial serves as a critical and useful site for discussing diasporic art in two ways. On the one hand, the social process involved in diasporic art and its production incorporate local histories, both Korean and diasporic, and local politics into a global exhibition, spatially expanding the framework from where the artists come and artwork is made, and thus resulting in the multiplicity of experiences, expressions, and associations. On the other hand, in the context of the entire exhibition, as suggested by the marginalization of Project Two in its reception, discourse, and physical location, a

³⁵⁷ Yong Soon Min, Interview by author, Los Angeles, September 2002.

diasporic consciousness cannot take center stage; instead, it becomes physically and metaphorically confined to a marginalized space in Korea's understanding of its history, culture, and society.

One final point of tension concerns the naming of Project Two. Why was not Min's project entitled "Diaspora?" When asked this question, Min immediately responds that the "Kwangju people" did not want to use the term. Sung is careful in stating that he does not recall exactly how the second project's name was determined, but if there were disputes with the coordinating committee, it was that "diaspora" was not a familiar term in the Korean lexicon. Naming the show *There* and not *Diaspora* indicates the discursive discontinuity between those who talk about overseas Koreans from a South Korean perspective and those who discuss diaspora from, in this case, a U.S. standpoint which is also a transnational perspective. Such differences in perspective have much to do with the power of master narratives in re-writing history.

III. Artists, Artwork, Reception, Exchange, and Discourse

To examine what Sung described as "outsiders' standpoints," I turn to the artists, artwork and activities to reflect upon the outsider's minor narratives in contrast to grand, master narratives. I analyze the artwork according to the four chronotropes of portraiture, narrative, historical memory, and absence/presence. Chronotropic substances alter the irregular or uneven rates of physical phenomena such as a heartbeat. A chronotrope can be positive (increasing the heart rate) and negative (decreasing heart rate). I am using this medical term in the analysis as a framework to treat the unevenness of diasporic art

and its presentation. That is, the diversity of practices and multiplicity of expressions can be treated evenly through the analytic conceptual tropes of portraiture, narrative, historical memory, and absence/presence.³⁵⁸ Each chronotope attunes to the methodological concern for the social dimension of art production in a regulating fashion. That is, each art work and each artist's practice exists within a structure of social relationships, and the tensions of curating a biennial production such as *There* cannot be discussed without imbuing the social and human dimensions involved in artistic activities and cultural production. The four chronotropes of portraiture, narrative, historical memory, and absence/presence differ from Min's own grouping of the artwork in her catalogue essay that discusses four themes of landscape, abstraction, gender and sexuality, and issues involving history, politics, and society.³⁵⁹ Each chronotope will bring to light methodological concerns discerning the social dimensions of an action-centered approach to art.

Two other demarcations take into account age or generation and host country such that an analysis of older artists in their 50s and 60s from China, Kazakhstan, and Japan whose works support master narratives is followed by a discussion of younger artists in their 20s and 30s from the U.S. and Japan whose art work challenges dominant narratives of cultural identity and belonging. In this way, the groupings along national affiliation and generational differences further reveal that community, kinship, and associational ties are critical components of diasporic art production.

³⁵⁸ I thank Christopher Hanscom for his clarification regarding this concept.

³⁵⁹ Yong Soon Min, "Certain Latitudes."

Art historians, of course, have addressed the place of modern art and their social implications. Meyer Shapiro describes the impossibility of either extricating an art work from the collective and practical world from which it was made, or of denying the artists life and their place in society.³⁶⁰ His essay brings light to Social Realism and Marxist intellectual tradition to reflect upon the social issues involved in art history's analysis and critique. The concept of Social Realism and art produced in socialist countries are being taken up anew considering the recent success of mainland Chinese artists, viz., Wang Guangyi, Zhang Xiaogang, Xu Beihong, Wu Guanzhong and others who have re-worked ideas concerning social mass culture, Realism, and the spectacle of PRC and Communist propaganda art work from the postwar period. The discussion of social dimensions imbued in Social Realism of socialist countries in the early twentieth century or popular culture in contemporary cultural production are but two examples. My approach, however, positions artists and artwork as catalysts in a sphere of social activities where cultural production takes on the added significance in light of their political, communal and individual-situated functions. Alfred Gell goes so far as to claim artworks as "persons" themselves in the sense that network(s) of social relations that form around the vicinity of the art object and surround particular artworks in specific interactive settings mediates social agency. The visualizations of the composite group of artwork shown

³⁶⁰ Shapiro first gave a speech on this topic to the First American Congress of New York in 1936 and first published the essay in *Social Realism – Art as a Weapon: Critical Studies in American Art* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1973); Meyer Shapiro, "The Social Bases of Art," *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers LTD., 1992), 508.

There, thus, uses computing methods to re-present the artwork and retrieve the social relations and spheres of social activities of the twenty-four artists.³⁶¹

Portraiture

The portrait affixes centrality to a person, image, scene, or religious icon, importing to viewers a sense of purpose, meaning, and religio-aesthetic value. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century art canon, portraits of important figures from emperors and kings in full regalia to facial profiles and drawings of illustrious and prominent personages were commissioned. The structured focus on color, form, position of the figure, material, and attention to details such as ornamentation, dress, and expression were important cues indicating social standing, political accomplishment, or renowned beauty.

A significant feature of the portraiture genre is that behind each portrait is an actually existing personage outside the work, defining one major function of the art work and constituting one reason for its being and its coming into existence. Richard Brilliant believes that non-human portraits are irrelevant inasmuch as portraiture involves “representation of the structuring of human relationships...when the interacting self comes into existence.”³⁶² In his treatise on the topic of portraiture, Richard Brilliant observes how this feature allows the viewers to see the underlying social dimensions of portraits.

³⁶¹ Please see: <http://www.lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/05/artdiasporaviz-Korean-modern-art.html>

³⁶² Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 9.

The vital relationship between portrait and its object of representation directly reflects the social dimension of human life as a field of action among persons, with its own repertoire of signals and messages. It is as if the art works do not exist in their own material substance but, in their place, real persons face me from the other side or deliberately avoid my glance. Quickly enough the illusion dissipates; I am once more facing not the person but that person's image, embodied in some work of art that asks me to regard it as such.”³⁶³

What Brilliant astutely observes in the “social dimension of human life as a field of action among persons” echoes the premise behind Alfred Gell’s anthropological, “action-centered” theory of art that examines the network of activities surrounding the vicinity of the art work that gives the work its historically-specific social agency. Art by minority artists is often bracketed along ethnic categories such as Afro-Cuban art or geographical categories such as Japanese art instead of being critiqued also and equally on its own terms. Rather than making symbolic propositions about aesthetics through iconographic or ethnic readings of art, Gell debunks the anthropological idea of trying to understand *other* aesthetics and an iconographic analysis of objects provoking a culturally endorsed aesthetic response.³⁶⁴

Brilliant cites several more conditions that make portraiture an important art genre unto itself. First, portraits are by nature public: the discernible public face and the added pressure to conform to social norms enter into the field of composition, and the artwork is

³⁶³ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 8.

³⁶⁴ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency*, 34.

enmeshed in value systems of their society.³⁶⁵ Second, a fundamental relationship exists between the portrait and its human original. That is, the occasion of making a portrait makes an illusion to the original, a deliberate intention on the part of the artist and not a by-product of a viewer's interpretation. In other words, a significant aspect of the portrait lies in the artists' intention, whether the viewer knows it or not; after all, the name of the picture could or could not reveal the original person.

One of the most interesting aspects of portraiture is its relationship to how identity operates in the picture. For Brilliant, highlighting the occasionality of the portrait is to realize that "it is no *incidental* matter to be envisioned in a portrait, affixed in a picture, remembered in a poem, or addressed on the stage."³⁶⁶ With the artists' intention in mind, the operation of a self-remembering and a self-reflective memory is inherent in the establishment of personal identity.

The examination of the portrait tableau presented at the *There* exhibition draws from the wider traditional and critical frameworks to show a mixture of mediums, style, function, and composition. Whereas some artists from 2002 supported the idea that portraiture serves the project of nation-building in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, other artists undermine this thesis through artistic practices that resist, subvert, or reject altogether dominant ideology. In other words, by examining diasporic art through the trope of portraiture, I locate art work that reinforce master narrative of the nation at the same time that other art practices challenge it.

³⁶⁵ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 10-11.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 7. Brilliant credits Hans-Georg Gadamer with this idea in *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

Octegenarian Suk Hee Man [Sök Himan] was the second oldest (1932-2002) of the twenty-four artists, and the function of his portraiture (oil on canvas medium) declares the importance of the central figure and shows that depictions of individual human subjects were not the only genre in the wider East Asian tradition of the portrait tableau. Traditional depictions also prized wise and virtuous behavior in scenes of daily life, theatrical performances, ceremonial processions, and other significant events. Such scenes were visually depicted equally for admiration, veneration, emulation, or even protection.³⁶⁷ His landscape paintings illustrate his home region of Manchuria, specifically Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture of the Korean minority in China and the other surrounding Manchurian regions in Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning Provinces. The untitled piece Yong Soon Min chose for the 2002 show was a vase of flowers, picked out from the large body of depictions of the flora in nature that express, for Suk, equanimity. They uphold traditional patterns and symbols that combine values upheld in both his cultural Chinese and ethnic Korean upbringing.

In addition to his landscape scenes of homeland and nature, Suk's body of art should duly be noted for the numerous portraits he painted of himself, his wives and others that reflect his life-work as educator and pioneer artist in Yanji, China and Tokyo, Japan. It is because of Suk's legacy and historical importance within the art community

³⁶⁷ During the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910), the first Royal Portrait Halls or *Chinjŏn* were built during the first King's reign. Chosŏn's founder King T'aejo (1392-1398) enshrined three *Chinjŏn* in Hamhŭng, his birthplace, Kyŏngju and Pyŏngyang, the capitals of Silla and Koguryŏ's respectively. Later, his son King T'aejong (1400-1418) built two more Halls for his father in Kaesŏng, the capital of Koryŏ, and Chŏnju, the royal family's ancestral home. All six Halls were destroyed during the *Imjin* Wars (1592, 1598) so that today, there only remains the replica of the Kyŏnggi Royal Portrait Hall in Chŏnju. Cho Insoo, "Transmitting the Spirit: Korean Portraits of the Late Choson Period," Unpublished Conference Proceedings of the First World Congress of Korean Studies, Vol. I, "Embracing the Other: The Interaction of Korean and Foreign Cultures." (Songnam, Republic of Korea: The Academy of Korean Studies, 2002), 566.

in Yanji that his self-portrait and a portrait of his second Japanese wife hang in the office of the art department at Yanbian University today. Suk is one of the pioneering artists of the Chinese Korean community in Yanji, having received his arts training in the 1930s at the prestigious Tokyo Fine Arts School, Japan's first art school founded in 1887. With his second Japanese wife, he had three children who were all educated in Japan where they reside today. Although he was a professor of studio art at Yanbian University, he resided in both Yanji and Japan (especially his later years) where Suk eventually spent his last few years with his family before he passed away in 2005. Suk, however, had a famous predecessor, Han Ragyŏn [1898-1947]. Born in Yanji, Han was the first Chinese Korean art student to study abroad in Paris during the early 1930s. Before his tragic death at age 49 in a plane crash, he had twenty solo exhibitions in China. His life work was recently exhibited again in Seoul at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Korean independence.³⁶⁸ The public aspect of Suk's portraiture in both human and landscape forms is not the sole redeeming quality of his art practice. Suk's work, more than any other *There* participant, establishes that inherent in portraits is the personal and collective identity that are formed through the operation of reflective and self-correcting memory.

A professional cameraman born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, presently working in Almaty, Kazakhstan, fourth-generation Russian Korean Viktor Ivanovich An presented a melancholic black and white photograph of an older couple in *Reminiscences* (*Chuŏk*,

³⁶⁸ Kyŏngsuk Kim, *Kwangbok 60 chunyŏn kinyŏm: Chungguk Chosŏnjok hwaga Han Ragyŏn t'ŭkbyŏljŏn* [Sixtieth Anniversary since Liberation: Chinese-Korean Painter Han Rak-Yeon], Korean Museum of Contemporary Art, ed. (Seoul: Taeil Munhwasa, 2005).

1996, photography, 24 x 24 inches). The setting draws a humbly clothed man and woman in front of dilapidated wood fence, and the rough texture of the couple's rugulose faces, the effect of years of working the land, is lessened with dimmed lighting that creates a nostalgic effect, powerfully emoting the story of Koreans who fled northward from the peninsula and who were forcibly moved from Vladivostok to Tashkent and Almaty.³⁶⁹

South Korean artist Kim Joo Young [Kim Juyŏng, b. 1965] personally made this long trek by herself in 2002 that Russian Koreans took in 1937 when Stalin ordered the forced relocation (without compensation) of the Korean minority from the seaport of Vladivostok to the desert arid lands of the inland republics. To commemorate the indescribable plight of the dispossessed Russian Koreans, Kim carried out a reformed *chesa*, funerary ritual, in order to pay respect to them and their history of suffering. Part of the *chesa* was presented at Kwangju where she installed the miniature version of mud huts that she imagined Russian Koreans first built upon arrival to the inland region. In addition, she chose to place her installation outside of the Exhibition Halls, purposefully demonstrating the even further marginalized place of Russian Koreans in the history of overseas Koreans.

Kim Joo Young's art practice remembers through ritual what are often dying cultures or forgotten peoples, her most recent site-specific performance taking place in the oldest salt-producing village in southwest China. She takes long and oftentimes

³⁶⁹ Hae-kyung Um, "Community, Identity, and Performing Arts: The Korean diaspora in the Former Soviet Union and China," in *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions*, Hae-kyung Um, ed. (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 43-60.

treacherous journeys to remote areas of the world to carry out her art projects, and the stories she recounts include the finicky visa issues with which she has had to deal as a South Korean citizen – another story about citizenship unto itself. Kim’s installation further stands out in the *There* show because she was not only the sole South Korean artist, albeit with fifteen years of studying abroad in France, but also one of two artists (the other is Y. David Chung) who installed performance art pieces.

Narrative

A majority of the artwork from the *There* exhibition tells a story. It is no mistake that some artists are motivated to tell narratives because the latter provides a sense of meaning in the art-making. Hayden White values the narrative as a “panglobal fact of culture,” which is what I believe allows artistic production to resonate with the narrative and narrative form. Following Barthes’ attempt at fleshing out the problems of translating “knowing” into “telling,” White claims the universal, international aspects of narrative that is human rather than culture-specific. It allows us access into a “metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of shared reality can be transmitted.”³⁷⁰ That is, narrative is a manner of telling characterized by a number of exclusions and subjective conditions, what structuralists ascertain through linguistic criteria such as the “I” or the third person that indicate the presence of the storyteller. Whereas structuralists discern difference between narrative and discourse which is a form of writing more objective because it does not impose upon the speaker

³⁷⁰ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Real Life,” in *On Narrative*, W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1-23.

any reference to the narrator,³⁷¹ Hayden White differentiates between a discourse that *narrates* and a discourse that *narrativizes*. The former discourse “adopts a perspective of the world and reports it,” and the latter discourse “feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself *as a story*.”³⁷² It is the latter discourse that *narrativizes* with which I am dealing in this chapter.

In *Leaving Home* (*Kohyang ūl pōrigo*, 1997, oil on canvas, 117 x 97cm), Jun Chae [b. 1926] recounts the histories of Japanese Koreans through symbolic representations that elicit a remembered history: abstract objects piled on top of the head of a solemn-faced woman who is wearing the traditional Korean garb, *ch’ima chogōri*. Although mimetic mechanisms might connect Jun’s style to that of Magritte’s, Jun’s piling is constructed to rekindle the image of poor, rural women hoisting heavy goods upon their heads. Ro Fung-sok [No Hŭngsōk, b. 1955] presented his earthen ceramic sculpture *Gate* (*Mun* 1994, ceramic sculpture, 150 x 69 x 48 cm). His piece depicts stages of development that Japanese Koreans underwent, emphasizing their ability to overcome each arduous “rite of passage” while residing in Japan. Each stage is marked with a small figurine that narrates the roles that women took on as both laborers and caretakers/mothers. In Ro’s depictions of men’s roles, their postures, either standing in complete darkness or sitting helplessly curled up with head placed on knees, allude to the emasculation felt and disempowerment experienced particularly by Korean Japanese men living in Japan as opposed to Korean men’s status within a patriarchal Korean society.

³⁷¹ The relationship between “discourse” and “narrative” as discussed by Jakobson, Benveniste, Genette, Todorov, and Barthes are cited in Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Real Life,” 3.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 2-3, italics his.

Park Il Nam [b. 1957] and Kim Sung Min [b. 1968] are also two Japanese Korean male artists whose work certainly invokes narratives memorialized into Japanese Korean communal identity. At first glance, Park's *Gap* (*Sa-I*, 2001, acrylic and oil on canvas, 194 x 30cm) evokes more a comparison with the abstract minimalism of the painter Barnett Newman. However, this piece is both a depiction of his own life-threatening experience during the 1995 Kobe earthquakes and a direct allusion to the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 when 6,000 Koreans living in Japan became the target of attack by Japanese police in its aftermath. These attacks took place in the span of one week.³⁷³ Kim's *White Shipment* (*Hŭin chŏkha*, 1999, oil on canvas, 162 x 97cm), on the other hand, draws upon the horrific conditions that Koreans endured on boat transport passages to Japan during the colonial period and the interim period after liberation and before the Korean War (1950-1953). The Japanese Koreans' boat experience has left such an indelible mark on their memories that Areum titled its third show in 2004 *Neo-Vessel* in order to recall the past suffering. *Neo-Vessel* made its own transnational tour of Kyoto, Tokyo, New York City and Seoul. Miriam Silverberg begins her M.A. thesis on the massacre of Koreans in 1923 with this quote from "Hell Boats," a popular Korean song of the 1920s that Koreans sang along their journeys. "What have we got to resent / Even our country's been ruined / No wonder our homes lie destroyed / they ship us over and won't let us back / the ferry-boats are all hell-boats."³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Miriam Silverberg, *The Massacre of Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake*, M.A. Thesis, Georgetown University, 1979.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

Areum [Arŭm] is the loosely-knit Japanese Korean artists' association whose main mission since its start in 1998 has been and still remains to be the production of triannual art exhibitions, thus far taking place in 1999, 2002, and 2004/05. There are almost three thousand Areum members who reside throughout Japan, yet the organization's commonality is that most of its members were educated in *Soren* schools, the North Korea-affiliated Korean schools (*minjok hakkyo*).³⁷⁵ There are ironically even a few Japanese, Okinawan and several Japanese Korean artists not affiliated with *Soren* but still are members of Areum.

Areum is yet another example of a mesolevel of community network that helped establish interviews for curators and researchers in Japan. Even today, the strong hierarchy among its *sempai* or senior members and *cohai* or junior members allows for accessibility to their work, interviews, and other contacts, if called upon. In fact, as head of Areum, Ro Fung-sok was an important contact person for Min during her few days in Japan of studio visits and coordination efforts for Project Two. Fung introduced Min to Chinese Korean artists as well.³⁷⁶ Chae, Park, Kim, and Ro are senior members of Areum, an affiliation that clearly helped secure their invitation to the 2002 Kwangju Biennial. The associational ties and networking involved in diasporic cultural production in Japan provides both stimulus and detriment to the art activities of Japanese Koreans residing there. Many younger and older artists of the field can work together and present their work together in a group exhibition, addressing the inter-generational tensions and

³⁷⁵ Sonia Ryang, *North Koreans in Japan: Language, Ideology, and Identity* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

³⁷⁶ Ro Fung-sok, interview by author, Tokyo, September 2005.

shifts that have created differences between first and second Japanese Koreans versus the more acclimated third and fourth generations. Yet, the subject that the artists address, as working members and active participants of Areum, uniformly deal with the history, culture, experience, and therefore identity within a more dominant ideological setting. This often means that the narratives of victimhood, suffering, and longing remain underlying themes of visual portrayal. Still, tensions in generational attitudes and opinions come through in the younger artists who were chosen to present *There*.

The viral male and adorned female bodies found at the center of Kang Chöngsuk's *Crossing* (*Kyoch'ajöm* 2001, oil on canvas, 162 x 97cm) and Susan Choi's *Orientalism* (2001, photography, 20" x 20") are different conceptions of portraiture than Suk's.³⁷⁷ The body has now become the main subject matter, reflecting a difference in gender and generation. The adornment of Choi's [b. 1972] own body flirtatiously interacting with her female counterpart is legible as a subversive, even irreverent manipulation of eighteenth century European orientalist paintings. The European large-scale paintings evoke heroic, virtuous and sexualized acts that clearly draw a subject/object dichotomy. Choi's photographs, however, engages the audience with the large glossy photographic print of herself and her model enticing each other to play, seemingly giving both women the right to act and the desire to be acted upon. If Choi's *Orientalism* addresses issues of race, homoeroticism, sexuality, and gender, then her purposeful use of a European backdrop within a photo medium invokes the question of falsity, fabrication, and desire into the vicinity of the art object.

³⁷⁷ In the catalogue, Kang's name is incorrectly printed. Min mistakenly identifies Kang Chöngsuk as Kim Yongsuk. Ro Fungsok confirms that there is no Kim Yongsuk in the Areum association.

If we further probe these two young women's work, Choi's ability to proclaim agency through her own bodily insertion into photographic manipulations provides a stark contrast to Kang Chöngsuk's [b. 1974] larger-than-life-size oil paintings of naked men who seem stuck hanging or slavishly stepping along inscribed walls. Generational differences of Japanese Koreans factor significantly in Kang's bold address of gender and sexuality, one of the first paintings dealing with these issues in Areum circles.³⁷⁸ The ploy in Kang's work that utilizes dull earth colors to create muscular, powerful male figures captivates me more when I realize she is a third-generation Japanese Korean and Areum member whose education in national schools (*minjok hakkyo*) and displacement in Japanese society would direct an art practice quite different from her American Korean counterpart. Her work quietly resists the male-dominated hierarchy of an association such as Areum, and her ability to use oversized male bodies composed in defeated positions is but one indication of the changing attitudes of third- and fourth-generation Japanese Koreans who no longer recognize the telos of return to the "homeland" as an option in their lives.

Historical Memory

The Japanese, Chinese, and Russian Korean artists' narratives are based upon personal and family experience and their historical memory of that experience. On the whole, their stories support the prevalent mode that South Korean migration studies also

³⁷⁸ Norma Field calls upon the various different political affiliations within Japanese Korean communities to construct a model that implicates not only Koreans' but all minorities' issues in Japan. Norma Field, "Beyond Envy, Boredom, and Suffering"

underline: that of the plight and suffering of Korean migrants who left at the turn of the century and during the colonial period. One distinguishing feature of an oral historian's work is that it involves recalling past events by engaging memory. In a significant number of my interviews, artists certainly did recall the past in order to produce their artwork, and in a few cases, their art practice is entirely based upon memorializing. How do we assess the material truth and significance of memory? Does a distinction between historical memory and collective memories help articulate memory's function in diasporic art?

Rather than relying upon classical theories of memory that limit memory's function as a passive vessel awaiting active philosophical inquiry (Platonic and Aristotelian discourse), I believe memory, like narrative, is a cultural construction that selectively forgets as it recollects forwarding the idea that memory is a social and cultural process which is actively constructed and context-specific. Further, the processes involved in the remembering remain inextricably linked to the material act of the artifying hand (the communicator) and the material properties of image production (the communicated).³⁷⁹

In other words, images spark recollection/remembering as much as they are determined by them, and memory operates through representation. There is thus a mutually-invested connection between memory and image transmission in the following formulation: memory enables transmission of images at the same time that transmission enables memory or the remembering. Even as memory is an *a priori* facet of image

³⁷⁹ Susanne Küchler and Walter Melion, eds., *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

making, it is also preceded and shaped by transmission of visual information. Thus, “memory is a dynamic construction informed by the cognitive processes in which images are produced and function.”³⁸⁰

Scholarly projects that “bring up” memory has its own history, and Ernst Gellner and Benedict Anderson are often cited to recall how human collective identities and imagined communities are keys to nation-making. Pierre Nora’s *Realms of Memory (Lieux de Memoire)*, however, attempts to valorize memory using scientific methods. Nora re-writes the entire history of France as a function of memory in seven thick volumes. His treatment of memory takes it out of the realm of subjective phenomena and into the domain of what he calls *cadres sociaux* (social frames) of collective experience. By taking what are *loci memoriae*, viz., geographical places, historical figures, monuments and buildings, literary and artistic emblems, commemorations, and symbols, he is able to demonstrate not only how memory binds communities together and creates social identities but also dramatizes how one’s consciousness of the past is symptomatic of the disappearance of certain living traditions.³⁸¹ Nora’s work presents one working definition of historical memory in contrast to collective memory. Collective memory represents remnants and assets that are physical, symbolic, and affective, stemming from the actual experience of individuals, groups, and nations. But Nora is able to claim that his work uses a form of historical memory based upon scientific tradition. Thus, he

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

³⁸¹ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past (Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions)*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), ix-x.

asserts the critical, analytic, and instructive nature of historical memory, based on reason rather than lived experience.

Although I agree with the idea that visual production can be a representation, this process simplifies the “entangled” nature of diasporic art. With the latter, one must engage with not only the art work and artist but also the processes of cultural production at a mesolevel. In this sense, historical memory is helpful as one category of analysis that pushes further the connection between memory and visual culture, constituted by the history of collective memories at the two sites of cultural production in Kwangju and Tokyo. Again, I am interested in the dynamism of this construction: to what extent are individual memories influenced by collective memories and master narratives, and in what ways are they constructed, imagined or fabricated against them? An examination of the art practices of younger artists, especially from U.S. contexts, provides a picture that resists any easy representation.

In juxtaposition to those narratives of struggle and the history of suffering that Japanese Korean artists Jun, Park, Kim, and Ro interpreted, U.S.-based artists appeal to narratives based upon not upon real experiences but fantasy and myth. The LA-based artist, Wonju Lim, engages in historical memories of Greek myths and ancient folklore in dense, excessive architectural installations. Her work captures complex compositions made from Plexiglas, acrylic, polyester film, and foam – materials that reflect, absorb, and refracts light, emitting images upon walls of the installation. The piece she presented in 2002 at Kwangju, *Elysian Field* (2001, Installation, dimensions variable), is named after that place reserved for the souls of the heroic and virtuous in Greek mythology. The

installation is part of a series of works including *Terrace 49*, *Baroque Palaces*, or *Schlemann's Troy*, examples of installations that contemplate the constructed myths stemming from memories of places.

Lim is attracted to stories of myths that beckon some past, but she purposefully “rips apart” any coherence of a story with a beginning, middle and end within her three-dimensional representations of the stories.³⁸² In this process, any original points of reference become indexical traces that then allude back to the story only as moments of remembrance – still shots of Wilmington California, Highland Park sunsets and sunrises, factories in postindustrial Berlin, and Hollywood palm trees. In the end, Lim’s installation does not encumber the viewer with the weight of History, and the three dimensionality of her work, presented in compartmentalized landscapes, befit her artistic strategies. In this process, she creates seamless sets of well-sold and well-represented artwork, compared to other artists in the exhibition. She is one of a handful of artists who has attained multiple gallery representation in the U.S. and Europe.

Fantasy is foremost on the minds of Jennifer Moon’s superheros. Moon’s art practice is conceptual and performative. She enacts multiple subjectivities through her body in everyday life, as the business entrepreneur Deirdre Swan, the sex goddess Electra, and the superhero she was training to become on the installation gym set at the Kwangju exhibition site. She first began training to become a superhero as an art student at UCLA and then expanded this idea into a regimented art practice. Moon literally enacts the various identities she assumed in projects to become a publicly-recognized superhero,

³⁸² Wonju Lim, Interview by author, Los Angeles, May 2002.

icon, a pop star, or a sports star, and she will embody these imagined heroes for years in time, literally, in order to create what she calls a “third communal entity.”³⁸³

Mark Roskill and David Carrier’s treatise on truth and falsehood in visual images may help make sense of Moon’s years-long dedication to her fictitious superheroes. They write: “Falsehood, fabrication, guile, and deceit, and the impossibility in modern aesthetic tradition come into use to indict the alienation of a modernizing world and deterioration of the human condition that spreads to encompass the world in its everyday activities.”³⁸⁴ It also shows a more disputatious relationship between objects and their environment. They come to the conclusions in their analysis of Pieter Bruegel’s *Netherlandish Proverbs* of 1559 that the increasing alienation of humans from their world manifests visually with the “loss of center” in nineteenth and twentieth century art.³⁸⁵ In effect, the changes of modern life signifies an epistemological shift in interpretive framework of visual artwork – such that the “things that artists do, and always did, come to carry negative connotations, in social and political terms.”³⁸⁶ With changes stemming from modernity, falsehood helps to evoke not only the “degree to which human fantasy is capable of permeating from thought into actuality, but [also] the fabrication of an ‘impossibility’ that directly embodies the artist’s sense of what is out of joint in the world.” Though in contemporary times, Moon’s desire to work in the realm of fantasy and fabrication is a performative practice invoking all that is “out of joint” in our world.

³⁸³ Jennifer Moon, Interview with author, Los Angeles, May 2002.

³⁸⁴ Mark W. Roskill and David Carrier, *Truth and Falsehood in Visual Images* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983).

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

Susan Choi, Kang Chöngsuk, Wonju Lim, and Jennifer Moon render narrations, real, mythical and impossible, into affective visual artwork. They purposely chose subject matter recounting events that prove significant not necessarily because they happened, but because they were remembered. Most importantly, the content of their remembered events found their way into a visualized form that became fragments of *There*. But what about the untold stories? What happens to those years of struggle that are not represented through artistic production? The fourth theme of absence/presence confronts this dilemma.

Absence/Presence

The most intriguing aspect of the absence/presence theme is a problem of ethnographic method. Although I have interviewed some fourteen artists, curators, and others involved in the production of *There*, artists' schedule conflicts and far-away residences outright prevented interviews with another ten. Suk Hee Man has since passed away; yet another failed to show up twice for interviews. Finally, two artists flatly rejected my requests for studio visits via email correspondence. I cannot assume why David Korty and Yoon Hee Chang did not want to be interviewed, but I do know that Korty's painting (Untitled 2000, Acrylic on Panel, 33" x 48") and Yoon Hee Chang's *View of That Which is There* (*Kögi e innün köt* 1994, Ceramic Sculpture) intrigued me. Korty is the only biracial artist from the entire collection, and Yoon the only non-Areum

Japanese Korean artist, and both Kory and Yoon made it clear that they no longer wanted any ties to the “diaspora show.” If Kory paints striking photo-quality landscapes of the same Los Angeles cityscapes that Lim captures within architectural compilations, then Yoon’s philosophical ceramic sculpture pieces provide meditative relief from the narrative-driven sculptures by Areum leader Ro. Ro and Yoon both came of age in the same generation as Japanese Korean artists, and if Yoon had responded positively to my request, the comparison may have been illuminating.

There and the Biennial Platform

Curating a show on Korean diaspora proved difficult, and the absence of these two artists from the analysis is yet another point of tension mounted between artists and the show, or artists and the curator. As for Min, she dealt with the uneven artistic practices in disparate locales by using flexible criteria of what she labeled a “visual cultural approach,” rather than relying upon the “prevailing criteria to find ‘cutting edge’ work.”³⁸⁷ Whereas Min never explicitly explains what her “flexible criteria” are, she does state that such an approach fashioned “a truly heterogeneous global art reality of artists” who are working in both “contemporary post-modern mode and in traditional or modern genres.”³⁸⁸ One curatorial issue was how to justify her showing the admixture of a contemporary Wonju Lim and the traditional landscapes and portraits of Suk Hee Man from Yanji and Japan in the same arts exhibition without critical backlash that would reduce the work as anachronistic, or as ethnic art. From a curatorial standpoint,

³⁸⁷ Yong Soon Min, “Certain Latitudes,” 26.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

there are two dominant brackets that Min became cognizant of: on the one end, her own U.S.-based biases and on the other, the funding from and showing in South Korea for a predominantly South Korean and especially Kwangju audience. At this point, it is crucial that we recognize that the five *There* sites Min highlights did not allow for an open position. In fact, it seems as if there are two opposing fixed vantage points. Even if there is multiplicity of positions inherent in diasporic consciousness, there still exists the uneven, inflexible fixity from both the South Korean nationalistic perspective and a Western perspective that relies upon the logic of late-capital that desires highly-stylized, marketable objects.³⁸⁹

What helps Min's dilemma is that the show took place at all, and this fact helps resolve the problem of justifying "traditional" versus "contemporary" art practices within the *There* show. That is, there is a difference between *contemporaneous* art work – that which is *in* the present – from those objects elevated into the truly *contemporary* – that which is *of* the present.³⁹⁰ We may think about "outsider" art as that which lacks a shared history and thus, of being in the same category as "contemporaneous art." In this sense, "outsider" art does not share features of modernist, avant-garde, and postmodernist art categories that mark its authenticity as contemporary or "fine" art. But the authentic outsider's object, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, becomes contemporary by sharing the same display space, not by way of sharing a shared history of production. As time

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 18.

³⁹⁰ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 230. I thank Tim Tangherlini for this reference.

interpolates an art object, it can transform the status of the object from an artifact (real family photos from history) to that of art.

An important factor in the production of objects' and artists' significance, then, is the collection of artists' practices through the production of a biennial. This production allows for artists to be contemporary precisely by means of sharing the same space, and not primarily because they are of Korean ethnicity or mainly deal with a history of struggle that must be overcome. The biennial format and its production creates for a community of equals in singular units. The spatial orientation of the biennial's production fragments and (re)-collects. In so doing, it "represents a precarious community that activates equality in intermittent acts of emancipation."³⁹¹ In other words, *There* presents a provisional production of a communal group made up of singular acts or individual artists who together operate within the postcolonial logic of the biennial. When time interpolates this spatial orientation, objects no longer have to remain within the national or art historical trajectories that freeze them along the authentic routes that made them.

The geo-cultural corpus of biennials, thus, provides a fruitful platform to examine artists, artwork, cultural production, circulation, reception, exchange, and discourse. Spatially, the biennial is not to be treated as a one-time experience to be consumed – a space constructed to glimpse, if not overlook, art objects. It is not a switch-on, switch-off experience that starts and ends with the production's set-up and dismantling. Instead, the large-scale spatial form of a biennial incorporates local history and politics of a globalizing exhibition in ways that are important for our understanding of both the local

³⁹¹ Ibid.

and global within a scale of identities from individual artists to group artwork and from regional artists to national packages of artistic production. Francesco Bonami, artistic director of 2002 Venice Biennial famously wrote in the Venice exhibition catalogue that the “Grand Show” of the twenty-first century must allow “multiplicity, diversity, and contradiction to exist inside the structure of an exhibition,”³⁹²

Different from an artist’s retrospective exhibition or a theme-oriented group show that travels to museums in several cities, I find the biennial functions as the grand collector of subjectivities and displays “objects as fragment forms.” Fragmenting refers both to the physical detachment of the object, from ruins of one’s heritage or from a series of original artwork, and to the curatorial process that makes fragmentation and its appreciation possible.³⁹³ The contradistinctive logic embedded within a biennial, thus, fragments at the same time that it collects on a large-scale. In this sense, the fragmenting functions as a metaphor for dislocation of the artwork, an underlying motif of diasporic art. It also serves as a passageway for re-presentation of artwork (from its original place of production) used to construct a new collection of significance. If one accepts this characteristic as an innate feature of the biennial, then one can understand why there is a boom in “third world” biennials and triennials in the last thirty years, a circuitry of exhibitions that links the bi-yearly exhibition from venues in Havana, Istanbul, Dakar, Cairo, and Yokohama, to exhibitions in Shanghai, Kwangju, Singapore, Sharjah, Buenos Aires, Tirana, Taipei, Vilnius, even reaching Libreville, Gabon with its Bantu Biennial.

³⁹² Tim Griffin, “Global Tendencies: Globalism and Large-scale Exhibition – panel discussion,” *Art Forum* November (2003): 162.

³⁹³ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 223-230.

There is even a circulating biennial called the “Emergency Biennial” that is based in Grozny, Chechnya. These shows deal with the Chechnyan identity, part of the on-going reformulations in newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union.³⁹⁴

The transnational movements of goods, ideas and people in a postcolonial context have seriously challenged the presentation of culture and art within national museums or enclosed pavilions. Curators and artists have been and still envisage differing types of platforms that may be able represent the structural transformations of the world in which they carry out their daily lives. Rather than marking the distinctions between “third world” biennials as different from “first world” exhibitions, as reviewers and some critics of the newly-aspiring biennials often do, I view the growth as a phenomenon that makes more sense within the processes of fragmenting and re-grouping that are discernible features of the postcolonial experience. In 2006 alone, there were fifteen “significant” biennials and triennials of contemporary art, including the 4th Berlin, 9th Havana, 73rd Whitney, 6th SITE Santa Fe, 5th Shanghai, 6th Kwangju, 3rd Liverpool, 27th Sao Paolo, 15th Sydney, 1st Singapore Biennials, and the 1st Luanda and Brisbane’s Asia-Pacific Triennials.³⁹⁵

Antidote to Master Narratives?

As an antidote to the master narratives that valorize Korea’s history of suffering and pure blood relations, aspects I have expanded upon at length in Chapter Two, the

³⁹⁴ Thomas McEvelley, “Fusion: Hot or Cold,” in *FUSION: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale* (New York: The Museum for African Art, 1993), 9-23; Sebastian Smee, “Biennial or Bust,” *The Weekend Australian* (February 4, 2006), 18; Clint Burnham, “Emergency Biennale,” *The Vancouver Sun* (August 17, 2006), 18.

³⁹⁵ Sebastian Smee, “Biennial or Bust,” *The Weekend Australian* (February 4, 2006), 18.

cultural production of the *There show* exemplifies the possibility of a provisional act of emancipation from dominant narratives, constituted by cultural *equality*. Equality does not refer to a founding ontological principle (i.e., all things equal or equality for all), but to a presupposition that Jacques Rancière defines as a “condition that only functions when it is put into action.”³⁹⁶ Rancière implies equality exists within an “aesthetic regime,” referring most particularly to a certain cultural equality that premises its existence on the reconstitution of the hierarchical system for fine arts.³⁹⁷

“Equality put into action” best describes the various activities in which artists must participate as part of a regime of art. This regime is premised on the idea that an analysis of art and artists cannot be separated from the history of social relations that informs the art-making, and Alfred Gell helps us to see that “art objects come together with people and exist by virtue of the social relations amongst people through things.”³⁹⁸ There are several important characteristics to the aesthetic regime that incorporates an action-centered approach. First, artists are cultural agents who make work about something and for an audience somewhere; therefore, an artists’ intentionality is necessarily part of the artwork’s agency. Second, the artwork is showcased in multiple locations, and the routes of its own travel further extend the network of people and things that surrounds the artwork. In this sense, the production of art involves social activities that surround the vicinity of the art, referring to multiple locations where it was made, installed or constructed, where it has been shown, where it was collected and what was

³⁹⁶ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: the Distribution of the Sensible* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 83, 86.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52-54.

³⁹⁸ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6.

written about it. The awareness of the mediatory role of art - the social relations that surround its vicinity within specific, but numerous, interactive settings – thus includes the artist, artwork, exchange, reception and discourse.

For example, the curatorial process for *There* took Yong Soon Min to Almaty, Kyoto, New York, Osaka, Sao Paolo, Seoul, Tokyo, Yanji, as well as Kwangju. The process included not only studio visits with the artists but also field site visits within the local Korean communities in diaspora. The action-centered approach to art directly involves my work as ethnographer, interviewing artists, visiting the sites of production, and collecting visual material, especially by less established and unknown artists from the more remote areas. The complex of social mediations involved in art production including the artist, curator, viewer, researcher and history of the local production site not only brings light to the differing histories of social relations in the specific regions where Koreans in diaspora reside but also creates new social relationships. The latter become critical components of the action-centered, anthropological theory of art and part of an antidote to master narratives of the nation because of the diverse network of constituencies involved in the meaningful work of analysis and discourse.

Another component of the antidote to master narratives is visually expressed in visualizations that re-presents the art and retrieves information from a digitized primary archive. The visualization of digital assets – including paintings, maps, video footage, interview transcriptions, and digitally-recorded talks - manifests what interrelationships exist within, among, and beyond sites of cultural production for Kwangju in this chapter and Tokyo in a following chapter.

IV. Conclusion

Within a diasporic framework, the spatial representation of five far-flung locations of Korean diasporic artists expanded the experience and expression of the collection of artwork. Do artists and artistic intervention challenge the national identity, culture, and consciousness that are crucial components of national history? The geo-cultural corpus of the biennial structure critically develops the idea of diasporic art that can exist alongside a national frame. Discovering the artists through the 2002 Kwangju Biennial *There* exhibition has elucidated the powers of diaspora that lie in intercultural associations, collected in a biennial platform to imagine alternative means toward understanding different histories and identities. Yet, when sites of the Korean diaspora are explored in the specific intercultural activities of the Kwangju biennial, even an expansive diasporic consciousness does not necessarily overcome Korean national history and national consciousness.

The body of work I offer through the chronotropes of portraiture, narrative, historical memory, and absence/presence lays claim to the very complexity of artists' senses of self. In this claim, I offer diasporic art as a category that can exist alongside national frames and embraces equally cultural constructions of a paradoxical nature. At the same time, diasporic art expands the space of Korean identity construction(s) by incorporating the creative expression of artists from different generations, multiple diasporic host communities/countries, all underlined by vastly differing art practices.

Chapter 4

Diasporic Intimacy and Disavowed Art: Postcolonialism, Art, and the Ambivalence of Repression at the 2004 Diaspora and Art Symposium in Tokyo

*The claim of the identity of the object speaks, whether the sciences hear it or not, whether they throw to the winds what they have heard or let themselves be strongly affected by it.*³⁹⁹

I. Introduction

In the twentieth century, intimacy was seen as ideal yet suspect in that it was the result of the double consciousness of urban living that was at once estranging and engaging with life. Hannah Arendt once wrote that “it is the common experience of

³⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 27.

dislocation that makes intimacy possible.”⁴⁰⁰ However, Arendt criticized intimacy as a retreat from worldliness, as a shirking from universal knowing, and a shrinking of life’s experiences. In this way, intimacy, Arendt argued, was able to bind people to national or ethnic community, to home and homeland, rather than to the world since it was connected to a seductive promise of warmth, authenticity, and closeness.⁴⁰¹

This chapter examines diaspora in the context of intimacy in order to focus less on the global and spatial dimensions of diaspora and more on the inner world and the intimate conditions of art-making. For the artist in diaspora, I propose that artwork presented at the 2004 Tokyo Symposium be analyzed as a function of the various social and transpersonal relations that surround the intimate vicinity of the artwork. Several conditions reflect diasporic intimacy as they relate to one’s sense of self or the construction of identity. First, the idea of double consciousness bound on the one hand to ethnonational community and on the other to an inner world is one condition of diasporic intimacy. From the standpoint of the artwork, social relations form around the objects and evolve as the art is produced, exhibited, written about, and discussed. Second, transpersonal relations surrounding the artists and their artwork underscore the two-tiered idea of who we are to others and who we are to ourselves, allowing for differing conjunctural (context-specific) settings. The recognition of conjunctural settings is an important aspect of constructing identity. It is a Heideggerian recognition of the fact that in one Being and one body, difference exists in sameness. Rather than a split sense of a

⁴⁰⁰ As quoted in Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 230.

⁴⁰¹ Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1968), 15-16. Cited in Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 230.

modern self, or the interstitial, multiply-situated, fragmented sense of a postmodern self, one can situate identity discourses within context-specific settings that remain grounded in the self that is socially whole and fully present. Finally, the idea of social and transpersonal relations incorporates Freud's notion of disavowal (*Verleugnung*) – a psychoanalytic method of constituting identity – in the analysis of artwork. Disavowal provides a means to see *misrecognitions* of identity through the ambivalence of repression within oneself that becomes evident visually through the art object.

II. Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium in Tokyo 2004: Setting

The Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium took place on November 2-3, 2004 at the Foreign Language University in Tokyo. A day of presentations and performances by Korean artists in diaspora from Japan, the U.S., and Europe was followed by panel talks and discussions concerning the topic of Korean diaspora and its influence on the making, presenting, and producing of art. The gathering of these ten artists was coordinated by a committee including Japanese Korean and Japanese academics, art historians, art critics, and artists alike. Professor of human rights law, Suh Kyungsik [Sō Kyōngsik] hosted the symposium at his home institution, Tokyo Keizai University where he is an Associate Professor of Human Rights and Law. The larger coordinating team consisted of Suh, Japanese Korean Professor of Postcolonial and Cultural Studies Lee Hyo-duk of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, art historian and feminist studies professor Kitahara Megumi of Konan University, Japanese artist Shimada Yoshiko, and curator Sunhee Kim

presently at Mori Museum, but formerly of Kwangju City Museum.⁴⁰² In large part, the Tokyo gathering was a response to the 2002 *There* exhibition because the Japanese Korean participants and audience who viewed the 2002 show were dissatisfied with *There's* marginalized venue at the Kwangju Biennial. The critique of *There* centered upon the bias of the large number of artists from the United States, with far fewer represented from Europe and South America. As well, there were other motivations for Suh, the hosting convener who believed that the understanding and conceptualization of Korean diaspora needed further exploration.

Unlike the exhibition at Kwangju in 2002, the Tokyo show was not set in a major museum space. The university environment created intimate conditions for discussion-based sessions of artists' presentations, in Japanese, Korean, English, and French.⁴⁰³ Different from the format of the biennial the well-coordinated symposium simulated the affect of diasporic intimacy. That is, the exhibition space was one large carpeted room with the walls decorated with the eleven artists' works. The audience members thus sat cross-legged on the floor, standing in the smaller screening rooms, gathered along the halls connecting the main exhibition space with the individual installation rooms, listening to each artist present and field questions concerning their work for an hour or more. This was followed by an opening reception by the hosting university during which participants and audience members had the opportunity to meet, interact, and network.

The exhibition began with clarifying explanation on diaspora, art, and culture:

⁴⁰² During her tenure at the Kwangju City Museum, Kim curated an exhibition in 2000 on Japanese Korean artists titled, "Human Rights of *Zainichi*."

⁴⁰³ For those who did not speak Japanese or English, translators were specifically assigned to these participants, for example, for Song Hyun-Sook from Germany, Mihee-Nathalie Lemoine from Belgium, and Yong Soon Min from the U.S.

We here temporarily call those people who have their ethnic roots in Korean peninsula and dispersed into various part of the world during modernity “Korean diaspora.” Are we allowed to call them Korean even if they have lost Korean language and most of Korean “ethnic culture” having been uprooted for so long? What kind of consequences does it involve by calling them so? Despite our intention to avoid naturalization or essentialization of ethnic “Koreanness,” we may be prone to such criticism. These quandaries will lead us to reconsider the accepted notion of “culture” or “ethnicity” in the post-colonial context, and that is exactly what we hope to aim at in this symposium.⁴⁰⁴

Why did another art exhibition take place only two years after the 2002 *There* exhibition at Tokyo in 2004? After all, besides the ten U.S.-based participants at the 2002 Kwangju *There* exhibition, the second greatest number of participants was the six Japanese Koreans artists. Although the intention behind creating another diaspora and art exhibition was to “expand” the expressions of the Korean diaspora even further than that presented *There*, the 2004 Diaspora and Art Symposium’s eclectic group of invited artists were mostly from the Japanese Korean community. Of the ten invited artists, six were from Japan. A professor of fine arts at the Tokyo University of the Arts Takayama Noboru is the oldest of the six. In Takayama’s case, he represents a certain category of second-generation Japanese Koreans who “pass.” With Japanese citizenship status, he

⁴⁰⁴ Suh Kyungsik [Sō Kyōngsik], “The Keynote Speech: ‘Why is Korean Diaspora Art an Issue?’” in *Diaspora and Art Today: Focusing on the Korean Diaspora*, Symposium pamphlet, June 2005, 22. As part of the symposium, the organizers also published a symposium pamphlet and made available a video recording of the proceedings and art performances for posterity.

has maintained an identity as Japanese for most of his education, and professional career. There was one group of Japanese Koreans, consisting of the three artists Kim Myönsik, Chu Jeho, and Bae Sunok, who represented the younger third- and fourth-generation of Japanese Korean artists. Trained and employed by Chosön University of Kodaira city, they are affiliated with the *Soren* or North Korean system of education. Separate from this *Soren* affiliated younger generation, Oh Haji is a third-generation Japanese Korean participant who was born and raised in Osaka.⁴⁰⁵ She decided to seek out her family history after college by returning to South Korea to learn not only the Korean language but also the trade of textile arts of traditional Korean *hanbok* making. *Hanbok* is the Korean garb consisting of long-sleeve, shortened top called *chogöri* and long, full dress called *ch'ima*. The sixth and final Japanese Korean participant, Hwangbo Kangja, is the only artist who showed artwork both at the 2002 Kwangju Biennial and the 2004 Tokyo Symposium. At *There*, she presented a piece titled *Pachinko* which was part of a collaboration with Japanese feminist artist Shimada Yoshiko, a successful artist in her own right and also a coordinating member/artistic director of the 2004 Tokyo Diaspora and Art Symposium.

Also at the 2004 show, the two artists who represented North America include Yong Soon Min, the curator of *There* in 2002, and one of her own M.F.A. students from U.C. Irvine, David Khang, a Canadian Korean performance artist who currently works a full-time day job as a dentist while pursuing his art career from his base in Vancouver,

⁴⁰⁵ Her Japanese name is Okamura Nazure. She recounts that she started using her Japanese name after her elementary school teachers could not pronounce her Korean one. However, she decided to go back to her Korean name toward the end of college. Oh Haji, interview by author, Tokyo, Japan, September 2001.

Canada. Finally, there were two Korean European participants, Berlin-based German Korean artist Hyun-Sook Song and Mihee Nathalie Lemoine,⁴⁰⁶ an artist from Belgium who has made a name for herself in Seoul for over a decade as the adoptee artist-cum-activist of South Korean adoptees.

III. Art of Retreat

As part of his overall critique of the twentieth century's era of art, Paul Virilio states: "abstract art is not abstract; it is an art of retreat."⁴⁰⁷ His discussion of twentieth century art articulates the emergence of art as victim of the multiple and mortal wounds, stigmas, and traumas of the century's countless wars, devastation, and displacements. Yet, rather than admitting to these injuries and "screaming in pain," the field of art, Virilio contends, does not even acknowledge this fact and thus [art] "still hasn't recovered from these sounds."⁴⁰⁸ The idea of retreating into an "abstract art" is an art of retreat that remains silent and fearful; it is a *disfiguration* reflecting the conditions that produced the works of art. For Virilio, one cannot understand abstraction without war. He states: "Contemporary art has been a war victim through Surrealism, Expressionism, Viennese Actionism, and terrorism today...art is the casualty of war."⁴⁰⁹ I examine two artists, Hyun Sook Song and Takayama Noboru, who engage in abstract disfiguration

⁴⁰⁶ Lemoine has several given names. Kim Byul [Kim Byöl] is the name her adoption agency gave her. Her adoptive parents named her Nathalie Lemoine. Upon finding her birth mother, she found out her birthname was Cho Mihee. I will use Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, combining her Korean birthname by which I have known her and her Western name that she uses currently based in Montreal, Canada.

⁴⁰⁷ Sylvère Lotringer and Paul Virilio, *The Accident of Art* (New York City and Los Angeles: semiotext(e), 2005), 21.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

from the 2004 symposium as reflective of an art of retreat. As such, an analysis of Song and Takeyama's abstract art illustrates the retreating stance of diasporic intimacy.

Hyun Sook Song (b. 1955) migrated to West Germany as a nurse in 1972, the last year of Park Chung Hee's Second Republic (1961-1972). Park drew up contract migration laws in 1962 that helped to "push" people out in order to solve South Korea's overpopulation problems or its "idling" population, *ingyŏ ingu*. The contract arrangements also worked to solve Germany's labor shortage of blue collar workers, especially in the field of coal mining and healthcare. Song ultimately married a German man and settled in Hamburg where she currently resides. Soon after she arrived, she decided to study art, a practice she has been cultivating since her early twenties.⁴¹⁰

She exhibited four paintings at Tokyo in 2002. The abstract titling of her paintings such as *Three Brushstrokes on Twenty-two Brushstrokes* are a deceptive ploy, taking a philosophical retreat into intimate portrayal of those ideas and things she was not able to express in nostalgic remembrance for her country of birth. Born in South Chŏlla Province in the mid-1950s, Song was born into a war-devastated First Republic era under Rhee Syngman (1948-1960) that ended in the student-led April Revolution of 1960. This was followed by the intensive export-led industrializing economy of Park's Second Republic, a period when South Korean workers were exploited as a result of its larger overpopulation situation. In 1965, the country received lump-sum aid (\$300 million), loans (\$200 million), and investment (\$300 million) from Japan after the 1965 Normalization Treaty was signed. During the 1960s and early 1970s, economists have

⁴¹⁰ Hyun-Sook Song, Artist's talk, 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium, Tokyo, September 2004.

proven that the South Korean economy grew fourfold with the help of these aid-packages and later with Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1967-1973, for example, South Korea received \$1 billion dollars in return for deploying 300,000 South Korean troops to fight alongside U.S. in the Vietnam War.⁴¹¹ However, Chölla Province was largely excluded from this growth. As the home region of the dissident Kim Dae Jung, the area suffered from regional discrimination. Park invested the majority of Japan's aid package in 1965, rather, to his home region by establishing Korea's first steel industry at the Pohang Steel Industries in Kyöngsang Province. It is within this domestic milieu that Song left South Korea.

The layers of her paintings are signified by number of strokes it took: a calculation of precision that she learned during her decades working in a textile factory, but certainly the abstract titles *Three Brushstrokes on Twenty-two Brushstrokes*, *Four Brushstrokes*, or *Three Brushstrokes on One Brushstroke* do not give sense of the image themselves, and of her remembrance of traditional Korean rooftops and Korean clay pots depicted in her small-scale oil-on-canvas paintings. Song's nostalgic images portray a past life in pastoral times. Yet, the video she also presented at Tokyo, titled *Wozuhaus*, a collaboration she carried out with her husband, is a serene visual depiction of daily life as a factory textile worker and painter, her two roles for over thirty odd years.

Central to Song's art, her daily life, and her paintings are themes of home, objects of nostalgic imaginations and ruminations about identity, the very elements that Svetlana

⁴¹¹ Carter Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), 397-398. Robert M. Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags:" The Hiring of Korean, Filipino, and Thai Soldiers in the Vietnam War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994), 64-65.

Boym indisputably observes are part and parcel of exilic artistic intervention. Boym upholds that ordinary exiles often become artists, remaking themselves and their second homes with great ingenuity whereby the inability to return home works as both a personal tragedy and an enabling force.⁴¹² In Boym's examination of Russian exiled artists, they are haunted by images of home and homeland precisely because they have mastered the art of intimation,⁴¹³ and artists and writers are enabled by their painful condition, translating, representing, and performing them into certain "pleasures of exile," turning their homes into museums, mimicking their exilic condition through the arts.

Takayama Noboru is a professor in the Department of Intermedia Art at the prestigious Tokyo University of the Arts, *Tōkyō Geijutsu Daigaku*, where he also received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. In 1949, this school merged together the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, *Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō*, and Tokyo Music School, *Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō*, both of which were founded in 1887. The Chinese Korean octogenarian Suk Heeman, participant of the *There* show, also received his art degree in the late 1940s from the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. As an artist, sculpture, and professor, Takayama has made strides in the cultural world in Japan through his public sculptures, artist residencies, and participation in international shows. Takayama has also held the International Studio Art Residency at the P.S. Museum in 1991 New York, the same residency that Yong Soon Min and Shimada Yoshiko also held. Moreover, Takayama has participated in various biennial and triennial art exhibitions including the first and second Kwangju Biennial in

⁴¹² Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 252.

⁴¹³ Intimation derives from the latin *intimāre* meaning "to make known" from the "innermost." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2006.

1997 and 2000. He has been commissioned by local governments creating public sculptures for places such as Yahata Blast-Furnace Memorial Park (1987), Seki City Cultural Hall (1988, 1990), and Mitinoku Lake Sid Park (2001). He has also participated in group shows at premiere venues such as Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art and at Japan's National Museum of Art. At the symposium, he presented oversized glossy prints of public sculptures that were mounted along one wall of the exhibition space.

Takayama's public art practice embodies sculptures commissioned for outdoor spaces throughout Japan whose work is comparable to one of his contemporary, Lee U-Fan [Yi Yuhwang], one of the most renowned and respected public artist/sculptors in Japan who is adored and admired by Japanese and Western European audiences. After having received his B.F.A. at Seoul National University, Lee resettled in Tokyo to resume his art study. His art practice includes meditational paintings of the basic shapes and elementary figures such as lines, circles, and dots, and steel sculptures whose presence remind us of timeless water, breath, and repose in a society exacting production, development, and speedy progress. Lee's works are seen in some of the most popular outdoor spaces in Tokyo and its suburban sprawl. Another artist of Korean descent whose solid steel sculptural pieces silently braced the scene at the 2002 Kwangju Biennial's *There* exhibition was Yoon Hee Chang, the Japanese Korean artist who refused my request for an interview. Yoon's homage to squares and rectangular objects grounded on the floor of the exhibition hall or dangling in mid-air were similar in form to those presented by Takayama in 2004 at Tokyo.

These are three ethnic Korean artists whose art practices are similar, yet in the first two instances of Takayama and Lee, their reputable training and success would not necessarily bind them into the doubleness with which I frame this chapter. In the Japanese larger public opinion, Lee U Fan is quite popular, Yoon remains far off mainstream art circuits of the Kantō and Kansai regions, and Takayama has found a successful place for himself both in education and national art discourse. Yet, it is the “social personalities” of these personages that make the biggest distinction among the three. Lee U Fan was born in Seoul in 1936, graduating from Seoul National University’s elite studio art program right after which he made his move to Tokyo in 1956 where he studied and debuted his first solo show. He has been making his career and life in Japan and Paris where he resides and maintains studios. A second-generation Japanese Korean, Yoon Hee Chang is relatively obscure in the art scene, but his art practice as an artist/sculptor continues as he participates in group exhibitions such as that which brought together up-and-coming Asian artists.⁴¹⁴

Quite distinct from the position of the two sculptors above, Takayama has led a professional and thus public and social life that has for the most part not recognized nor been socially marked by his ethnic Korean background. As a child of mixed Japanese and Korean descent, he chose to take on his Japanese father’s name, full embracing (in public and thus socially) his Japanese background. He has “passed” throughout his education and professional career track because of his choice to be recognized in terms of

⁴¹⁴ One example in which Yoon was invited participant was the “Circulating Currents – Japanese and Korean Contemporary Art” exhibition held at the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art and the Nagoya City Art Museum, July 14 – September 3, 1995. Of the ten invited artists born in the 1940s and 1950s such as Park Hyun-Ki [Pak Hyōngi], Cha Ou-Hi [Ch’a Uhi], Cho Duk-Hyun [Cho Tōkhyōn], Kimsooja, Yoon is the only Japanese Korean participant.

his Japanese background. In fact, Takayama's inclusion in the 2004 Tokyo Symposium caused some debate among the curating consultants as well as the audience members who were aware of his identity, first and foremost, as a Japanese artist.⁴¹⁵

Unlike the exilic reflections of Song's meditational paintings of remembered objects, Takayama's open-space sculptures are in full view, readily accessible to a public, having been commissioned by the local governments throughout Japan. Why, then, did Suh Kyungsik insist on Takayama's participation? Takayama's inclusion is one element of the "social personality" that Japanese Koreans have had to engage with in terms of how they present themselves to themselves within their own "ethnic" communities on the one hand, and on the other, to others within a mainstream Japanese society, and finally, there is also the self that is offered or publicly recognized to a Western audience, as in the case of Lee U Fan.

W.E.B. DuBois's "double consciousness" partially captures social and transpersonal relations as it defines intimate sense of self of artists in diaspora. In the African American case, there is the black person's understanding of herself within her black skin and her self-consciousness as inferior and as the *other* within the white society that she first inhabited as slaves: "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."⁴¹⁶ In addition to this double consciousness, I detect a third aspect of the Japanese Koreans public personalities that may be better compared to the condition

⁴¹⁵ Rebecca Jennison, Kitahara Megumi, and Shimada Yoshiko, interview by author, Kyoto and Tokyo, September 2005.

⁴¹⁶ W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1903), 3.

that Leo Qing brings to light for the “triple bind” of Taiwanese colonial subjects. For the latter, they were subjected to the colonial dictates of Japan (1895-1945), engaged in a fight for preservation against the mainland Communist Chinese, simultaneously while maintaining for themselves their positions in Taiwan or as Taiwanese.⁴¹⁷ Their identities are constituted by social personalities in their differing socio-political milieux via-à-vis Japan, mainland China, and within Taiwan. For commercially successful artists such as Takayama, Lee and to a lesser extent, Yoon, the triple bind of their social personalities are also negotiated differently as Korean or Korean Japanese for Japanese audiences and consumers, ethnic Korean communities and social activists, and for Western audiences.

IV. Doubleness: Pain and Pleasure of Diasporic Art

The ambivalent mode of doubleness is one constituted by the feeling of being “neither here, nor there” and by pain and pleasure. Boym believes that for the exiled, this feeling is an empowering one, in one sense, that helps to reflect upon the past and to “go beyond the loss and pain of displacement” without becoming victim to their misfortunes. She argues, in other words, that the ambivalence derives from a source of great pain at the same time it expresses the most intimate of exilic pleasures, liberating the source of pain, thereby warranting a cultural emancipation through exilic pleasures.⁴¹⁸

Edward Said equally discerns from his reflections on exile that the private experience of an individual exilic condition cannot be separated from the collective of the

⁴¹⁷ Leo T.S. Qing, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), see especially Chapter 5, “‘Into the Muddy Stream’: Triple Consciousness and Colonial Historiography in *The Orphan of Asia*.”

⁴¹⁸ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, see especially Part Three titled *Exiles and Imagined Homelands*.

nation and national sentiments. He claims that “all nationalisms in their early stages develop from a condition of estrangement.”⁴¹⁹ This artistic practice of exiles provides one antidote to homesickness or the inability of being “at home” in the world, being conditioned with the impasse of being “neither here, nor there.”

“Neither here, nor there” describes precisely a predicament that Nathalie Lemoine finds herself in as an adoptee Belgian Korean who has made her life’s work in the mediums of drawings, paintings, manipulated photographs, video and film work, as well as writings including poetry, an autobiography entitled *Sixty-five Percent Korean*, and publications of OKAY (Overseas Koreans Abroad Yearbook) documenting yearly a collections of artwork by Korean diasporic artists. The first OKAY yearbook was published in 1999, and currently, OKAY 6 is in progress.⁴²⁰

Nathalie Lemoine did not leave South Korea in 1969 of her own choosing since she was raised in Europe as part of a second flow of inter-country, trans-racial adoptions. At an alleged four years of age, Cho was adopted by a Belgian couple (mother, a social worker and father, a banker) with three other Korean children. She was the second oldest in the group.⁴²¹ The journey from a baby adoptee (*ibyangga*) to independent adult adoptee (*ibyangin*) with a fuller understanding of “where she came from” is a journey she expresses and documents through art.

⁴¹⁹ Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University of Harvard Press, 2000), 176-177.

⁴²⁰ There is no official website but updates on artist-participants are available on the following url: <http://www.myspace.com/okaybook>

⁴²¹ According to her adoption papers, she was born in June 1965. But twenty-three years later in 1991, her birth mother told her that her actual birth-year was 1968. Therefore, she was only a one year old at the time of her adoption.

A self-proclaimed visual artist, Lemoine was trained in the fundamentals of drawing and painting at St. Luc Art School in Belgium. She put herself through art school, after becoming economically independent in 1981. She left her home at thirteen years of age (though she thought she was sixteen), never to return, feeling partially responsible for her parents' divorce. She especially wanted independence from her adoptive mother with whom Lemoine had a contentious relationship, an independence she depicts as liberating and as living "without power control."⁴²²

In art school, she made a short film entitled *Adoption*, an enactment of a narrated letter from an adoptee to her birth mother with wonderment about where she came from. It won the "best scenario" award at the Brussels Short Film Festival in 1988).⁴²³ As a Korean adoptee, her prize earned her notoriety, and it served her well. In 1989, she was selected, along with twenty European university students, to participate in a Korean adoptee "home-coming" program sponsored by the Korean government. Two years later, she was asked again by the Korean Embassy to participate in the 1991 Olympic Korean Ethnic Games for Overseas Koreans in Seoul.⁴²⁴ This second return trip would be a momentous one: her search for her birth mother proved successful after her "story" was aired on national television. Of their meeting, she writes that she arrived in a room where a group was waiting for her:

⁴²² Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, Interview by author, Seoul, May 2002, September 2005.

⁴²³ For a larger discussion on adoptee's self-representation through videography, see Eleana Kim, "Korean Adoptee Auto-ethnography: Refashioning Self, Family, and Finding Community," in *Visual Anthropology Review* vol. 15, no. 1 (2000): 43-70.

⁴²⁴ Since Lemoine did not play sports, she somehow negotiated for her friend to take her place in the sporting events of this Olympiad. In effect, she arranged for herself and her substitute to participate in this program. Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, Interview by author, Seoul, South Korea, May 2002.

There was a bunch of *ajummas* [older women] from the neighborhood and my aunts, [among whom] one was my mother, but I knew already who my mom was...It was weird. It was like entering into a common field; a known field and we didn't have to talk about it...I think it was pretty decent, the way we reacted. We didn't cry like other Koreans. I just wanted to know why.⁴²⁵

Working as an adoptee activist and artist, Lemoine has been based in Korea since 1993. Belgian Korean adoptees created the Euro-Korean League (E.K.L) after Lemoine's first two visits to Korea, a forum whose mission was to link Korean adoptees to the homeland. E.K.L members asked Cho to be their intermediary from Korea, then to work for E.K.L. in Belgium. At that time, the internet had only begun to be accessible! Over the past decade, she has been successful (finding birth parents, locating adoption agencies and adoptive papers) with some 200 (out of 600) adoptees who sought her help from the world over; an amazing figure for a volunteer, working without official backing or continued organizational backing. Until the economic crisis of 1998, Lemoine had been working out of a small office space provided by her generous patron, Mr. Cho, a Christian man who offered his help after learning about her efforts on national television.⁴²⁶

2003 marked her tenth anniversary residing in the country of her birth. One year later, she decided to leave Seoul and immigrate to Montreal where she resides today, allowing her to return to a francophone region. For the occasion of her ten year

⁴²⁵ Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, Interview by author, Seoul, May 2002.

⁴²⁶ Mihee Nathalie Lemoine, Interview by author, Seoul, May 2002.

anniversary in Seoul, she celebrated with a retrospective exhibition of her work at a cafe. No other Korean adoptee that I have read about, heard of, or met has made the return back to reside in Korea for such a long period of time. As a European adoptee, a returnee to Korea, and now a diasporic Korean resident of Canada, Lemoine occupies a particularly complex social position.

After working several years in the mid-1990s as a liaison-cum-activist representing Korean adoptees, the accumulation of frustrating experiences, of constant questioning of Lemoine's affiliation and belonging undoubtedly informs her artwork and writing. Through it all, she continually manages the flow of Korean adoptees the world over who travels to Seoul to fact-find and make birth-family searches, galvanizing resources to create conditions that provides this journey for "roots" with spirit, solidarity, and sustenance. She incorporates art into adoptee issues as a way to communicate and convey her message. Since that time, she has also engaged in various types of individual art practices and group activities by producing the first adoptees' art exhibition in Korea, advocating for the right of adoptees to have extended visas, and lobbying to bring about a new F-4 Visa that allows South Korean nationals, their offspring, and adoptees to reside in Korea for up to two years.⁴²⁷ Lemoine has also co-founded provisional artist groups such as KameleonZ, Han Diaspora, KimLeePark Productions, KOA, OAKs (Overseas Adoptee Koreans), and many other networking related activist groups. Further, the Korean Overseas Adopted (KOA) is partly a continuation from the European Korean

⁴²⁷ Some of her curated shows include "East to West, Our children - With our Love," Space for Shadows Performances, the visa campaign, the 1999 OAK Calendar, K.A.A.N (Korean American Adoptee Network) Showcase 2000, the OKAY series, and others.

League and is the first adoptees' support group in Korea.⁴²⁸ Lemoine helped create a nonprofit, independent structure that provides a consultation and information center for adoption issues and search assistance, serving overall as a link between Korea and overseas Korean adoptees.⁴²⁹ She has helped co-found networks and groups that assist adoptees' transition to residing in Korea, finding employment opportunities, language training (and other schooling), or social welfare programs.

I want to connect the empowering expression of diasporic intimacy to the function of diasporic art and artists as one possibility of activating the inner-most feelings of loss, without succumbing to resentment, anguish, or sentiments solely pertaining to victimization or suffering. Can artists transform the condition of *not* being “at-home” without becoming a pillar of salt? Or as techno-scientist cultural critic, and artist Paul Virilio argues, is art of the twentieth century victim to its circumstance, terrorized by wars, social trauma, and the disfiguring events that displaced its people?

Accumulation as Artistic Process

In the large exhibition room, approximately seventy feet long by thirty-five feet wide, paintings and photos were arranged along each side and installations interspersed throughout. A pile of photos displayed along the long and short walls were the manipulated images of Korean adoptees from their original adoption papers that were stamped with their adoption case numbers, the only link to their past that may allow them

⁴²⁸ The acronym KOA pronounced in Korean, *koa*, means “orphan.”

⁴²⁹ Cho is less active in such adoptee search activities, but she has written a book *People Who Search* as a resource for other adoptees in their search.

to search for and discover the birth mother/father. Along the opposite side of Lemoine's photos were three enormous glossy prints of Takayama's public sculptures. On the other end of the shorter wall was nestled an opened suitcase on top of a pile of coals and rocks that had large, framed large oil on canvas portraits of miners. Representing the hard labor and unjustly compensated toil of the these Japanese Korean miners in Northern Japan, the paintings and their wooden frames attempt to replicate the air of the dark, dank, and dirty work of miners into the display space. Another installation next to the piles of coal are two set dining tables, one readily configured for a family meal juxtaposed to the other table that is disfigured with broken shards of plates, bowls, and glasses on top of soil and dirt. Finally, on the other side of the same wall in a smaller, separate room, photos of Hwangbo Kangja's family were arranged to tell her family story. (Make diagram)

In each of these cases, the need for accumulation as a process in art is one that allows the historical memory of events to be accessed. Accumulation as a method of processing serves several purposes. First, the many are represented or reflected in the one, and in Lemoine's case, the many involved in the history of international adoption and its relationship to the postwar history of war, social devastation, U.S. occupation and the manifestation of army camp towns where so many unwanted or "tainted" mixed-race children were born and adopted abroad are envisaged in the pieces Lemoine presented at Tokyo titled *Joie de Vivre* (Joy of Living) and *Paegin* (One Hundred People). Lemoine often uses double-entendres in the titling of her work. In this case, *paek* could mean both

the one hundred adopted kid's portraits or it could also mean "caucasin," referring to the caucasin parents who had adopted the Asian infants in her piece.

Second, the fractured/fragmented self of the adopted child is surrounded by similar images, or at best comforted by a communal identity of those who share similar experience of international adoption. Third, representation of the many in the one then obscures the identity of the maker and his or her personal story takes on a more historical grounding and transpersonal value. The accumulation of children's faces signifies the first time that a photographic portrait was taken, as a requirement for their adoption paperwork and later their passport. It is this occasion that makes Lemoine's work personal and collective. Yet, the idea of victimhood, sorrow, or sympathy for those adopted children is equally offset by their collectivity. The strategy of the accumulated faces then never focuses on one child, and the pitiful narrative of the motherless and abandoned child, which is the very logic of South Korean "search telethon" television broadcasts that often end with bouts of tears and sobbing, is stunted in order to take account for the many stories of children-turned-adult adoptees searching for answers to their questions concerning their birth parents and birth land. This accumulation of photos can also be another point of mesolevel facilitation, produced by the decades of Lemoine's own labor in collecting these portraits and in aiding birth family searches for returnee adoptees for over ten years. Therefore, the social collection of pictures provides a cultural medium of artwork and individual activities of self-led birth family searches, in the end producing a powerful image and eliciting a mesolevel of art in action.

Fourth, accumulation also incorporates audience or viewing peoples' participation. In addition to Lemoine, Hwangbo Kangja and third-generation Japanese Koreans Kim Myŏn-sik, Bae Su-no, and Chu Je-ho also who choose this method of accumulation. In Hwangbo's storyline of personal family photos, the history of overcoming difficulties is told through photographs of one family and touches upon the story of many Japanese Korean families. Hwangbo Kangja established the first social activist civilian organizations for Japanese Korean women in the mid-1990s. In finding *Mirine* which means rainbow, Hwangbo created a space in Japan for Japanese Korean women dealing with the double-bind of socio-ethnic and gender discrimination. As a minority in Japan and as women in a patriarchal Japanese Korean society, she felt motivated to upstart the group after the "comfort women" issue galvanized feminist groups especially throughout Asia in the early 1990s.

The pile of coals installed in front of forgotten and uncompensated miners tells the story of those who worked in coal mines of Northern Japan, Manchuria, and other areas during the colonial period as colonized subjects of the Japanese empire. It equally reflects the stories of those German Koreans who were "pushed" to move after the peninsular war especially in the aftermath of the first migration laws were established in 1962 after Park Chung Hee visited Germany in 1961. South Korean photographer and installation artist Pak Ch'an-kyŏng and German critic Klaus Rehling collaborated on a book of essays and documentary photos to present the stories of German Korean coalminers and nurses in vivid detail. Pak and Rehling's book aided the production of a series of documentaries produced by Major Broadcasting Company of South Korea based

upon the untold stories of German Koreans, yet another example of art that creates activities surrounding its vicinity.⁴³⁰

These piles of coals allude to the fifth and final feature of accumulation as artistic process which allows for documentation of devastation and trauma. Art of trauma is documented richly in two of the most remembered histories of suffering: the artworks representing the Holocaust and the Atlantic Slave Trade of the early modern era from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In one instance, Christian Boltanski's installation is littered with shoe boxes tacked onto rows and bows of bunk beds. There is also her installation of glass cases with piles of suitcases, mounds of dentures and eyeglasses from Auschwitz. Recent exhibitions in France's Gare du Nord included mountings of pictures of all the families rounded up at the Vel'd'Hiv' Paris in July 1942 who were shipped by train to Auschwitz. In another example at the Charles de Gaulle Airport, hundreds of pictures of people identified by name, age, and addresses were lined up on panels concentrated along an airport corridor. In a memorial for the Holocaust in Weimar, Rebecca Horn configured a pile of corpses by stacking a dozen violins at the end of a piece of railroad track.⁴³¹ From the 2002 Kwangju Biennial itself, the process of collecting bodies or names is used in Project Three *Stay of Execution* where piles of people's names were inscribed onto the prison space to signify the bodies of those slain during the Kwangju Uprising of 1980, the event that scarred the city and marred South Korea's image.

⁴³⁰ Pak Ch'ankyōng and Klaus Rehling, *Togil ro kan saramdul: P'adok kwangbu wa kanhosa e kwanhan kirok* (Seoul: Nunbit, 2003). Pak Ch'ankyōng, interview by author, Seoul, May 2005.

⁴³¹ Sylvère Lotringer and Paul Virilio, *The Accident of Art*, trans. by Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2005), 23-24.

Shimada Yoshiko also registers a personal history. The images of her three paintings at the 2004 Diaspora and Art Symposium are depictions of those Japanese Koreans massacred during the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Shimada memorializes these unnamed folk due to the belief that her own grandfather was involved in the killings of Koreans.⁴³² On the peninsula, the 1920s marked the beginning of the “Cultural Period” of colonial rule, yet also during this time on the archipelago, tens of thousands of Koreans were killed as a response to the supposed looting and mayhem that followed the Kanto Earthquake. The indiscriminate killings that Japanese carried out took place even in police stations. Koreans sought shelter and protection at the station, only to find that the police were partaking in the massacre.⁴³³

The participation of a successful, internationally-recognized Japanese feminist artist complicates the agency of who speaks and represents in a symposium showcasing Japanese Korean cultural production. Shimada has had gallery representation at Ota gallery in the famous Ginza art district for the last fifteen years, a significant mark of success in the highly competitive markets of Japanese art. Also, she received her high school and college education in California, at San Bernardino High School and Pomona College respectively. Furthermore, she participated as a Japanese artist in the P.S. 1 international Artist-in-Residence program in New York City and Berlin’s Artist-in-resident program, each for two years.

⁴³² Yoshiko Shimada, Interview by author, Tokyo, September 2005.

⁴³³ Miriam Silverberg, “The Massacre of Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake,” (M.A. Thesis, Georgetown University, 1979).

The first work that brought Shimada into contact with the Korean Japanese community was her artwork on the “comfort women,” work she was inspired to create, as was Yongsoon Min, from the first Korean “comfort women’s” testimonials of 1991 at New York’s United Nations Assembly. This trajectory of artistic enquiry eventually led her to connect with Hwangbo Kangja with whom Shimada collaborated to create the *Pachiko/Family* series of manipulated pastiche photos, presented as the 2002 Kwangju Biennial. The piece was one that allowed her not only to work alongside feminist Japanese Korean women, but also other social movements for recognition, for example, at the 2000 Military War Tribunals for Military Sexual Slaves of World War II, the Third Asian Feminist Art Exhibition held in Seoul in 2001, and many other exhibition showcasing artists addressing socio-politically-charged art.

Yong Soon Min, the curator of the 2002 *There* exhibition, was invited to present her art work at the Tokyo show in 2004. Min chose to present her recent video work concerning the issue of international migrant laborers in South Korea. There were two separate video pieces, one of which was titled “Moving Target.” It was an accumulation of ideas and thoughts represented through a five-minute loop of video that captured a social protest by international migrant workers at a street demonstration in Myōngdong, Seoul. The video cut into strips and became infused with another set of images from a different protest. The voiceover for this video was of a Bangladeshi worker, Kaber Uddin, who was addressing the protesters in the Korean language.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁴ Yong Soon Min, “Transnationalism from Below,” in “Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium” Catalogue, *Diaspora Art Today: Focus on Korean Diaspora* (Tokyo: Tokyo Keizei University, 2005), 39.

In the first installation-as-video piece, the postmodern nature of her video imagery shows how formative Cultural Studies as a form of resistance and counter cultures influenced her conceptual ideas and artistic disfigured forms. From Kristeva to Bhabha, she highlights that the movements of people and of those in diaspora reflect equally the movements of ideas and thoughts through texts and discourse. Therefore the long vignette of books floating and wading through water, subsumed within melodramatic musical accompaniment is homage to works that have impacted her art practice. The clipped and disfigured images of the protest workers is a social comment on both a metaphorical and political level: international foreign migrant workers will never be considered whole and fully-deserving human beings who can have and exercise those rights and privileges as South Korean citizens. On a metaphorical level, the disfigured presentation of the protests critiques the out-of-date manner of protest in an era when consumption and cultural industries have overcome the neo-left and socio-political models of protest in the past.

Yong Soon Min who was born in Suwôn, Kyônggi Province in 1953, moved to America in 1960. Although her father had received his college education in Japan at Waseda University, in the aftermath of an internecine war that resulted in a divided state, he found himself working for a U.S. army sergeant. Min states that it was through her father's link with this army officer that they were able to immigrate to the states.⁴³⁵ Her mother also worked on a U.S. military base until their departure. Min arrived several years before the U.S. Naturalization and Immigration Act was passed (1965) at a time

⁴³⁵ Yong Soon Min, Interview by author, Los Angeles, July and September, 2002.

when the Civil Rights and black liberation movements broke down (and built anew) racial barriers and incited revolutionary changes. Min came of age when a flood of newly arriving immigrants was trying to become professionally established. Yet, Min focused on fine arts, graduating with a Master of Fine Arts from University of California, Berkeley. Afterward, she was awarded prestigious residencies, including the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum (1981) and the National Studio Program of the Institute for Contemporary Art in 1991, of the P.S. 1 Program in New York. As well, she has held several teaching positions. Currently, she is associate professor at the Claire Trevor School Studio Art Department at University of California, Irvine.

During our interviews, I sense a firm determination on Min's part of having defined the parameters of her artistic aspirations, with or without her parents' blessings. Though Elaine Kim notices a "burst of cultural forms" that exist today since second- and third-generation immigrants now have the freedom to choose professions outside of business, law, and medicine as well as the ability to speak English as their first language, one must remember that such was not the case during the time Min chose to study art.⁴³⁶ Lisa Lowe also observes that the diversity of Asian American artists' access to modes of cultural and artistic representation was wrought out of the cultural politics of the 1960s and 1970s.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁶ Elaine H. Kim, "Locating Korean America," in *There: Sites of Korean Diaspora* (Kwangju: Kwangju Biennale Foundation), 97.

⁴³⁷ Elaine H. Kim, Margo Machida, and Sharon Mizota, eds., *Fresh Talk, Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), xx.

The examples of accumulation are concentrations of things that help us remember the event or the history of trauma. But does the concentration help us to build solidarity in order to create conditions of emancipation as Suh Kyung Sik desires and argues, or does it transgress into “art as victim,” as Virilio has stated was the case for the whole genre of contemporary art in the twentieth century? Is accumulation the art of the assembly-line as Heidegger has famously stated?⁴³⁸ Are museums and biennials that accumulate art objects for display also assembly-lines? Do they manufacture provisional cultural spectacles for consumption?

Do these accumulations of things, images, books, faces, objects and representations help us to remember the events of the past? How does a concentration of objects help to bring about the solidarity that Suh calls for in order to create conditions for emancipation from the history of suffering that initially galvanized the group of curators and artists to bring this cultural event to fruition? Any attempt to answer these questions must address the ambivalence of repression that functions in the art works’ process of accumulation. What this ambivalence suggests for some such as Boym is the possibility of transforming the painful condition of displacement into the pleasures of exile – a release that allows us to remember without becoming victim to our consciousness and our histories. I believe, however, that while these “emancipating” effects of cultural expression may occur for the individual, in this particular instance of the Diaspora and Art Symposium, the provisional moment of emancipation is further troubled by the idea of a disavowed art.

⁴³⁸ Heidegger’s famous quote, as cited by Virilio, *The Accident of Art*, 23.

I would like to read Boym's more celebratory analysis of and Suh's more emancipatory claim for the objects of aesthetic works in their display of diasporic intimacy in light of Freudian fetishism. Freud claims that a fetish is an after-effect of some sexual impression in early childhood. For example, his famous discussion on the foot fetish entreats the foot as it is a "substitute for the woman's (mother's) penis that the little boy once believed existed," and it takes effect when a little boy does not want to give up on the fact that his mother does not have a penis.⁴³⁹ If a woman did not possess a penis, then the penis of the little boy, Freud argues, was also in danger. Thus, his fear of castration, and subsequently his aversion to real female genitalia, remains at an emotional level, affecting itself as a stigma of repression, *Verdrangung*.⁴⁴⁰ This repression should have been forgotten, or relinquished, but according to Freud, the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from extinction through the function of disavowal, *Verleugnung*. In other words, a fetish defers the point of trauma into an object form. Therefore, a fetish "remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it."⁴⁴¹ In this sense, Freud believed that "the process of when fetish is instituted reminds one of the stopping of memory in traumatic amnesia."⁴⁴²

Two important points are evident from Freud's observations about the fetish character. First, in Freud's analysis, there is an emotional reaction to the fear of castration as an *affect* (*Verdrangung*). Second, the traumatic amnesia that marks the point when a fetish is created is a disavowal of the idea (*Verleugnung*). Although the

⁴³⁹ Sigmund Freud et al., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953), 152-53.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 154.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 155.

fetish is created because of some kind of trauma, that trauma is itself disavowed. In other words, there is no association with or recognition of the fetish to trauma. I would like to link this point of disavowal and the cause of the fetish, and thus disavowal of trauma, to the social conditions under which diasporic intimacy emerges. That is, similar to when a fetish is created at the point of disavowal, thereby disclaiming association with and recognition of the point of trauma in memory, I suggest that the topics that diasporic artists grapple with and the art objects produced are replete with symbols and signifiers of trauma and repression of trauma. In effect, their sense of self, or identity, is veiled in disavowed art, and art objects embody the meeting point at which home or *heimlich* and the unhomey, displaced, or *unheimlich* come together.

Disavowed Art

An ambivalence of the cultural expression of diasporic pain and exilic pleasure through a psychoanalytic analysis, thus, understands an object of art as *disavowed art*. In the Freudian sense, the latter disavowed art is that which is reflective of an undescribed, unrealized repression. This psychoanalytic turn provides another way of looking at visual work by artists in diaspora and artwork of migrant cultures as solely representation (identity politics), celebration (Boym), or liberatory (Suh). On representation and art, U.S. cultural critics have explained away artwork by minority cultures and diasporic artists as *representation* of self, a motto of “identity politics” in the 1980s and 1990s, one way through which a large body of substantive artwork was marked as “ethnic” art and thus was marginalized as anachronistic. Margo Machida, for example, describes art

objects as “readily perceptible points of identification capturing and extending the imagination of viewers, allowing them to better recognize aspects of themselves and their lives through engagement with the work.”⁴⁴³ As part of the identity politics that created a social imaginary and contributed to community consciousness, Machida explains the latter community, on the one hand, forms a commentative structure wherein artist and audience view the process of art making. On the other hand, such art creates the communicative act of art objects that embody forms of identification to an individual’s experience. This mode of identifying “object as representation” and “representation as identification” provides an iconographic description and a linear event→ object→ representation schema for viewing and understanding art.

On celebratory readings of art, Boym finds a rehabilitative capacity for art to overcome the source of pain or anguish and transform the trauma into a source of emancipation. Artists can then represent this source of pain, event, or trauma through artistic representation in the form of an object. This reading of art is prematurely celebratory and idealistic in that it does not take the art work first and foremost as the standpoint from which we can observe the social relations, socio-political events, or diasporic intimate conditions that inspired the work of art. If the fetish conjoins the feeling of being “at home” to the inability of feeling at home and is created through disavowal of trauma, I find that celebratory readings of art and literature represented through diasporic intimacy do not help one to “go beyond the pain and loss,” an

⁴⁴³ Margo Machida, "Preface: Visual Art and the Imagining of Asian America," in *Fresh Talk, Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art*, ed. Margo Machida Elaine H. Kim, Sharon Mizota (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), xv.

underlining thesis on Boym's idea of diasporic intimacy. The latter allows neither Russian exiles nor Korean diasporic artists to make their "homes away from homes." In my reading of Freud, the fetish is a projection of repression and disavowal. If this is so, then how can that fetish – as embodied in installations, museums, in-home shrines, or in any type of staging, spectacle, or performance – wield such powers of release from dislocation?

The turn to a psychoanalytic analysis of the artwork, moreover, responds to Arendt's critique of intimacy. That is, objects are the visual forms through which we can reconsider the disengagement of artists, writers and thinkers, estranged from worldly affairs, who then turn to the intimate quarters of home, homeland, nation, country, or ethnic community. The art object is the reminder, the rejoinder, the fetish, or the vehicle that allows us to recognize a disconnect from event, trauma, or history and the present. The fetish works as a rejoinder to the painful condition that remains attached to points of trauma, rupture, and stigmas in one's life.

Art produced by diasporic subjects, then, cannot solely be understood as emancipatory or representational. Rather, it is a *preservation* of the moment of trauma and a recognition of the retreat from wounds of displacement. In this manner, the notion of historical memory, nostalgia, and narrative does not follow a linear logic nor a solipsistic circular logic, but one that iterates a present moment and opens it up into a multiplicity of possibilities – what Frederic Jameson has called the "nostalgia of the present."

In an examination of the modern Gothic in Science Fiction novels alongside period (historical) novels (e.g., Philip K. Dick's *Time Out of Joint*) as well as nostalgia films (e.g., *Something Wild*, *Blue Velvet*), Jameson argues that time does not work cyclically when thinking about identity, embedded and informed by history, because the postmodern condition finds itself in an ahistorical period of history.⁴⁴⁴ He works toward linking science fiction as a genre that is in dialectical and structural relationship with the historical novel, a relationship of kinship and inversion. If, for example, the historical novel corresponds to the emergence of historicity which he defines as a perception of the present as history, and not a representation of the past or the future, then science fiction equally corresponds to the "waning or the blockage of that historicity, and to its crisis and paralysis, its enfeeblement and repression."⁴⁴⁵

One hypothesis he proffers is the supposition of "the possibility that at an outer limit the sense people have of themselves and their own moment of history may ultimately have *nothing* whatsoever to do with its reality." He continues:

...that the existential may be absolutely distinct, as some ultimate "false consciousness," from the structural and social significance of a collective phenomenon: and this is surely a possibility rendered more plausible by the fact of global imperialism, in terms of which the meaning of a given nation-state...may be wildly at odds from their own inner experiences and their own interior daily life."⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ Frederic Jameson, "Nostalgia for the Present," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (1989): 536.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 523.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 520.

In this sense, we come to understand that the image does not *reproduce*, nor does it *represent* reality. It shatters the continuum of a linear progression from the person to event to object. The more radical possibility, for Jameson, is that “the collective reality of the multitudinous lives encompassed by such terms is nonthinkable and can never be described, characterized, labeled, or conceptualized.”⁴⁴⁷

A formulation of diaspora with art, as diasporic art, makes possible the “nonthinkable” collective reality in a postcolonial world, a context that is unevenly experienced by subjects. In other words, through diasporic art, we see that being is radically divided against itself in the inner world. Contrary to the nostalgia that sustains Boym’s celebratory and Suh’s emancipatory concept of diasporic intimacy, diasporic art is not situated in the past, remaking that past, nor does it rely upon the future of nostalgia. Diasporic intimacy is rather an exercise of the present displacement imbued upon the past and imagined for the future. This is closely related to how a “transindividual” becomes a psychoanalytical response to the ambivalence discovered in “nostalgia of the present.” The transindividual mediates the subject ready to situate itself in the clash (between past and present) – “a subject no longer using dualism and splitting to escape the task of mediating itself,”⁴⁴⁸ a topic further explored through the body.

V. Bodies in Diaspora

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Walter A. Davis, *Deracination: Historicity, Hiroshima, and the Tragic Imperative* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 200. I thank Nick Kaldis for introducing me to this source.

David Khang's rich portfolio of work critically reassesses the body to explore the threshold of his own bodily pain in the attempt to mediate the subject situated between pleasure and pain, a situation exploring generational divide, bridging his home place of Korea and immigrant land of Canada, negotiating his profession as dentist and ambition as practicing artist, all the while criss-crossing the boundary between sexualized desires and gendered demarcations. Khang was the only performance artist at the Tokyo symposium. For his performance in Tokyo, he re-visited Paik Nam June's *Zen for Mouth* originally performed in Berlin mid-1960s. In Paik's famous performance, he inserted a cow tongue into his mouth, dipped it into a cocktail of ink and ketchup, and "wrote" calligraphy on rice paper, a subversive comment on traditional and formal qualities of calligraphic arts of East Asia.

In the foyer of the International Studies and Human Rights Building where the 2004 Symposium space was located on the Tokyo Keizai University campus, Khang's re-invoked his own version of *Zen for Mouth* by rolling out a sixty-foot long calligraphy scroll that splayed well beyond the entrance doors. With the audience lined alongside both sides of the scroll, we experience the beauty of the writing, pleasure in the performativity, and pain of the ten inch (at least in diameter) cow tongue in mouth with Khang's half-naked body, squirming progressively albeit bemoaningly on all fours, dipping interspersedly into an "ink" concoction of petroleum and ketchup to re-present his own version of calligraphic writing. Dressed in reformed *hanbok* (*kyeryang hanbok*) from the waist down, Khang creates a meditative and philosophic practice of bodily-

inscribed calligraphic arts “speaking” the torment of a debilitated tongue that is replaced with a cow tongue transplant.

The grotesque is constant in Khang’s performances, but it is always combined with a meditative atmosphere, qualities that are also evoked in two other performances, which together come together as a series of performances on the body, tongue, and language. Khang’s *Zen-for-Mouth*, then, is part of a tripartite series including the performances *Linea Lingua* and *Oral-Fecal* that were performed and recorded from 2003-2005. As part of *Linea Lingua*, Khang performed a piece titled *Speaking of Butterflies*, beseeching Lamont Young’s performance of the same name.⁴⁴⁹ Young’s version instructs someone to release butterflies in a room, and the performance is over when they flutter away and are released to the outside world. The butterflies performance is part of Young’s larger *Composition* series that addresses what Young viewed as the futility of speaking, an act both fleeting and ineffective. In Khang’s homage to Young, instead of awaiting the butterflies’ liberation into the outside world, he sews together butterflies entrapped in five books that represent five different writing scripts – English, Greek, Latin, Chinese, and Arabic. Standing within a dark and ominous netted enclosure, again dressed in a reformed *hanbok*, Khang takes the needle and string that connects the butterflies and ties it to a suture he makes onto his own tongue. He opens the books and “frees: the butterflies to fly about on the one end of the string while they are simultaneously anchored by his tongue on the other.

⁴⁴⁹ David Khang, Interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, November 2005.

Finally, the third and final part of the three-part series, *(Vag)Anal Painting* is perhaps his most pain-inducing performance: the calligraphy brush is placed in his anal orifice as he wades, knees bent, through a circular shallow pool, “writing” in the pool where ink is automatically and interspersedly released into the water. The circular movements of his “anal painting” are projected onto a larger screen above the circular pool, creating fleeting calligraphic representations that last only as long as the water will hold and as much as his own bodily movements will allow. Khang is forthcoming in his confession that his performative use of calligraphy in the tripartite series is one that stems from failure and the recognition of the futility of “writing.” By writing, he admits that as a B.F.A student at Emily Carr College in Vancouver, he took a semester abroad to study calligraphy at Hongik University and realized that one could not master the art of calligraphy within the few months of his exchange program. However, he explored the traditional medium through other performative means. The process of the ink in water format for his final performance in the series represents the *pièce-de-résistance*, an apex point in realizing the fleeting quality of his practice as a performance artist. The provisional aspect of a performance can never last, can never endure time as paintings and photos do. They may be captured through film, but the life of the performance is only and always remembered for its intimate, momentary effect in the short duration of its existence. These qualities aid him to “write” calligraphic and anal paintings within the fleeting medium of water, one of the five elements of matter.

The combination of body and tongue reflects his engagement with language, discourse, and representation, be they a critique of a muted, emasculated Asian male in

the West or the body used as a synecdoche for a disempowered and feminized Korean body/nation in history, embattled by the disfiguring events of the “America’s Half-Century.”⁴⁵⁰ Our conversation begins and ends with his uncle, the famous dissident and social activist Reverend Moon Ik Hwan [Mun Ikhwan], the person who has influenced him the most from his own family. Moon is one of the most famous dissident religious leaders in South Korea. He and his brother, Moon Dong Hwan, were part of the first generation of postwar South Koreans who received their education in the U.S. in the 50s. Moon Ik Hwan first entered Tokyo Theological Seminar but was later dismissed for his refusal to join the Japanese army. Later, he received his Masters degree from Princeton University. Soon after his return to South Korea, he taught at Yonsei and Hanshin University and committed himself to the movements for social justice, democracy, and reunification. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for his social activities.⁴⁵¹ In fact, Khang entered seminary school in Toronto to become a minister at one point in his life. If he had realized this family dream, he would be a third-generation minister, as his grandfather Moon Jae Rin was the first Korean person to have graduated from Toronto’s Emmanuel College.⁴⁵²

From this strong socially conscientious and Christian family, however, emerged a performance artist who takes the pain of the 3-8-6 or *sam-p'al-yuk* generation with which

⁴⁵⁰ This is the title of Thomas McCormack’s book that explains the logic of U.S.’s economic supremacy and the important role that military power plays in maintaining, protecting and insuring that status. Thomas J. McCormack, *America’s Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 4-7.

⁴⁵¹ For his life story, see:

http://sthweb.bu.edu/archives/index.php?option=com_awiki&view=mediawiki&article=Moon_Ik-hwan

⁴⁵² David Khang, Interview by author, Los Angeles, November 2005.

he readily identifies and invokes the pain of their struggles in his own art practice.⁴⁵³ Born in 1964, Khang immigrated to Toronto, Canada when he was only ten years old in 1974. When he speaks of his “cohorts back there” and their suffering at the hands of torture and dictatorships, I am not sure if he means the work and the imprisonment of his two uncles, both of whom were activist-Reverends and Khang’s mentors as a young boy, or if the memories are his nostalgic reflections on a history that he later learned in his adulthood through education in Canada and the U.S.⁴⁵⁴

His art practice is one that reflects the work of a transindividual, neither “here” nor “there, evoking pain and creating pleasurable, albeit provisional, forms with his body. The idea that he solely represents an Asian American sexually desired and desirable male or an ethnically Korean interstitial artist limits the historical allusions, social relations, and the aesthetic beauty of his practice. In this manner, Khang’s performances best *preserves* (and not *presents*) the moment of trauma, remains fully present through the (physical, tortured) pain, (national, historical) wounds, and (social, sexual) stigma. It is neither an *algos*, wading in reflection or nostalgic longing of the past nor a projection to be realized in the promise of the future. If for Jameson, Science Fiction responds to the problem of historicity, its “crisis and paralysis, its enfeeblement and repression,” then for diasporic art, the singular act of performativity of the body in pain and pleasure engages

⁴⁵³ *Sam-p'al-yuk*, or 3-8-6, represents those in their thirties, educated in the 1980s, born in the 1960s. This type of generation representation is used also for both older and younger generations, for example, *sa-ch'il-o*, or 4-7-5.

⁴⁵⁴ David Khang, Interview by author, Los Angeles, November 2005.

the weight of that past with the utter present moment of being and the multiple possibilities, Jameson's nostalgia of the present allows.⁴⁵⁵

Like Khang's revision of calligraphy, Oh Haji uses traditional Korean form of art in her own right by fabricating traditional Korean *hanbok*. She is a third-generation Japanese Korean who was neither taught Korean in Japan nor spoke Korean with her parents or grandparents. She became inspired to learn about her family's past during her grandmother's final battle with and subsequent death from Parkinson's disease. Born and raised in Osaka and currently residing in Kyoto where she went to school in textile arts, Oh's route to the 2004 Tokyo Symposium took a trajectory quite opposite from Takayama Noboru's. Oh actively sought means to learn Korean, seek explanations of her "heritage," and particularly took an interest in learning textile fabrication, majoring in fabric dying at Kyoto University's School of Arts. She took her interests to another level when she decided to return to Korea, learn Korean, and started an apprenticeship with a Korean *hanbok* designer. Her intention to stay a few months went well beyond her initial plans, as she worked and resided in Seoul for over two years from 2002 to 2004, learning Korean language and *hanbok*-making, and furthering her interest in Korean society and culture through various odds-and-ends jobs, even working for a clothing vendor at the central Namdaemun (South Gate) night markets.⁴⁵⁶

For someone whose social network and personal friends were mostly if not all Japanese, Oh Haji's entrance into the Japanese Korean art world was initiated by her introduction to Shimada Yoshiko in 2002, just before she came to South Korea. Shimada

⁴⁵⁵ Frederic Jameson, "Nostalgia for the Present," 523.

⁴⁵⁶ Oh Haji, Interview by author, Osaka, September 2005.

became intrigued by a young third-generation Japanese Korean artist who was interested in traditional clothes-making and introduced her to the coterie of active Japanese Korean community in the Kansai region, ultimately leading to her meeting Suh Kyungsik and Nathalie Lemoine during her stay in Seoul. Shimada asked Oh to participate in the 2004 Symposium, and her relationship with Lemoine also opened up opportunities for Oh to participate in a few international “diaspora arts” shows in Hong Kong and Seoul. Interestingly, Oh does not know her own family history and admits that her parents and sibling have never inquired about her artwork or her participation in these international shows. On the flip side, however, they have not desisted from her participation in “*zainichi*” social groups or her going to Korea and learning Korean. Unlike any other artist among the Japanese Korean artists, there is no remembered or passed-down stories of “history of suffering” that has provided Oh with a Japanese Korean consciousness. Upon her return to Osaka in 2004, her daily life is consumed by her working at an all-girls high school in Kyoto teaching art where she is surrounded by her friends who are all Japanese. Her friendships and relationships with other Japanese Koreans and Korean artists whom she met in Seoul did not connect her necessarily to become “politicized” in her native Osaka hometown, and yet she continues to make *hanbok* and create installations with her photographic re-presentations of her cloth-making.

VI. Perspectives on the Problematic, *munje üisik*, of the 2004 Symposium

Suh Kyungsik concretely points out the three major functions of the symposium. First, the medium of art relinquishes Japanese Koreans from the “prison of language” to

freedom of art. Language is at once obfuscating and infantilizing for Suh: obfuscating because of the inability to articulate fully Japanese Korean's experiences and infantilizing because of inability to express anything on a deeper level [in the Korean language]. Language, for Japanese Koreans, is a prison that they cannot escape.⁴⁵⁷ Japanese is the language of the colonizer that has penetrated into their psyche and deep consciousness. By changing mediums of expression and communication, from speech and language to art and visual culture, Suh is hopeful that the shift makes more possible Japanese Korean's ability to extricate themselves from their imbroglio: the *impossibility* of communicating through language and the *blockages* that language creates.⁴⁵⁸

Suh deploys cultural production towards political means. As Suh states, "our [Japanese Koreans] experience is inexpressible through language," and it is precisely this reason why artists turn toward material objects and visual affect in order to express the regret, pain, violence, nostalgia, and the history of exile.⁴⁵⁹ The fact that Suh's problematic (*munje ūisik*) starts with the struggle of speaking fluently the Korean language itself, even as a second-generation of prominent standing at a reputable university in Japan, indicates an ambivalence of repression. Why is articulation in mother tongue such an important condition? Why is mother tongue Korean for Suh? Furthermore, what is mother tongue for the larger group? Do U.S. Korean or other diasporic artists mention such a condition as a "lack" in their sense of self as an artist or as an ethnic minority in the U.S.?

⁴⁵⁷ Suh Kyungsik, Interview by author, Tokyo, September 2005.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., emphasis Suh's.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

Different from Suh's insistence on the existence of the language of mother tongue, Naoki Sakai explains that "mother tongue" can only exist in the register of the imaginary. First, the speaker of the mother tongue, in the act, already distances the speaking subject from the subject itself, or in Sakai's words, "the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the enunciated."⁴⁶⁰ And it is within this distance that "the relation between myself and an assumed mother tongue is essentially 'broken'."⁴⁶¹

Second, the mother tongue is a notion: a notion of voice, feel, material, and selected/random memories constructed around the figuration of "her."

It resembles the notion of a home: various memories swarm within this collection, including fabricated memories of things that never existed. It is a fundamentally nostalgic notion...the immediacy of the mother tongue is something that is *imaginarily* related to the *notion* of the "mother tongue." Let us note, moreover, that these memories have no immediate relation to language...This is because insofar as a language is a medium of expression, it does not bear the distinctive features of either individual morphemes or personal diction. Rather, it is necessarily constituted as a *unity* of linguistic rules within a certain regime.⁴⁶²

In short, the establishment of the mother tongue and the notion of a native language or national mother tongue both produces the idea of the "native speaker," as a speaker of the mother tongue and creates the matrix of the "ethnos" or "nation" as a region of flawless communication.⁴⁶³ Investigation would reveal that, within such so-

⁴⁶⁰ Naoki Sakai, "Nationality and the Politics of the 'Mother Tongue,'" 19.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21.

called multi-ethnic nations as the United States, Australia, and Canada, the demand for linguistic homogeneity that has emerged as part of the logic of national integration derives, in fact, from phonocentrism. Moreover, the invention of a national language makes possible both consciousness of an ethnocentric “we” and the nationalistic sense that this “we” exists as an archetype. I believe that Suh’s problematic or *munje üisik* is misplaced. For art and particularly the image, as Walter Davis articulates, “experience is epiphanized in an effort not simply to find ‘the words to say it,’ but the way to be it, to exist as agent in the concrete situation that the image defines.”⁴⁶⁴

Still for Suh, the negative disposition of not being able to articulate his experience in the Korean language is transferred into discussions about the work of artists such as Nathalie Lemoine and Yong Soon Min, two artists he mentions early in my interview, as people who “probably have no interest in our [Japanese Korean] case.” The term Suh uses to refer to Japanese Koreans is *chaein*, which is short-form for *Chaeil Chosŏn Hanguk in*. The term includes both Chosŏn and Hanguk to represent those who arrived during the colonial period when Koreans were colonial subjects of Japan as well as those who arrived postwar, and *Hanguk* refers to the postwar naming for South Korea specifically. Rather than using often-used and -heard *chaeil tongp’o* or *chaeil kyop’o*, he takes the focal point away from Japanese, *il*, and replaces it with the personhood, *in*. I read this as a strategic move to relocate the emphasis from Japan to personhood and humanity, within the larger context of diaspora. Yet, he believed that the Symposium

⁴⁶⁴ Davis, *Deracination*, 197.

was an important forum which brought these two artists, Min and Lemoine, into one arena to discuss, debate, and compare differing experiences.

As mentioned in the opening remarks of the Tokyo Symposium, Suh's definition of diaspora is unmitigated and clear: it is being part of a community that exists as a result of cultural, economic, and political domination and control of one group of people by another.⁴⁶⁵ This dimension of Japanese Koreans' and other diasporic historical experience was not articulated at the 2002 *There* exhibition, thus causing for his dissatisfaction of the Kwangju Biennial. Without specific reference or insight at the exhibition into the historical, geo-political, war-related background concerning the reasons people emigrated from Korea and especially for those in Japan, the display of diasporic art merely "hung up" (*chinyŏl*) the art. In fact, it lacked the two most important focal points which for Suh are the historical and socio-political causes of people's movement outside the peninsula and the subsequent *minjok* or national issues caused by displacement.⁴⁶⁶

Suh further distinguishes his understanding of *minjok*. For him, it does not mean "ethnicity" (*minjoksŏng*) that relies upon shared blood, culture and the spirit of the people. Rather, he defines *minjok* as a group-community that shares a history of suffering and a goal of liberating/emancipation from this suffering through solidarity with others. For Suh, then, *minjok* is a concept that develops from consciousness-from-below in terms of

⁴⁶⁵ Suh Kyungsik, Interview by author, 2005 Tokyo.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

people's historical experience and local political situations that does not necessarily coincide with the idea of ethnicity (*minjoksŏng*) that is espoused by the nation-state.⁴⁶⁷

Moreover, diaspora is not about nomadism, nor are diasporic people borderless people, for they are affected by borders of state-decreed creeds, laws and regulations. In any concept of diaspora, after all, "the history of colonial domination cannot be overlooked."⁴⁶⁸ Koreans in diaspora at other destination countries may have different perspectives, but for those in Suh's position who were directly subjected to the violence of colonialism, the most important issue at hand not just for the Japanese Koreans but for many cases of diasporas of the world is this history of colonial domination and violence. When people remind Suh that he is fortunate to speak several languages, to experience three cultures, and to be part of a dynamic social community, he unequivocally reminds them that this "dynamic" community is a euphemism, for one cannot forget that this group did not come to life by accident. Japanese Koreans' consciousness is the direct product of exploitation and discrimination. Without manifesting the structural conditions under which diaspora was created, no people and certainly no art can be considered diasporic.⁴⁶⁹ To further his point, Suh claims that the history of imperialism connects the Korean diaspora, such as the Russian and CIS Koreans of the former Soviet Union with the history of Japanese Koreans. In this sense, Suh believes that it is the long history of imperialism and colonial structural system of exploitation that give the Korean case its diasporic characteristics.

⁴⁶⁷ Suh Kyungsik [Sŏ, Kyŏngsik], *Nanmin kwa kungmin sai: chaeil Chosŏnin Sŏ Kyŏngsik ūi sayu wa sŏngch'al* [Between refugee and citizen: Thoughts and reflections of Resident Korean in Japan Sŏ Kyŏng Sik]. Translated by Im Sŏng Mo and Yi Kyu Su (P'aju City: Tolbegae, 2006), 10-11.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

At the 2002 exhibition, as a result of issues of funding and preparation limitations, the show was far from complete. Therefore, Suh and the coordinating committee for the 2004 Symposium believed the Tokyo show would provide an opportunity to continue discussing issues and expand upon the 2002 *There* show. Suh Kyungsik's colleague and fellow Korean Japanese, Lee Hyo-duk was also another consulting organizer of this exhibition. Currently working as co-editor of the quarterly journal *Zenya* (The Dawn) and well-known in the Japanese Korean community as an art critic, Lee was a consultant, helping to flesh out ideas, themes, format, participants of the event. Kitahara Megumi, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Konan University and specialist in Asian women's art, art history, and media studies, was one of two Japanese members of the coordinating team. Japanese artist Yoshiko Shimada, artistic director of the exhibition and member of organizing committee, was the other Japanese representative. These two women, however, maintain differing positions vis-à-vis the art world and art presented in the Tokyo venue. In Kitahara's case, she is an established professor and enthusiastic supporter of Japanese Koreans issues regarding culture and art.⁴⁷⁰ She was eager to share her knowledge of work in visual arts and culture in the latter half of the twentieth century, questioning the meaning, value, motivations, and/or larger reason for the plethora of cultural festivities that have dealt specifically with Asian women and art, and more

⁴⁷⁰ I am indebted to Professor Kitahara Megumi for her generosity in sharing her archive. She was crucial to my own archival research, as she encouragingly loaned me her entire catalogue archive of art shows and exhibitions from roughly the previous two decades. As well, she contextualized the numerous exhibitions that have transpired and those in which she herself has participated. She also introduced me to people in the field, facilitating my ethnographic work during my time in the Kantō and Kansai regions.

recently, Japanese Koreans, women, diaspora and art.⁴⁷¹ Shimada presented the collaboration between herself and the Osaka-based Japanese Korean activist Hwangbo Kangja at the 2002 *There* show.

Suh's interest in the combination of political movement with cultural production began during the mid-1980s, a turning point for several reasons. It was the first time he was able to leave Japan and travel abroad. If a Japanese Korean was not a declared citizen of South Korea, North Korea, or Japan, then they were denied travel documents and/or passports. Also, it was also during the 1980s when the practice of "fingerprinting" foreign residents finally was put to an end as a result of grassroots level social movements in Japan and elsewhere. At this time, the Japanese state started granting travel documents to those who were not declared citizens of these states. Greatly motivated by the movement to emancipate his two brothers from South Korean prisons, arrested as prisoners of consciousness by the South Korean state, Suh's travels to the United States impinged upon the plight of Korean diaspora itself: the relationship between diaspora and the homeland.

⁴⁷¹ The Trans-Social and History Group is a research group interested in the convergence of colonialism, *zainichi*, diaspora, women, and art. One of their first meetings took place at UCLA, under the supporting sponsor of Professor Miriam Silverberg and the History Department. They subsequently have had presentations at a panel during the 2004 AAS, 2005 Workshop at Sŏngkonghui University, and a Colonialism, Women, and Japanese Koreans Conference in October 2006 at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies where I was an invited discussant. In addition to this conference, the core members have had bi-monthly meetings where one person from the group presents their research results, followed by discussion. During my dissertation research year in 2004-2005, I was able to join the on-going reading/research group.

⁴⁷² German Kim, "Confessions of Koryŏ Saram," in *There: Sites of Korean Diaspora* (Kwangju: Kwangju Biennial Foundation, 2002), 84.

Diaspora with or without Homeland

In addressing the understanding of homeland for ethnic Koreans in the former Soviet Union, German Kim writes in his essay for the *There* catalogue in 2002 that the idea of a return to the homeland would be illogical in his mind.⁴⁷²

We would be aliens there [South Korea]; we do not know the language, we have different mentality, habits, customs, way of life, we cannot live in a mono-ethnic environment, we would be absolutely incompetent there. I have experienced it myself. In Korea, despite the distant but existing kinship, the complex of being alien, of being a stranger was much worse than in Germany or US.

I am often asked: Germans return to their Fatherland, Jews go back to the Promised Land, Greeks to Greece, Russians to Russia. What about Koreans? I sometimes joke – No way! But it is true. We *Koryŏ saram* have long since decided that our motherland is here.⁴⁷³

While third-generation Kazakh Korean German Kim accepts the strangeness of being in Korea, Sonia Ryang describes Japanese Koreans as a people without a homeland. Rather than categorizing them as second-class citizens who are treated like subhumans, as many scholars of this issue do, she suggests that the very *unzainichi* reality, that of being

⁴⁷² German Kim, “Confessions of Koryŏ Saram,” in *There: Sites of Korean Diaspora* (Kwangju: Kwangju Biennial Foundation, 2002), 84.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 84, 85. Since 2002, there have been increasing exchange and study abroad programs to Seoul for younger generations of Koreans in the former Soviet Union, experiences which may or may not change the conclusions for these younger generations’ opinions about the complex of being alien in South Korea.

outside and not *inside* of Japanese society, means that “they are not subhuman but merely and nakedly human, lacking the protections that full national incorporation provides. Furthermore, to argue that they are treated like second-class citizens would be missing the point, since they are not citizens of Japan in any capacity whatsoever.”⁴⁷⁴ What exactly does it mean to be what Ryang labels *unzanichi*, as people without homeland? If they are without homeland, then why does Ryang title her introduction to the edited volume *Diaspora Without Homeland*, “Between the Nations”? For Ryang, people without homeland are:

...forever in exile, wandering, in search of home, land, and security. Death is near, or at least so it feels, for they do not know who they are and where to live and die – by using this name or another, by speaking more than one language depending on the need, they exist as sojourners, foreigners, outsiders, outlanders, and therefore intruders, polluters, unwanted guests, unrecorded populations, people without papers, people who do not belong in the dominant political order.⁴⁷⁵

Ryang argues that a Korean diaspora in Japan lost a community when they became truly diasporic: Koreans in Japan are *unzainichi*. Ryang understands Japanese Koreans within diaspora as immobile, closer to exile, a condition more likely described by confinement against one’s will or beyond one’s control. She contends that the unique historical condition of Japanese Koreans created for their isolation, and for their peculiar

⁴⁷⁴ Sonia Ryang, “Diaspora and Beyond: There is No Home for Koreans in Japan,” *The Review of Korean Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 69. See also, Sonia Ryang, “Introduction: Between the Nations,” in *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*, edited by Sonia Ryang and John Lie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 16.

⁴⁷⁵ Ryang, “Introduction: Between the Nations,” 15.

form of self-image (identity), diminishing cultural identity of Koreans to the notion of the past for diasporic community. For Japan's case, there is no longer a hope for return for all generations because they remain homeless in what she describes as an "inflexible and fatalistic" situation, "marked with inescapabilities."⁴⁷⁶

Juxtapose Ryang's pessimistic and unsettling proposition of diaspora to death for Japanese Koreans with Suh formulation of the "quasi-diaspora." In many ways, Suh's thinking was influenced by his own personal historical experience, that of his brother's tumultuous lives as prisoners of consciousness in South Korea and his fight for their release. Under the sponsorship and help of the American Friends Committee, his multi-stop speaking tour of the U.S. gave him the opportunity to see a different case of Korean diaspora. He experienced first-hand the different and varied conditions in which American Koreans lived, and his exchanges with American Koreans made a deep impression, raising the ethical call under which Japanese Koreans should live.⁴⁷⁷

Suh formulates an argument for the "quasi-diaspora" Japanese Koreans within such a context and personal historical experience. The "quasi-diaspora" subject exists between the status of *nanmin* and *kungmin* or between refugees and national citizens, respectively.⁴⁷⁸ On the one hand, they have lived for almost half a century like refugees (*nanmin*), without guaranteed rights, as full-fledged citizens in a country that many people came to unwillingly or as colonial subjects during Japan's colonial rule of Korea (1910-1945). On the other hand, Japanese Koreans make up the largest minority group

⁴⁷⁶ Sonia Ryang, "Diaspora and Beyond," 69.

⁴⁷⁷ Suh Kyungsik, Interview by author, Tokyo, September 2005.

⁴⁷⁸ Suh Kyungsik, *Nanmin kwa kungmin sai: Chaeil Chosŏnin Suh Kyŏngsik ūi sayu wa sŏngch'al* [Between Refugee and Citizen: Reflections and Observations by Resident Korean in Japan Sŏ Kyŏng Sik], Ch'op'an ed. (Kyŏnggi-do, P'aju-si: Tol Pegae, 2006).

(650,000) in Japan and continue to make their livelihoods and reside in the state of Japan. Thus, their lives have become an undeniable presence in Japanese society and culture, no longer living as transients holding onto the future hope for return to the homeland. Yet, they do not feel that they are full-fledged citizens because of Japan's own creed of *jus sanguinis*, recognition of citizenship only by blood, unlike *jus solis*, citizenship by land or birth right. In this sense, today, no longer mere refugees temporarily residing in a foreign country nor comfortable in their own skin, they have dealt with and tried to overcome this "not here nor there" feeling of inferiority and unease embodied in daily life as *zainichi*, or Resident Koreans, in Japan. Sonia Ryang clarifies her position as "*unzanichi*" *zanichi*, declaiming that Japanese were never a part of Japan, never considered fully human, dignified with human rights as declared by the Rights of Man of 1918. Therefore, this should not be the goal of Japanese Koreans today.

The realization that Suh describes for the 1980s and the 1990s in his life is the *diasporic consciousness* that John Lie locates in the late 1970s for the group of Japanese Koreans writers of the quarterly journal *Kikan sanzenri* (k. kigan samch'ŏlli, Journal of 3,000 *li*).⁴⁷⁹ Lie argues for a different configuration for Japanese Koreans relationship to the Japanese state that was based upon their "diasporic realization": the return to the homeland of Korea is no longer the ultimate goal of Koreans residing in Japan. In this sense, Lie finds that an unintentional diasporic consciousness was created in the late 1970s, with the publication of the journal *Kikan Sanzenri*. This journal was notable as

⁴⁷⁹ The designation of three thousand *li* refers to the distance that many Koreans had to walk to cross the border between the Korean peninsula and Manchuria during the first wave of Korean migrants across the Tumen River during 1860s. One *li* equals how many km?

the first printed forum for those resident Koreans not aligned with pro-North or pro-South organizations.⁴⁸⁰ Those Koreans in Japan who considered themselves temporary sojourners on the archipelago experienced an ontological shift in producing a “third-space” through *sanzenri*.” This third space lied outside of the Cold War-induced geopolitics. Therefore, it is a first cultural expression of identities that does not correspond solely along political bifurcated fault-lines of *Sōren* and the *Mindan*.⁴⁸¹ The terms “ethnonational consciousness,” “diasporic consciousness,” or diasporic issues,” is a significant break from past understandings of sense of self and of belonging, as it is lies in the space of possibility within Japan, and is no longer bound to issues of homeland, viz. return, reunification, political association, and kin-folk affiliation. I extrapolate from Lie’s archival work that *sanzenri* also represents hybrid notions for identifying with the place of residence *in situ*, rather than with the idyllic, politicized, or nostalgic/imagined understanding of a homeland.

Ironically, Lie comes to a conclusion different from my observations on “diasporic consciousness.” As he describes the resulting consequence of diasporic consciousness, “enmeshed thus in Cold War politics, the founders of *Kikan sanzenri* not only valorized geopolitics, in particular, the question of Korean unification above all, but also accepted without question the monoethnic ideology of Japan that dominated Japanese society at the time. In this way, the *Kikan sanzenri* intellectuals unwittingly strengthened the monoethnic ideology and policy of the conservative Japanese as well as

⁴⁸⁰ John Lie, "Imaginary Homeland and Diasporic Realization: *Kikan Sanzenri*, 1974-1987," *Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (2000): 12, 16.

⁴⁸¹ Sonia Ryang, "Introduction: Between the Nations," 15.

Korean governments which preempted ethnic minority politics in postwar Japan.⁴⁸² In other words, the *Kikan sanzenri* intellectuals maintained the master narratives that defined Korean and Japanese identities as separate entities, ethnically pure and homogeneous. It is within this discursive background that Japanese Korean artists and art groups such as the 2004 Korean Diaspora and Art Symposium begin to create a social space to express their identity and belonging again as part of a larger diasporic art production.

There are, however, generational differences. Though the first generation's historical experience discreetly influenced the formation of a Korean identity in Japan, the impossibility of return and the lack of desire/hope for returning by recognizing their homes in Japan broke this narrative. In effect, for the first generation, Ryang understands the loss of national home or homeland is such that "the nostalgia for such a loss is lost."⁴⁸³ As for second-, third- and fourth generation Japanese Koreans, they remain afflicted by their predecessors' historical experience but also by their own apolitical choices, individual tastes, and larger forces of change in a high/late capitalist market-driven society of Japan in the present day. If no longer driven by the nationalist-dominated expatriate political community's drive for return back to homeland in postwar decades, where would Ryang say is their home? What does it mean to be *unzainichi* if they live, work, and by virtue, pay taxes, observe holidays, speak Japanese, and participate in the rituals of daily life in Japan? Furthermore, why describe life choices of Japanese Koreans only as if they have to be one way (diasporic, thus *unzainichi*) or

⁴⁸² Sonia Ryang, "Diaspora and Beyond," 67-69

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 67.

another (ethnic Koreans, thus *zainichi*)? What creates this *unheimlich* pessimistic situation beyond that which is structured and regulated by the state?

VII. Conclusion: the Transindividual and a Turn Away from Pessimism and Particularism

In analyzing objects of diasporic intimacy from the point of Freudian fetish character, I argue that those objects on display are not *presentations* of loss or painful condition, but are a *preservation* of loss. The function of art that *preserves* the moment of disavowal is more significant of the moment of repression. In this sense, the psychoanalytical analysis of the artists who presented at the Tokyo symposium proves my working methodological premise: that an iconographic reading of art signified by the artist→object→identity→representation schema does not fully express the meaning, significance, and function of the art works on display. Furthermore, discourse cannot broach the topic of repression because of the fact of the object's preservation through disavowal. Disavowed art, therefore, does not liberate the artists from the past, nor does it allow themselves to make "homes away from their homes," where the object of analysis converge upon a topic and expands the framework of that topic. Rather, disavowed art encapsulates the moment of trauma and fully embraces the present, as articulated in Jameson's "nostalgia of the present."

Is there an inherent contradiction in the hypothesis that social conditions are reflected in artwork, if art signifies the moment of repression? If the Tokyo Symposium on Korean Diaspora and Art should be framed by diasporic intimacy, does the fetish character in the visual artwork become symbolic of a disavowed art that remains at the

level of a preservation of trauma? Is this contradiction a condition of casting diaspora that remains at the level of object, unable to engage at the level of discourse? If so, then how does this repressed trauma allow for discourses of displacement to expand upon the exclusions and limitations embedded in master narratives? After all, is not the body of such discourses the first step toward comparative work on a broader level? Furthermore, if the Kwangju Biennial's *There* exhibition provides an example of cultural productions' enabling self-transformation, provisional moments of solidarity and mobilization, and models that create meaningful, albeit fragmented collections, then how can we understand the enabling component of repressed trauma and preservation of that trauma in art objects? How can we think about the preservation of trauma in art objects and art-making without succumbing to a vortex of pessimism and master narrative of nationalism that retracts back into the singular experience? I argue that diasporic art expands the field of diaspora and culture into four chronotropes of portraiture, historical memory, narrative, and absence/presence to express the multiplicity of identities and various forms of belonging into a global framework, allowing for comparisons across borders, cultures, and languages. If my conclusions hold true, how can we overcome pessimism and particularism?

Discussions about identity or identifications have relied upon a gradient between the self and society and the fractured identities in between. However, another way of discussing selfhood and interiority is discussed by Balibar in his concept of the transindividual: the interior excluded other. This "interior exclusion" is a psychoanalytical discussion based upon the reality of "ambivalence of repression," a

repression that, for Balibar, must parlay into the analysis of not only his politico-psychoanalysis but also other social analyses that takes the complex of identification and subjectivity as topics of analysis. Ambivalence of repression means that "the self is confronted by the 'other' not only when it confronts society but also when it confronts itself."⁴⁸⁴ The recognition of the self in society and self in itself becomes an important distinction in the negotiation of the self with itself in deciding which self is most appropriate, or not, to a social situation. An analysis that takes into account the transindividual takes a transformative step to discerning identities of "diasporic subjects" as negotiated in their artwork. It also helps us see why there has been a turn to the visual arts in recent times.

In a discussion of minority cultures, this means that society is confronted by "the other" in the form of individual selves, in the form of "other" collective selves, and most significantly in the form of its own collective "identity."⁴⁸⁵ Instead of thinking about the "other" in terms of just self and society, then, the other of both the self and of society is the "transindividual." Balibar uses the term "transindividual" frequently by thinking of both the intrasubjective and intersubjective to disrupt the dichotomy of the individual and society.⁴⁸⁶ By juxtaposing Balibar's exploration of critical psychoanalysis,⁴⁸⁷ Susan Gearhart articulates the social and cultural implications about the complex topic of subjectivity. She states that "we all, by now, understand that self is not punctual and

⁴⁸⁴ Suzanne Gearheart, "Psychoanalysis, Transnationalism, and Minority Cultures," in *Minor Transnationalism*, ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shumei Shi (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 30.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁸⁷ She states it's "critical" because like Reich, Balibar is dealing with Freudo-Marxists.

unified, but rather complex and problematic." ⁴⁸⁸ These two concepts of the intrasubjective and intersubjective have a dual relation to culture in Balibar's description of the transindividual.

⁴⁸⁸ Gearheart, "Psychoanalysis, Transnationalism, and Minority Cultures," 29, 31.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

*To every being as such, there belongs identity, the unity with itself.*⁴⁸⁹

Chǒngch'esǒng (正體性) is the group of characters which together signifies the Korean word for identity. Denotated, *chǒng* means proper; *ch'e* means body; and *sǒng* is character. One denotative translation of identity based upon these characters could be “proper body and character.” Another could be “correct form and mind.” These words combine to ensure that there is a sense of propriety or correctness in one’s being, both in physical bodily form and in an inner mindful character. The Confucian inflection of this term as it is defined brings to mind a rigidity and hierarchy that dictate social mores, cultural comportment, and an understanding of one’s place in the world. If identity is understood in juxtaposition to sociocultural characteristics or bodily comportment and belonging in social groups, then the definition of *chǒngch'esǒng* as identity is *exogenously* defined in accordance with standardized cultural norms and social roles, which can be called the individual’s social identity.

The connotation is a far reach from the Western formulation of the word “identity” that does not conjure up necessarily sentiments of what is right and wrong; rather, identity at the current historical juncture is highly debated precisely because there are no proper meanings as to what is or should be proper form and mind. The self (or self-identity) is the aspect of identity that is experienced and developed *endogenously* through the individual’s own subjective perceptions and experiences of the social

⁴⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 26.

environment. In the Western context, does identity refer to one's sense of self in an open context with no prescriptions, regulation, or stipulation?

Martin Heidegger defines the principle of identity with the equation $A = A$, a formula expressing the equality of A and A which stands for the highest principle of thought.⁴⁹⁰ The distinguishing point of $A = A$ is that he does not define A as mere sameness; every A is "itself the same." Furthermore, every A is "itself the same with itself."⁴⁹¹ He formulates this equation from Parmenides's famous statement that thought and being are the same. He continues:

Sameness implies the relation of 'with,' that is, a mediation, a connection, a synthesis: the unification into a unity. This is why throughout the history of Western thought identity appears as unity. But that unity is by no means the stale emptiness of that which...persists in monotony...the relationship of the *same with itself* emerges as this mediation in a decisive and characteristic way and where an abode is found for this *radiant emergence*.⁴⁹²

He goes on to state that since the era of Idealism, "it is no longer possible for thinking to represent the unity of identity as mere sameness, and to disregard mediation that prevails in unity. Wherever this is done, identity is represented only in an abstract

⁴⁹⁰ In Western philosophy, although the first concerned with identity was Plotinus and Leibniz, Heidegger believes that the unity of identity is founded upon the Being of beings, a topic first and most authentically dealt with by Parmenides. To paraphrase Parmenides's exact quote: "For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being." Ibid., 23, 27, parenthesis his.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁹² Ibid. Emphasis mine.

manner.”⁴⁹³ Heidegger’s idea of the “same with itself” based upon the concept of Being of beings reifies in principle an internal subjective construction of identity, but his formulation seeks the “mediation that prevails in unity.” Thus, in the equation $A = A$, the “equals” sign acts as more than a symbol. Considering the mediation of social life, I understand Heideggerian Being as emerging also within the context of the exogenously socially-defined being of form and mind, similar to the denotation of *chǒngch’esǒng*. How can Heidegger’s abstract principle of identity aid in the understanding of proper bodily form and character/mind denoted in the Korean term *chǒngch’esǒng*?

Accounts of identity that frame the analysis within the context of global postmodernity and the influence of transnational capitalism and the emergence of new global economic and cultural powers of the Pacific Rim help us to see recent macro-level or structural changes that effect change in term self and community consciousness.⁴⁹⁴ Yet, at the same time, it is difficult to tackle the historical depth and spatial expansion of diasporic identity without considering the conditions at the micro-level and the individuals whose real lives inspire art-making and cultural production. The two analytical chapters of Part II take critically differing approaches because of the necessity to account for both the global and transnational at the macro-level and the individual and communal at the micro-level. In one example that examines the global and local conditions of migrants, Hye-Rahn Park’s ethnographic portrayal narrates the life stories of transnational ethnic Korean migrants who are and have been leaving their home place

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ This transformation is certainly taking place for Asians in America. Arif Dirlik, “Asians on the Rim: Transnational Capital and Local Community in the Making of Contemporary Asian America,” *Amerasia Journal* 22 (1996): 1-24.

in Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture to find work and live predominantly in South Korea. Her study seeks to bring light to “voices under erasure” since the changing conditions of their lives were not represented in studies carried out in the People’s Republic of China and other foreign scholars’ accounts.⁴⁹⁵

One goal of this project is to bring light to a reality that one cannot tackle the topic of identity without considering mesolevels and the inner life. Furthermore, I wed cultural representation and analysis that takes into account the inner life of the diasporic subject since iconography and semiology alone cannot provide adequate tools to consider the complexities of dwelling-in-diaspora. As Gell articulated, art’s odd, peculiar, and intransigent qualities are key factors of their efficacy as social instruments. As a product of the mediations of social life, and not as a mere function of art institutions nor as transport-vessels of meaning and communication of form, art is particularly capable of expressing the paradoxes of its production which scrutinizes and challenges at the same time that it reinforces conventions. One way this dissertation attempts to elucidate this paradox is to show the chronotropes of portraiture, historical memory, narrative, and absence/presence both inscribe yet critique the discourses of its past. This postmodern logic applies also to historical discourses of the nation and migration. That is, it reinstalls historical contexts as significant and determining, but by doing so, it problematizes the entire notion of historical knowledge.

⁴⁹⁵ Hye-Rahn Park, “Narratives of Migration: from the Formation of Chinese Nationality in the PRC to the Emergence of Korean Chinese Migrants in South Korea” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1996).

On an intimate scale, another way this dissertation attempts to qualify art as efficacious social instruments is to reveal the context-specific or conjunctural settings in which art can reveal the conditions of its retreat as bodies in diaspora, as transindividuals, or as subjects radically divided against itself in its inner world. The intimate scale of analysis is a turn away equally from the modernists' claim of art's timeless, universal values as well as from nostalgia that sentimentalizes away from structural exclusions, ethnocentric bias, and nationalistic imagination.⁴⁹⁶

Why does Nathalie Lemoin accumulate the portraits of so many adoptees and present them in one image? Why does David Khang emanate the pain and pleasure of bodily orifices to invoke both the past and present, formalist traditions and fictive constructions, gendered forms of nation and the individual? Why does Hyun-Sook Song paint stroke after stroke to reimagine a traditional rooftop, a meditative urn, a ceramic pop? Why does Oh Haji continue to fabricate the imagined body draped in traditional Korean garb? I forward the idea of diasporic intimacy to help explain and seek answers to such questions through a mediation of the inner, psychic life. Walter Davis describes a similar feeling of the "image as affect." As he defines it, "an image is a complex of conflicted affects and motives arrested in a moment of time."⁴⁹⁷

Yun Pömmo, art critic and Professor of art and design at Kyewön University of Art and Design asked the following question in his critique of the 2002 *There* show: "Exactly what in the world was the motivation for such an exhibition space? It was ashamed..." He goes on to hypothesize that perhaps it was because the curator, Min,

⁴⁹⁶ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 43, 89-90.

⁴⁹⁷ Walter Davis, *Deracination*, 196.

could not speak Korean, this made her unable to utilize the space and to understand the domestic audience.⁴⁹⁸ Rather than being guided by a trajectory of migration history in chronological time and by an exhibition space neatly categorized into units of nation-states, Yum may have taken the complex of affects and motives, rather than reducing the show into a misunderstanding of a non-Korean speaking curator or a misreading of the context for a nation-centered agenda.

Diaspora as Resource: Countering Dualities

In conceptualizing Chinese diasporas, Adam McKeown attempts to forge a categorical development of a “diasporic perspective” that can have broad implications when used within analyses of geographically-dispersed institutions and identities as they are interconnected with global flows of culture. Similar to Clifford’s survey of diaspora’s misuses and abuses, McKeown also implicates the ways in which diaspora as a concept has been “depleted” of its meaning, but he still discusses the categories of diasporic labor, diasporic networks, diasporic nationalism, and diasporic culture as they remain pertinent to ethnic Chinese communities. Moreover, these categories also show how practices and ideologies of migration cannot be done away with since they remain imbricated within larger global trends and transnational activities. In Chapter One, there were two major problems of diaspora against which I cautioned. On the one hand, the ahistorical nature of a “presentist” use of diaspora such that the “newness” of the concept obscures historical specificity. This presentist frame leads to the second major issue of diaspora

⁴⁹⁸ Yun pōmmo, “Isan ūi ttang, isandoen chōnsi kihoeok (Scattered People, Scattered Exhibition)” *Space* (July 2002): 78.

discourses that refers to the multiple, plural, and unstable notions surrounding diasporic identities and cultures. Kamala Visweswaran finds that in the U.S. context, immigration is too often understood in a presentist frame, and groups such as “Asian Indians” may be designated as “new immigrants,” thereby obscuring older histories of residence and racialization. In fact, she suggests that “newness” in the immigration paradigm may be less an artifact of recent entry than a potent political construct.⁴⁹⁹

In light of the critique against diaspora’s ahistorical and open-ended glossalia of definition, McKeown warns against diasporic perspectives on two extreme ends: perspectives that stress dichotomies and ones that only highlight multiplicities. What he calls “diaspora-as-exile” and “diaspora-as-diversity” are ideals that have plagued diaspora discourses. The former emphasizes the victim narratives starting with Jews, Armenian, and African diasporas. The latter is the overly contextualized understandings arising from self-consciousness and contemporary status of diasporas as a way of life.⁵⁰⁰

The critique of “diaspora-as-exile” as a retreat from the world revisits the same problem that Arendt characterized about living a modern existence in the intimate quarters of one’s mind. Removed from the workings of the world, diasporic or exilic intimacy disengages an individual or makes him unwilling to participate in civil society or the public sphere. Moreover, the critique of “diaspora-as-multiplicity” lends itself to the endless appropriations of being, without reflecting upon the historically situated conditions in which such a formulation was conceived. It equally does not account for a

⁴⁹⁹ Kamala Visweswaran, “Diaspora by Design: Flexible Citizenship and South Asians in U.S. Racial Formations,” *Diaspora* 6, no. 1 (1997): 5-29. On new immigrants, see also Dirlik’s critique. Arif Dirlik, “Asians on the Rim,” 14-17.

⁵⁰⁰ Adam McKeown, “Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842 to 1949,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 2 (1999): 306-337.

Heideggerian “unity in being” formulation that recognizes, at base, the thing within itself as the same with itself.

As an example of diasporic identity, Magdalene Ang-Lygate finds that it “is centered on a complicated subjectivity that constantly negotiates its way to avoid exposure and possible rejection.”⁵⁰¹ She writes, “a common consensus is that the notion of identity as a static and unitary trait is no longer viable. Instead, identities are seen as shifting, pluralistic, and dynamic aspects of all social relationships. It is not only about how we see ourselves but is also a social product that is negotiated through time and space, constructed within hierarchies of power.”⁵⁰² This language of constant negotiation and complicated subjectivity is precisely a function of diaspora-as-diversity, one that is shifting, pluralistic and dynamic.

The discourse on the fractured subject is another mode of examining the constant negotiation of an unstable identity of diasporic subjects. Dayal Samir speaks of doubleness of diasporic subjects as fractured self, but rather than recycling Du Boisian double consciousness (of seeing oneself always through eyes of the other, in amused contempt and pity), he reads it literally and descriptively through the work of Safran and metaphorically through Gilroy’s heuristic of the black Atlantic. Throughout his historicist account, Samal insists upon a “negative” doubleness that denies the subject’s sovereignty or agency and stresses the performativity of the subject at the interstitial

⁵⁰¹ Magdalene Ang-Lygate, “Charting the Spaces of (Un)location. On Theorizing Diaspora,” In *Black British Feminism: A Reader*, edited by Hedi Safia Mirza (London: Routledge, 1997), 180.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 174.

border zones of culture.⁵⁰³ The ideas of plural, multiple, shifting, dynamic, fractured, and doubleness, then, are means through which we see that there is no stable constant personhood at least understood discursively.

Samir and Ang-Lygate's formulations of diaspora and identity generate categories of shifting meaning that make little sense. What does it mean to have "no stable constant personhood?" How does one arrive at the fractured identity and doubleness without recognizing the experiences that led to this point? Part I of this dissertation reckoned with the historical records of multiplicity and multi-ethnicity in and around the peninsula long before globalization discourses dominated the late twentieth century. Art that mediates social life in the Korean context takes this historical specificity into account.

⁵⁰³ Dayal Samir, "Diaspora and Double Consciousness," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 29, no. 1 (1996): 47-48.

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List of Interviews by author

*All interviews were carried out in-person, digitally recorded, transcribed, and translated if necessary by author unless otherwise indicated.

Chin, Soo Young, Anthropologist/Community Leader, Los Angeles, 2002
Cho Duck Hyun (Cho Tökyhyön), Artist/Professor, Seoul, 2002
Cho, Michael, Filmmaker, Los Angeles, 2005
Chung, Y. David, Artist, Los Angeles, 2008
Chung, Young, Artist, Los Angeles, 2002
Choi, Sungho, Painter, New York City, 2005
Choi, Susan, Painter/Video, Los Angeles (email interview), 2008
Chung, Dorian, Curator, San Francisco, 2002.
Ha John-Nam (Ha Chönnam), Painter, Osaka, 2005
Hers, Kate, Artist, Seoul (no recording by request of artist), 2002
Kang, Ik-joong, Painter/Installation Artist, New York City, 2005
Kang Chungsuk (Kang Chöngsuk), Painter, Osaka, 2005
Kang Sungho (Kang Sönggho), Painter, Osaka, 2005
Khang, David, Performance Artist, Los Angeles, 2005
Kim, Byron, Painter, New York City, 2005
Kim Honghee (Kim Honghi), Art historian/Curator, Ansan, Kyönggi Province, 2007
Kim Kyöngnan, Dancer, Seoul, 2005
Kim Myung-sik (Kim Myöngsik), Painter, Tokyo, 2005
Kim Oksang, Photographer, Seoul, 2005
kimsooja, Artist, New York City, 2007
Kim Yangja, Painter, Osaka, 2005
Koh, Byoung Ok, Artist, Los Angeles (no recording), 2002
Lee, Grace, Filmmaker, Los Angeles, 2002
Lee Hye-Kyung (Yi Hyegyöng), Producer/Feminist, Seoul, 2002
Lee Kwanggyu (Yi Kwanggyu), Former President, OKF, 2005
Lee, Jin, Photographer, Los Angeles, 2007
Lemoine, Nathalie (Cho Mihee), Artist/Activist, Seoul, 2002, 2005
Li Aishun (Yi Aesun), Professor Yanbian University, Yanji (no recording), 2007)
Lim Oksang, Painter/Sculpture/Environmental Artist, Seoul, 2005
Lim, Wonju, Artist, Los Angeles, 2002, 2005
Min, Yong Soon, Artist/Professor/Curator, Los Angeles, 2002, 2003, 2005
Moon, Jennifer, Artist, Los Angeles, 2002
Oh Haji, Textile Installation Artist, Osaka, 2005
Pak Yongsuk (Pak Yöngsuk), Photographer/Producer, Seoul, 2006
Park Chan Kyong (Pak Ch'angyöng), Photographer/Artist, Seoul, 2005
Park Inam (Pak Illam), Painter, Osaka, 2005
P'il Ch'ungguk, Gallerist, Yanji, 2007
Ro Fung Sok (No Hungsok), Sculpture, Tokyo, 2005
Shimada Yoshiko, Painter, Tokyo, 2005

Suh Kyung-sik (So Kyongsik), Professor/Activist, Tokyo, 2005
Sung, Vincent, Photographer, Seoul, 2002
Sung Wankyung (Sŏng Wangyŏng), Curator/Professor, Seoul, 2005
Stroud, Ronald Lee, Artist/Organizer, Los Angeles, 2002
Yi Kuhong, President, Overseas Koreans Foundation (OKF), 2005
Yi, Paul, Producer, Los Angeles, 2002
Yun Suknam (Yun Sŏknam), Painter/Sculpture, Seoul, 2005