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Maps of Life and Abjection: Reportage, Photography, and Literature in Postwar Seoul

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The collapse of the Japanese empire unleashed in the streets of Seoul new everyday epistemologies and affects closely tied to evolving relationships across media. This article analyzes how reportage, photography, and literature in post-liberation and post-Korean War South Korea synergistically addressed pressing postcolonial and neocolonial questions, the weight of which could be felt in the realm of daily life: What does liberation look like in the marketplace? How should we make sense of the foreign military presence in Seoul after the Korean War? What are the effects of foreign consumer goods on the minds and bodies of the people and the nation's sovereignty? The article shows how South Korean cultural actors responded to the increasing commodification of everyday life by bringing critical attention to the uneasy relationship between the body, foreign commodity-signs, and artifacts of mass visuality. These intermedial accounts succeeded in linking the granular experiences of everyday life to larger historical and geopolitical forces and making visible how the encroachment of mass media products and commodity-signs were transforming the very means by which the everyday could be represented.

Keywords: commodification, everyday life, intermediality, Korea, literature, media, photography, postwar, reportage

> When I'm bored and solitude seeps in, I get up and go out the door. I enjoy walking midst the throng, people rubbing against one another walking to and fro. They go around in white shirts, no jacket. I want to walk alongside them, brushing skin.
>
> During the Japanese occupation, we always kept our jackets and hats on no matter how hot it got. Is this the symbol of freedom of the body that's come with Liberation?
>
> At every shop, luxury items tempt the eyes of passersby.
>
> — Kim Kwangsik (1954)

In the December 1952 issue of *Sint'aeyang*, cartoonist Kim Yonghwan published a set of illustrations titled "The modernology of women in three cities in wartime" (*Chŏnsi-samdoyŏsŏnggohyŏnhak*). Kim focused on three different images of women: a down-and-out middle-aged refugee from Seoul, a smartly dressed pair of "extravagant types" in Pusan, and "refugee type" women in Taegu, diligently knitting and peddling goods to make ends meet. Kim writes that the "facial expressions of" women from

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Pusan, with their "cutting edge 'new look' (*nyu-ruk*)," are nonetheless laden with "sorrow" because as citizens of a provisional capital, their everyday lives cannot attain "deep-rootedness" (Kim Yonghwan 1952). These illustrations, then, appear almost ineluctably to cross over to observations about broader sociohistorical conditions and their effects on the lives of ordinary citizens.

That the leap is deliberate is evidenced by Kim's use of the abstruse word "modernology," which has its roots in 1920s Japan; its reappearance in 1950s Korea, I believe, is emblematic of a growing appetite for modes of observing, recording, and disseminating socially significant information during a time of mass dislocation, intense precarity, and economic and political uncertainty. In its original Japanese coinage, "modernology" (*kōgengaku*) was a method of urban investigation practiced by Kon Wajirō and Yoshida Kenkichi, who sought to "attune themselves to every new detail of street life that could be recorded, sketched, or enumerated" as Tokyo was being rebuilt in the wake of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake (Sand 2013, 100). Kon famously characterized it as a "scientific method," ethnographic in nature, but distinct from anthropology in that it focused on observing the "everyday practices (*seikatsu*)" of modern-day people (Silverberg 1992, 36). The term "modernology" entered the Korean peninsula most notably through the works of Pak T'aewŏn, who appropriated its observational techniques for his flaneur-driven novella *A day in the life of novelist Kubo* (*Sosŏlga Gubossi ŭi ilil*, [1934] 2015). But when considering Kon and Yoshida's original deployment of modernology in the aftermath of cataclysmic urban destruction, we may find illustrator Kim's appropriation during the Korean War (1950–53) even more apt.

In this article, I argue that after Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945, the streets of Seoul became a privileged epistemological space for representing *saenghwal* ("everyday life" or "way of life") and for tracking the historical reality of Korea's transition from Japanese colonial occupation to a position of semi-sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States. What emerged through the intermedial mapping of illustrations, reportage, photography, and literary fiction was a picture of ordinary South Koreans living in a precarious state of compromised mobility, security, and autonomy. These mappings functioned affectively to emphasize the problematic relationship between the human body and what I call the "commodity-sign." They represented and elicited affects through descriptive, rhetorical, and pictorial techniques by linking foreign commodities, their signs, and artifacts of mass visuality with abject affects, most notably disgust. Marx's commodity fetishism, as W. J. T. Mitchell (1986, 187) has observed, was meant to make "capitalism an object of disgust," or to frame it as constituted by "vulgar, superstitious, degraded form of behavior" that calls for revolutionary transformation. If the consolidated anti-communist state under President Syngman Rhee made free expression of leftist revolutionary discourse all but impossible, reportage, literature, and literary fiction went on to produce critiques of everyday life increasingly colonized by the commodity-form. These strategies of affective mapping, while they can be traced back to the modernist movement of the 1930s, took on postcolonial and postwar significance in the era of Reconstruction (*chaegŏn*), during which the South Korean economy was primarily dependent on US aid. The failed promise of "liberation" by the United States was felt and tracked through representations of commodity abjection.

The term "commodity-sign" is usually linked to Jean Baudrillard, who defined consumption as "the stage where the commodity is immediately produced as a sign, as sign

value, and where signs (culture) are produced as commodities" (Baudrillard 1981, 147). Baudrillard's framework was responding to the emergence of a saturated consumer society, in which markers of style and status, expressed through sign-value, were complicating the traditional Marxian categories of use- and exchange-value. Throughout this article, I rework Baudrillard's concept to focus on earlier years immediately after the Second World War and introduce factors Baudrillard usually neglects, such as medium-specificity and postcoloniality. In this article, commodity-signs are not disembodied or free-floating. My analysis pays attention to how the materiality and representational conventions of the medium that redirect the social meaning of the sign-value were tied closely to the affects they elicit. Even more importantly, the effects of these mappings were not entirely "phantasmagoric" as in Adorno's sense of a "consumer item in which there is no longer anything that is supposed to remind us how it came into being" (Benjamin 1999, 669); on the contrary, commodity-forms were marked as foreign, uncanny, and abject, a tendency that problematizes Kellner's neo-Marxist characterization of the commodity-form as having the power to integrate individuals (Kellner 1983, 71). Kellner quotes Marcuse to this end: "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment" (67). If it is true that the commodity-form eventually manages to compensate for the brutality of capitalist exploitation and alienated labor through its power to evoke identification, the compensatory process was by no means seamless; the very act of representing and reframing the commodity-sign across various media was a means of resisting the process of integrating Koreans as disempowered and alienated consumer subjects. At the same time, through this process of resistance and negotiation, new subjectivities were forged and mobilized.

This article's methodological orientation, in keeping with my opening analysis, is both intermedial and historical. Indeed, my first major intervention is that it foregrounds intermediality as a necessary framework for understanding *saenghwal* after 1945. We see an example of such intermedial relations—which I call "intermedial reflexivity"—in one of Kim Yonghwan's aforementioned illustrations (see figure 1): in the background, we glimpse an homage to another medium of social documentation—photography—in the form of a signboard of a camera shop (i.e., "CAMERA").

Here, intermedial reflexivity aptly characterizes a moment when the content of a medium self-consciously references another medium that it is collaborating with or competing against within the broader cultural field, particularly in service of shared social goals and audience desires. This reflexivity shapes the composition too: deviating from the preferred technique of rendering his caricatures in flat, two-dimensional space, Kim situated his "wartime women" three-dimensionally, producing a more "realistic" illusionistic space to resemble works of contemporary street photography. While this affinity between caricature and photography is not surprising, what deserves our attention is the recurrence of such reflexive relationships across multiple media during this period as they tracked forms of everyday life, organized around and gravitating towards the changing urban streets.[1]

[1]Within the French context, Anne McCauley (1983, 355) has written on caricature and photography's "peculiarly incestuous relationship during the years after the introduction of the collodion-on-glass negative process in 1851."

자료출처 : 新太陽 제1권 제5호 (1952. 12)

Figure 1. Intermedial reflexivity across comics and street photography (Kim Yonghwan 1952).

Secondly, this article proposes an affective, intermedial, and postwar rethinking of how we have understood "the crisis of representation" in the field of Korean studies. Existing analyses of the crisis of representation (also called an "epistemological crisis"

or a "conundrum of representation") have focused on the era of Japanese occupation, largely linked to a loss of referentiality and historical vision or the inability to properly account for colonial subjection (Hanscom 2013, 25; Kwon 2015, 12–13; S. Park 2009, 878).[2] These concerns have been discussed primarily in terms of literary-intellectual discourse. As I will show, the rise of popular photography after 1945 marked a crucial reconfiguration of media ecology, particularly in terms of how everyday practices on the street would be represented and circulated. By producing an intermedial account of this democratizing mediascape, we can move beyond the literary-intellectual question of whether language can adequately represent historical reality to examine how cultural actors in South Korea were already putting into representation problems of compromised human autonomy in an impoverished, aid-based society.

Thirdly, intermedial rethinking brings to focus the transmedial historical phenomenon of commodity abjection as a widespread symptom of a postwar neocolonial city, without neglecting the medium-specific ways in which new everyday subjectivities were being mobilized through shifting intermedial conditions. By looking across reportage, photography, and literature, we find that the encounter with consumer goods was repeatedly linked to feelings of abjection in which "'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again—inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable" (Kristeva 1982, 18). Contrary to the aforementioned account of the commodity-form as a potently integrative force, encounters with the commodity-sign were moments often racked with terror, uncanniness, and anguish in which the very integrity of the self was hanging in the balance. Yet these crises of abjection did forge new subjectivities that were symptomatic of geopolitical and neocolonial realities. Textual and visual representations of these moments of crisis served as a vital venue of critique against emblems of US power, especially during a period when formal leftist discourse was being suppressed by Rhee's anticommunist state.

Life on the Street: Post-liberation and Postwar Reportage

In the wake of liberation, varied forms of street reportage began appearing in magazines such as *Choun*, *Taejo*, *Minsŏng*, and *Sinch'ŏnji*. Some of them, like the *Sinch'ŏnji* series "Street information center" (*Kŏriŭi chŏngbosil*), included a hodge-podge of facts, anecdotes, tips, rumors, and musings, providing a granular, on-the-ground account of *saenghwal* in Seoul. O Sobaek (1921–2008), a young reporter who would go on to become a prominent news editor, contributed titles such as "The den of temptresses" (*Yobudŭl ŭi sogul*) and "Browsing the Ch'ŏnggye stream street stalls" (*Chŏnggyech'ŏn*

[2]Hanscom (2013, 25) frames "crisis of representation" within literary modernism as "both a creative response to referential crisis and a symptomatic of a loss of faith in larger narratives that relied on communicative models of language." Kwon (2015, 12–13) emphasizes the manifold effects of the "conundrum," touching on subjectivity, language, history, and aesthetics and linking them to the problem of translating the particularity of the colonial experience to "normative universality." For Sunyoung Park (2009, 878), the epistemological crisis experienced by writers like Kim Namch'ŏn was the problem of modernity in the streets, where "intellectuals found themselves ideologically stranded, confused," which was tantamount to the loss of historical vision.

nojŏmgugyŏng) (O Sobaek 1949, 1948). The latter piece is especially interesting for its depiction of the marketplace, as "rich with a beautiful roominess" that, "having been born out of liberation, is a thing of progress, its air thick with a feeling of freedom." He goes on to say that "though I went around poking my head here and there, I couldn't find my focus. Front, back, and side to side, my eyes would be rolling in every direction to the point of agony, but it wouldn't be enough. If only I had another pair of eyes on the back of my head…." In contrast to the bleak austerity of the wartime mobilization period during the early 1940s (Hwang 2015, 48–49), the open market becomes emblematic of bountiful freedom. O still emphasizes how the sheer range of offerings nearly incapacitates his vision. His role for the reader, then, is to select from the "countless spectacles" and provide a friendly curation of "things that are special and fun" (O Sobaek 1948, 164). O's perambulatory act of poking around (then curating, narrativizing, and critiquing) became a common device in the genre of street reportage, often organized around the mobile subjectivity of the flaneur.

The question of how to read the encounters of the flaneur is as old as the question of how the daily experience of urban modernity should be represented. For Walter Benjamin (1997, 35), writing about Paris, these everyday accounts were as much about supplying clues for deciphering the different "physiologies" populating the marketplace as they were about mapping the city's various corners. Benjamin characterizes these expressions as quintessentially petite bourgeoisie, focusing on turning the public exterior of the boulevard, for example, "into an intérieur," an aesthetic orientation predicated on the primacy of the self's interiority over the increasingly elusive dynamics of social reality. Janet Poole (2014, 6), writing on colonial-era modernism, has argued in the same vein: "the urban is constituted through a tension between the city as surface detail and a highly interiorized and disembodied mind, which moves through the streets observing the transformation of the environment into superfluous and disconnected details." This epistemological fragmentation was part and parcel of colonial modernity's "crisis of representation" and the loss of historical vision.

What changes after liberation is that we begin to see concerted efforts in the genre of literary reportage to bring these "superfluous and disconnected details" into a connected historical totality. Post-liberation reportage attempted to draw from the interplay between the visible and the invisible to suggest the existence of a structure that could not be discerned by an untrained eye, a reality rife with problems and contradictions that awaited transformation. The proliferation of this genre was shaped by conditions of economic precarity, political turmoil, and geopolitical upheaval following the collapse of the Japanese Empire: the popularization of rumor and first-person chronicles during a time of deep political uncertainty (Shin 2015), increased migration to Seoul, and appetite for information about its new arrivals.

The examples of reportage I analyze in this section are remarkable for their plurimedial quality (incorporating text and image intracompositionally; see figure 2) and the background of some of the illustrators who helped produce them. Chang Ukchin, best known for his minimalist and abstract illustrations of rural everyday life and his membership in the New Realist movement (*sinsasilp'a*) (1947–53), produced strikingly detailed renderings that engaged in intracompositional dialogue with the narrative portion of the street reportage. Some of the articles were collaborations between writers and illustrators, as in "Walking around Seoul" (*Sŏul manbo*) by Hong Yŏngmo and Kim Ŭihwan

자료출처 : 朝運 제1권 제4호 (1949.12)

Figure 2. Street reportage as plurimedial imagetext. Illustration by Kim Ŭihwan (Hong 1949).

(1949) and "Seoul's changing sights" (*Pyŏnmohan sŏurŭi p'unggyŏng*) by O Sin and Chang Ukchin (1954), while others, like "Impressions from the streets" (*Kadu sogyŏn*) by Song Pyŏngdon (1950) and "Streetscapes: Rambling talk in Ch'ungmuro" (*Kadup'unggyŏng ch'ungmurobangdam*) by Im Tong'ŭn (1950) were both written and illustrated by the artists themselves. It is also important to note that Kim Ŭihwan and Im Tongŭn provided illustrations for the journal *Ŏrininara* (Children's world), whose editorial staff and contributors had engaged in leftist cultural activity after liberation; Kim and Im were members of the notorious reeducation program Bodo League for communists and suspected sympathizers and went north (*wŏlbuk*) during the Korean War (Wŏn 2001, 125). While it is difficult to speculate about the ideological motivation of these illustrators en masse—we would not, for example, want to put Chang Ukchin, who was known to evade organizational activities in general (Pak Changmin 2013, 55), in the same group as the contributors of *Ŏrininara*—what emerges when we look across these imagetexts is a recurring distrust of foreign materiality and signs of decadence, usually linked to consumer goods.

Interestingly, both "Impressions" and "Streetscapes," published in the months before the outbreak of the Korean War, employ the metaphor of orchestral music to describe the change in Seoul, a choice all the more fascinating if we consider that both writers were primarily illustrators by trade. So, we have two parallel cases in which illustrators are producing plurimedial accounts of street life that incorporate image, text, and sound. In "Impressions," Song (1950, 176) calls the sensory experience of the city "the outpouring" of a "new symphonic design," while in "Streetscapes," Im (1950, 206) writes, "There's a terminology called 'disharmony.' I wonder if Ch'ungmuro isn't indeed a place of disharmony." Since disharmony can produce "astonishingly beautiful effects as we see in modern music," the question becomes "is Ch'ungmuro indeed a place of 'harmonious discord'?" (206). Leaving the question unanswered, Im shares his displeasure with Chinese-character signs for "sushi" and "yakitori," calling them "grotesque," and laments that the mere sight of these signs brings to mind the "sounds of *geta*" and the "disgusting smell of tea" (207). In other words, walking through post-liberation Ch'ungmuro was a synesthetic experience, in which stimulation of one sense triggers a sensation in another faculty; this triggering was not merely text-to-sound but also a temporal evocation, in which the post-liberation present becomes possessed by the colonial past. The reportage's plurimedial format underscores the importance of synesthetic innervation. It opens up the flaneur's critical faculties as he attempts to distinguish between "harmonious discord" (as found in modernist music) and what is truly dissonant or abject.

The flaneurs of street reportage privileged certain spaces as more wholesome and progressive than others. In "Impressions," the shop windows of Ch'ungmuro are said to be "chock-full of merchandise that are not particularly important to our *saenghwal*" (Song 1950, 178). Around Chayu Market and the PX, "profiteers who eat away at our nation's progress roam the streets" while "women peddle makeup to customers shopping for extravagant items" (179). By contrast, Namdaemun and Tongdaemun markets are filled with "necessities for *saenghwal*" (178). He singles out an image of women negotiating the price of fish as "beautiful and picturesque," comparing them to "flowers blooming in mud" (179). Song also sees a glimpse of egalitarian gender relations in these women who are fending for themselves to feed their families: "It's a good thing that the person

who cooks does the negotiating herself.… In forty years or so, we may see men going around shopping for fish while women go out to work" (179). If Japanese signboards evoke grotesqueness and memories of colonial domination, then the fish market (in contrast to the sushi restaurant) opens up a vision of a progressive future in which women have become more self-reliant and gender relations more equitable.

The conclusion of "Impressions" contains none of the ironic ambivalence usually associated with modernist flaneur narratives:

> The rumor that the Japanese Empire will rise again is indeed frightening, news that will make you tremble.… Even if we must increase production of coal and foodstuff in the countryside and put off making cars and airplanes in the industrial zones till a later decade, we should produce clothing and daily necessities so that they exceed all the foreign merchandise in the display windows. (Song 1950, 181)

Song clearly articulates the problematic relationship between *saenghwal*, consumption of foreign commodities, and South Korea's future as a sovereign nation. The observation is a socially actionable one that calls for domestic production of "daily necessities" so that the marketplace is not corrupted by the lure of foreign goods. He raises critical awareness in the reader by staging an intermedial innervation through which an individuated and mobile observer becomes primed to decipher the fleeting impressions of the city into an understanding of powerful sociohistorical realities lurking below the surface. The target of this everyday critique was not simply commodity-forms but also commodity-signs. Such signs functioned in metonymic relationship with Japan's lingering power, fueling "frightening" rumors of re-domination by Korea's former colonial occupiers.

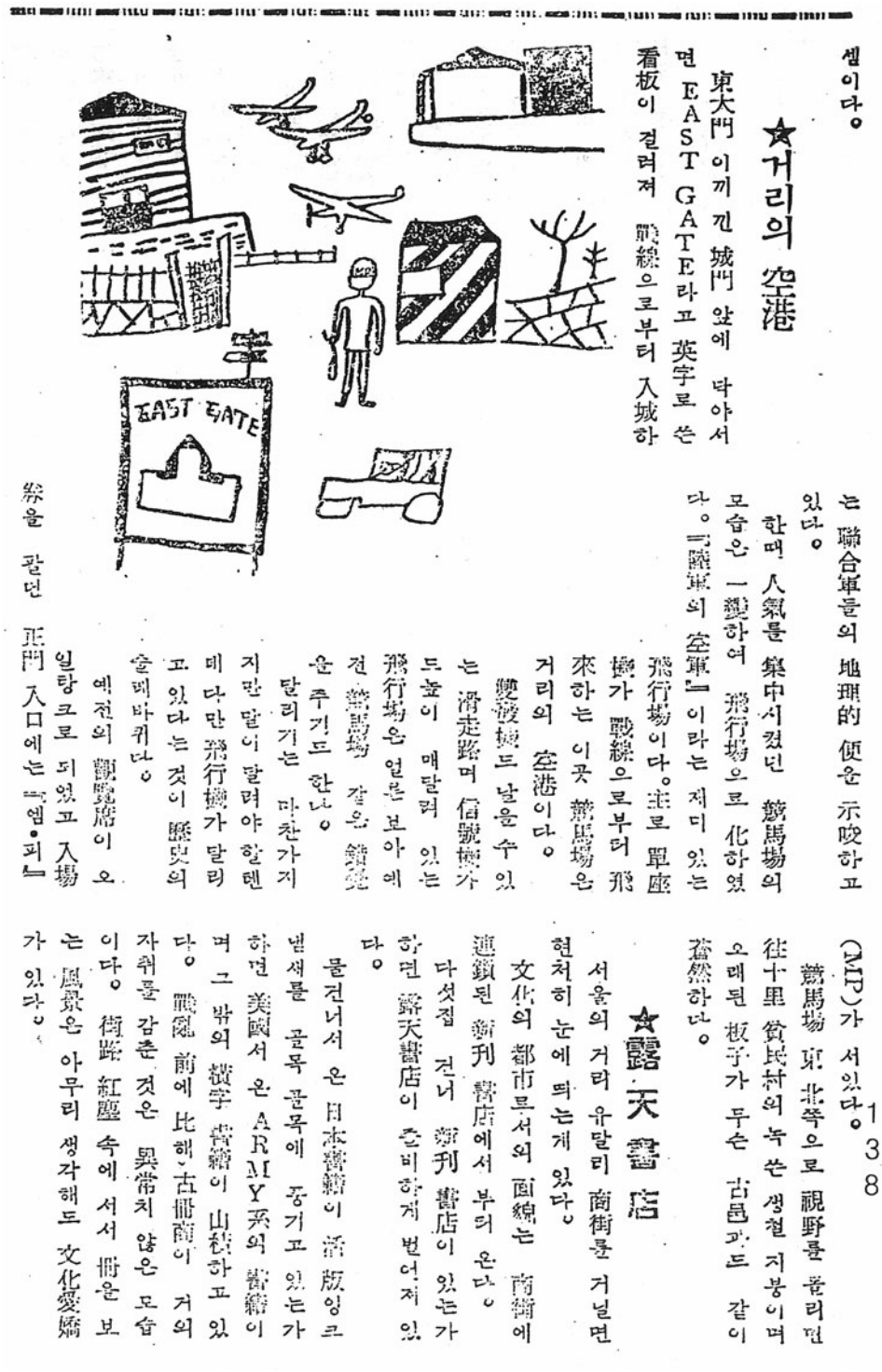
Writer O Sin (an alternate moniker used by O Sobaek) and illustrator Chang Ukchin's "Seoul's changing sights" deserves special attention in that it was published shortly after the Korean War armistice. Chang's works, which tend to emphasize flatness over depth, were influenced by Western abstract art yet maintained a rustic, folksy quality. In his own words, "What comes out is compressed. It's honest because it can't help but be revealed. A picture improves with every repetition" (Kim Kwangmyŏng 2017, 101–2). One might suppose that an artist commonly known for depicting the world like a "children's story" may not serve as the best illustrator of Reconstruction-era reportage. On the contrary, as Pak Changmin (2013, 67) has argued, the "modernized traditionalist orientation" of the New Realism Movement (in which Chang played a part) was a way of overcoming the dehumanizing conditions of the Korean War.[3] Chang's ritualistic search for a purity of form, then, can be understood as a search for a realm of life that lies beyond the visible surface. In addition to acting as a palliative counterpoint to the uneasy social reality depicted in the writing, Chang's drawings offer an alternative structure of the feeling of postwar life.

[3]Indeed, the same year "Seoul's changing sights" was published, painter Kim Whanki wrote a review of the National Art Exhibition, entitled "The cheerfulness of painting" (*Misurhoehwa ŭi myŏngnyangsŏng*), in which he described his fellow New Realist Chang's "Scenery with car" and "Old tree" as having the look of a fairytale (Kim Whanki 1954).

O's reportage leads readers from Seoul Station through Chongno, Myŏngdong, Namdaemun, and Ch'ŏnggyech'ŏn. A helicopter (called "dragonfly airplane" by children) is seen flying over Sejongno. The *Tonga ilbo* and *Chosŏn ilbo* buildings still stand unscathed, but the surface of the capitol building is still scarred by artillery fire. Tonghwa department store has been turned into a PX. "There are soldiers from all over," O writes, "so that the impression is that of a race exhibition. The dwarf soldier from Turkey. The British soldier in a beret. The black soldier who still looks adolescent. The extravagant French soldier" (O Sin 1954, 136). This phenomenon of "race exhibition" in postwar South Korea was met with ambivalence wavering between fascination and disgust, the former stemming from encounters with unfamiliar physiognomies, the latter from the fear of racial contamination (B. Park 2010, 51).

O's narrative offers privileged glimpses into scandalous interiors. The exposé takes its readers into the souvenir shops that double as brothels for soldiers, providing voyeuristic pleasure for the readers and serving as a means of social critique. "On the outside," O writes, "there are splendid souvenirs, but once you enter, there are Carmen-like dolls … their lips painted pink, cheeks glowing in splendid shades … women laughing like canaries …" (O Sin 1954, 136–37). The interplay of the visible and the invisible conveys something essential about postwar Seoul. O imposes an order to how the pieces of the city fit together. First, the "race exhibition of soldiers," then "the fake souvenir shops," which are followed by an area of "demilitarized sexuality," where supposedly illegal sex work continues in an organized fashion (138–39). He calls this space "a world of extraterritoriality" (139). Indeed, until the ratification of the Status Forces Agreement in 1966, the US military "enjoyed virtual extraterritorial immunity" in South Korea (Jin-kyung Lee 2010, 128). Far from privileging the interior over the exterior or placing the self and one's interiority over the delineation of social reality, then, O's critical gaze links what is happening in one corner of Seoul to the geopolitical reality of the Republic of Korea's semi-sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States.

The final destination of the tour is Tongdaemun, where an English-language sign "East Gate" stands. The area is now used as an airport by the Army. "It was a racetrack, originally—the area is supposed to be for horses, but now there are planes," O writes. "This is 'the wheel of history.' Where they used to sell entrance tickets for customers, there is an MP standing guard, and to the northwest of the racetracks, you see Wangsimni—a shantytown" (O Sin 1954, 140). (Here, Chang's illustration for the narrative's concluding page stages a perspectival shift (see figure 3). While the previous drawings are oriented to emphasize sideways movement, to facilitate a smooth glide from right to left, the final drawing is confrontational: a dead-end. The MP, the barricade, and the planes enact a barrier and bring the walking tour to a halt. While street reportage manages to piece together parts of the city to situate the fleeting impressions of everyday life within a historical and geopolitical reality, it also inevitably draws attention to the limits of its conditions of production, to sites that demobilize the flaneur and his vision. In "Seoul's changing sights," the crisis of representation is not caused by a problem of aesthetics or epistemology but by a militarized urban terrain under US dominion, depicted in terms of physical barriers and air power.



셈이다。

☆거리의 空港

東大門 이끼 낀 城門 앞에 닥아서면 EAST GATE라고 英字로 쓴 看板이 걸려져 戰線으로부터 入城하는 聯合軍들의 地理的 便宜 示唆하고 있다。

한때 人氣를 集中시켰던 競馬場의 모습은 一變하여 飛行場으로 化하였다。『駐軍의 空軍』이라는 제대 있는 飛行場이다。主로 單座機가 戰線으로부터 飛來하는 이곳 競馬場은 거리의 空港이다。

雙發機도 날을 수 있는 滑走路며 信號機가 도높이 매달려 있는 飛行場은 얼른 보아 예전 競馬場 같은 錯覺을 주기도 한다。

달리기는 다찬가지지만 달이 달려야 할텐데 다만 飛行機가 달리고 있다는 것이 歷史의 술레바퀴다。

예전의 觀覽席이 오일탕크로 되었고 入場券을 팔던 正門 入口에는 『엠·피』(MP)가 서있다。

競馬場 東北쪽으로 視野를 옮리면 往十里 貧民村의 녹쓴 생철 지붕이며 오래된 板子가 두슨 담邑과도 같이 蒼然하다。

☆露天書店

서울의 거리 유달리 商街를 거닐면 현처히 눈에 띄는게 있다。

文化의 都市로서의 面貌는 商街에 連鎖된 新刊 書店에서 부터 온다。

다섯집 건너 新刊 書店이 있는가 하면 露天書店이 즐비하게 벌여져 있다。

물건너서 온 日本書籍이 活版잉크 낼새를 골목 골목에 풍기고 있는가 하면 美國서 온 ARMY系의 書籍이며 그 밖의 橫字 書籍이 山積하고 있다。戰禍 前에 比해 古冊商이 거의 자취를 감춘 것은 異常치 않은 모습이다。街路 紅塵 속에 서서 冊을 보는 風景은 아무리 생각해도 文化愛嬌가 있다。

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Figure 3. The end of the tour. Illustration by Chang Ukchin (O Sin 1954).

Postwar Photography: From a Realism of Labor to a Realism of Looks

If post-liberation reportage reoriented the subjectivity of the flaneur outward, something similar began happening in the postwar photography of "everyday-life realism" (*saenghwalchuŭi riŏllijŭm*).[4] Photographer Im Ŭngsik (1912–2001), its chief pioneer, clearly distinguished the movement from the dominant style of the colonial era, called "salon photography" (*sallong sajin*). The former supposedly focused on concrete details of ordinary people engaging in work, leisure, and family life, while the latter indulged in aestheticism and idealized pictorialism divorced from everyday life. In "Victory of photography in the mode of everyday-life realism" (*Saenghwalchuŭi sajin-ŭi sŭngni*), he claims that photographs of the past were "positioned alongside tonal richness and life of consumption and had nothing do with everyday feelings (*saenghwal kamjŏng*) of the people." It was not until after the Korean War, he claims, that photographers were able to objectively describe "social phenomena" and "see and contemplate all objects realistically" (Im Ŭngsik 1956). Indeed, Im's experience during the Korean War as an embedded photojournalist who documented the Battle of Inchon and the retaking of Seoul (Im Ŭngsik 1999, 82–83) was formative in his development as a photographer and critic.

Rather than take Im at his word, this section investigates the range of influences and interests that animated this period of photographic realism and its evolution.[5] While Im decries colonial-era photography as linked to a "life of consumption," we have seen from my analysis of reportage how post-liberation and postwar *saenghwal* was hardly untouched by the circulation of foreign goods. In this light, I will show how the works of Han Yŏngsu (1933–99) addressed increasingly pressing ontological questions about the uncanny relationship between the human body and the commodity-sign. I argue that Han's postwar realism shifted the camera's gaze away from heroic or romanticized depictions of the laboring masses towards the economy of looks as people in the streets negotiated competing demands for their ocular attention.

Before I elaborate on the details of this procedure, we must first consider at least two axes of influence that shaped the field of South Korean photography during the early postwar years. The first axis was transnational and synchronic and formed through the

[4]Jung Joon Lee (2013, 355) aptly translates *saenghwalchuŭi* as "everyday life-ism." To avoid the awkwardness of two consecutive "isms," I use the partly abbreviated descriptor "everyday-life realism."

[5]To be sure, the post-1945 orientation of the camera towards life in the street was not merely an effect of change in the photographer's consciousness. During the Japanese Occupation, aerial shots or images of the colonial capital had been heavily regulated; after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, for example, ordinary citizens were banned from taking photos just over twenty meters above ground level (O Hyejin 2011, 179). In this regard, liberation did mark the emancipation and mobilization of photographic vision for virtually anyone who could acquire a camera. By the mid-1950s, photography had proliferated both as an increasingly visible art form (genres such as photojournalism and "camera novels" circulated through *Hŭimang*, *Sin-t'aeyang*, *Yosŏnggye*, and *Yŏwŏn*) and an accessible hobby. In 1954, Im Sŏkche and Kim Haesŏn contributed to a full-page spread in *Tonga ilbo* on amateur photography. Kim writes that "in the past decade or so, photography has spread throughout our society and penetrated into every household," and that "the hobby of photography is not a recreation monopolized by a special class; rather, the general masses—man, woman, young, or old—can enjoy it" (Kim Haesŏn 1954).

continuing influx of Japanese photography magazines, such as *Asahi camera* (Im Ŭngsik 1999, 276). Pak Chusŏk (2005, 47) has characterized the background of the emergence of South Korean realism as having been shaped "fundamentally by the formation of a photographic perspective based in Japanese photography and its socialist realism." While Im (1999, 276) urged Korean photographers to refrain from "uncritically copying" the "so-called socialist realism" from Japan in the November 16, 1955, issue of *Chosŏn ilbo*, the very need for his caution suggests a broader climate of Japanese photographic influence. In spite of these undeniable affinities, just as Julia Adeney Thomas (2008, 368) emphasizes the need to assess Japanese post-1945 photography outside of "powerful [contemporaneous] American paradigms" in order to "jettison received categories, defamiliarize the [Japanese] pictures, and, most especially, recover the discursive practice that gave them significance," I believe postwar realist photography in South Korea is best evaluated in its own terms of discursive and historical negotiations with postcolonial, transnational, and intermedial problematics.

To that end, let us consider Han Yŏngsu's photograph of a dapperly dressed man and woman sitting idly around rows of foreign magazines (see figure 4). There is much to unpack here. While post-liberation efforts to purge Korean culture of Japan's colonial contamination persisted through the postwar decades (Suh 2013, 147–48), consuming Japanese print culture was a tough habit to break for many Koreans. Smuggled foreign magazines circulated in plain sight despite President Rhee's tightening of border control and refusing US pressure to normalize economic relations with Japan (Haggard, Kim, and Moon 1991, 852; Morris-Suzuki 2006, 128).[6] Even if we bracket these cultural, economic, and geopolitical factors and focus on the composition, the magazines' placement is hardly a throwaway detail. The two subjects are seated on the threshold of two different kinds of print culture, the somber books sitting ponderously in a bookshelf behind them, the titles on their spines virtually illegible, while the flashy magazines light up the left half of the composition with the models' smiling faces. Once we notice these faces, it is difficult not to compare them to the faces of the seated woman and man. The relationship is one of neither obvious correspondence nor contrast; what the photograph appears to posit, rather, is that there *is* a relationship, an interplay—while the full ramification of that interplay is held open—between the faces of these Korean subjects and the faces on the magazines of foreign provenance. Such shots, in my view, function as a citational "nod" to the influence of Japanese photographic culture as a condition of production for contemporary Korean photography. Han's work brings attention to how its own meaning-value is constituted within a broader circuit of intermedial and transnational networks that exceeds the boundaries of a single medium or national culture.

[6]In the editorial "For the fostering of our national culture" (*Uri minjongmunhwa ŭi yuksŏng ŭl wihayŏ*), journalist Kim Ŭlhan argues that in addition to "completely suspending the use of Japanese for a decade," the practice of producing Korean translations of "penny dreadfuls" (*sanmun sosŏl*) and "bizarre tales" from Japan should be eradicated. He laments how "so-called writers and publishers" will visit Pusan and Yŏsu to "rifle through the bags of smugglers with bloodshot eyes" (Kim Ŭlhan 1950). Kim's outrage is a response to the widespread smuggling and black-market sales of Japanese products, including magazines and books that made their way into the peninsula despite President Rhee's trade restrictions.

Figure 4. Intermedial reflexivity as a citational "nod" to the influence of Japanese photography (in the form of the magazine *Asahi camera*) (Han 2014, 63) © Han Youngsoo, Sogong-dong, Seoul 1956–1963 Han Youngsoo Foundation.

The second axis of influence was more indigenous and diachronic. As a thorough analysis of the evolving complexity of colonial-era photography is outside the purview of this article, it suffices, for now, to trace the earliest example of South Korean photographic realism in the post-liberation period to another Im. Just two days after the formal establishment of the Republic of Korea, photographer Im Sŏkche's solo exhibition was held at the Tonghwa department store. Yi T'aeŭng, chairman of the leftist Korean Photography Alliance, wrote in the exhibition pamphlet: "After August 15th [1945], the artistic consciousness of photographers and their efforts towards a new direction were fierce. Their artistic conscience had been awakened to the necessity of discovering the 'genre' of artistic photography grounded in proper national art that bravely rejects the vague definition of the art of photography left by Imperial Japan of the past." He went on to say, "[We see in his work] the struggle and will to escape the past's tendency towards a delicate, sensuous and romantic mood to arrive at an upright and practical realism" (Ch'oe Pongnim 2015, 3). The effects of Im Sŏkche's work are all the more clearly visible in the comments of leftist literary critic Kim Tongsŏk (1913–?), who praised Im for his objective realism and historical engagement; he wrote, "[Im] captured the reality of southern Chosŏn [i.e., Korea] exactly as it is, and I'm not the only one surprised by its lofty artistry" (Kim Tongsŏk 1948).

The remarks of both Yi T'aeŭng and Kim Tongsŏk are examples of what Mitchell (1994, 153) has called "ekphrastic hope," in which "ekphrasis"—a vivid, dramatic description of an image—"ceases to be a special or exceptional moment in verbal or oral representation and begins to seem paradigmatic of a fundamental tendency in all linguistic expression." I rework Mitchell's "ekphrastic hope" in this context of Korean cultural history as referring to the hope of assimilating the human subjects of the photographs into a heroic postcolonial narrative and of seamlessly integrating meaning-value across images and words. Consider, for example, how Kim endows Im's still image with a sense of historical movement through his description: "Let us take the work 'Fence.' The children are under a tall fence. The fence may be tall now, but it will wear down and the children who are short now will grow tall.… The day will come when we can leap over the fence to welcome a new era" (Kim Tongsŏk 1948). Kim's hope that the still image is part of the progressive narrative allegory of overcoming national division (symbolized by the "fence") travels together with the hope that the mute image has been given a legitimate voice. The need for hope is all the more understandable if we consider that Kim's commentary was published in the final days of the United States Military Government's rule over southern Korea. Charles Armstrong (2003, 74) has highlighted how, between 1946 and 1947, "a growing number of intellectuals became disillusioned with the U.S. occupation and moved north to the Soviet zone."[7]

A reading of Im's "Loading and unloading" (1948) and "Miners" (1952) helps us understand how his photographs might evoke ekphrastic hope (see figure 5). In "Loading and unloading," four workers stand around over two dozen white sacks, their image captured, it seems, during a moment of well-deserved rest. Their tanned torsos shine under the sun, in striking contrast to the sky, the sacks, and the white rocks below. Their arms are extended and half-raised, which intensify the sense that their

[7]Both Kim Tongsŏk and Yi T'aeŭng went north around 1950.

Figure 5. Im Sŏkche, "Loading and unloading" (1948) and "Miners" (1952). © Seok Je Lim. Photo by Seok Je Lim.

bodies are being offered up to the camera's gaze. Yet their expressions, oddly enough, do not appear to be aware of the photographer. The bodies are heroic. The lens angle, too—pointed slightly upwards—emphasizes the men's physical vigor. Im's "Miners" functions somewhat similarly. A group of miners sits in a circle to warm their hands. Two men are in the foreground; as many as six are in the back, blurry, though their smiling faces are visible. The camera is closer to the action than in "Loading and unloading," so that we are almost looking over the shoulder of one of the miners. There is almost a recognition, but the rest of the composition, which emphasizes the circle created by the camaraderie of collective labor, centered touchingly by the floating hands near the middle of the frame, keeps the viewer on the outside.

What sets apart Han Yŏngsu's postwar realism from Im's earlier counterpart is the former's orientation towards a different kind of media-related affects. If Im's realism of labor seemed to readily avail mute bodies of workers for dynamic narratives of ekphrastic hope, then Han's realism of looks privileged suspension over mobilization, tending towards a kind of fear. Mitchell (1994, 154) uses the term "ekphrastic fear" to describe moments when preserving the gap between the verbal and visual becomes "a moral, aesthetic imperative." Such "fear," according to Mitchell, keeps our exuberant, utopic aspirations in check, and we become wary of the deceitful and illusionistic power of the "image-text" to lead us astray (156).[8] We can rework Mitchell's idea of "ekphrastic fear" within the context of remediation—when one medium is incorporated into or represented within another medium—by positing that Han's photographs often elicit a fear of remediation. By staging intermedial encounters (for example, between photography, popular magazines, and cinema), Han shifts the focus of realism away from sites of physical labor, towards life on the streets, alleyways, and the marketplace—spaces that were being colonized by images of advertising, simulation, and fantasy.

One remarkable photo shows children playing in front of a movie poster for Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955), starring Cary Grant and Grace Kelly (see figure 6). The intermediality of the shot can be found in the citation of VistaVision, billed at the bottom right corner of the poster (and almost at the center of the photograph's composition). As an ironic counterpoint to the widescreen format of VistaVision, Han's shot is composed vertically. The poster also tries to emphasize depth of field by placing another figure beyond the frame of the poster and making the action inside the poster "spill out" into the streets. Han frames the shot to create a compositional match: one of the children has his back turned to us, at the bottom edge of the frame, just as Grace Kelly's back is turned to the street observer in the film poster. Standing before the viewer and the open portal to a Hollywood fantasy space is the more realistic space of everyday life. Like the interplay between the Korean faces and the display of foreign magazines earlier, the relationship is not of exact correspondence. The poster appears to be partially ordering the reality outside of it—ordering even the framing of Han's camera gaze—yet the boy's expression of elation and mischief prevails over Cary Grant's stiff, unnaturally rendered expression. Everyday life, for now, resists being absorbed and abolished by the realm of simulation.

[8]Mitchell (1994, 89) distinguishes between image/text, imagetext, and image-text, the last of which "designates *relations* of the visual and verbal."

Figure 6. Intermedial reflexivity across street photography and cinematic vision, the latter underscored by the citation of "VistaVision" (Han 2014, 59) © Han Youngsoo, Danseongsa, Jongno 3-ga, Seoul 1957 Han Youngsoo Foundation.

In another set of photographs, Han explores the sense of uncanny doubling and repetition surrounding the figure of mannequins. One pictures a girl passing by a display window of a dress shop on a rainy day (see figure 7). Three mannequins are clad in dresses, not dissimilar to the one she is already wearing. We cannot help but notice the ornate patterns of the umbrella and the fetching boots. (In humorous contrast, just across the street another child is dressed head-to-ankle in a shapeless poncho.) It is

Figure 7. Uncanny encounters between human bodies and mannequins (Han 2014, 49, 133). Left image © Han Youngsoo, Myeongdong, Seoul 1958 Han Youngsoo Foundation; right image © Han Youngsoo, Seoul 1956–1963 Han Youngsoo Foundation.

hard to tell from the photograph if her look is one of pensiveness or fleeting curiosity, but the photograph causes us to think about the nature of this look and how it informs the young girl's identity.

If we consider another photograph of mannequins by Han, the economy of looks becomes more complicated (see figure 7). There are seven mannequins standing outside (as opposed to behind the display glass). Two women towards the background admire the merchandise on one of the mannequins, while another towards the foreground looks on. See how her feet face us while her head is turned away, as if she was addressing us just a second ago. We are pulled towards her, into the diegetic space of the photograph, yet, at the same time, there is something stubbornly unreadable about her, an effect created by her proximity and resemblance to the two mannequins to her right.

These photographs differ fundamentally from Im's works in that Han's compositional logic is actively drawing the viewer into its diegetic field. Unlike "Miners," which may offer an intimacy of comfort and communion as an unalienated fruit of collective labor, Han invites the viewer into a world of isolated, individuated figures who appear estranged. The human body is at once animated and arrested by the economy of looks. In Im's photographs, the distance between his human subjects is being erased through the unifying bond and implied dynamism of labor; in Han's, the spaces between his urbanites feel absolute, unbridgeable except through fleeting moments of contact made via glances and looks. This is where the feeling of suspension comes from, the fear.

Where, then, is the sense of abjection? On the question of how Han moved from abjection to attraction, Chŏng Hun has argued cogently. For the April 4, 1957, Sinsŏnhoe exhibition "Market ecology" (*Sijang saengt'ae*), Han depicted a merchant standing aloofly beside columns of dangling poultry (Chŏng 2012, 49–50).[9] Drawing from Han's

[9]The Sinsŏnhoe was a group of photographers established around 1955. Their mission—or the "new line" (*sinsŏn*)—was realism. Its first group exhibition was held in April 1957 at the

statements about his experience during the Korean War, Chŏng argues that the dead birds (now commodities on display) are linked to lingering memories of carnage from the war. He argues that Han's turn towards framing shots of books, magazines, posters, and display signs in a relationship of "visual irony with his human subjects," then, marks the "point at which the figure of the human being as trace of pure living body disappears and now finds recognition as a social sign and identity rendered visible" (53). In other words, Chŏng emphasizes Han's ability to track how figures of bare life have begun to take on visible social personhood in the Reconstruction era. My reading differs in that I want to emphasize the postwar shift towards the economy of looks. What is remarkable about this economy is that it both estranges the subjects of the look and aestheticizes this process of estrangement.

On photography's double-edged relationship with estrangement, we may refer to Benjamin's discussion of the "salutary estrangement" in Eugène Atget's works.[10] Benjamin remarks on the striking emptiness in Atget's Parisian pictures like "Versailles" (ca. 1910), which draws from surrealist photography to presage "a salutary estrangement between man and his environment." This kind of aesthetic provides the potential for "clearing the ground for the politically trained eye before which all intimacies serve the illumination of detail" (Benjamin 1972, 21). The mapping of alienated spaces, in other words, can better "train" the eye for detail that might have been familiarized into a kind of invisibility, so that they become actionable sites for transformation. Such pictures, far from being distractions or sources of ocular indulgence within the urban sensorium, may lay the groundwork for a more politically purposive way of seeing.

The uncanniness found in the aesthetic of Han Yŏngsu's photographs, then, can be located within a longer genealogy of surrealist and documentary fusion that Atget's *oeuvre* represented for Benjamin. The affinities with Han are even more striking if we take into account Atget's well-documented attraction to storefronts and display windows, as seen in the shot of the corset shop in figure 8. In a recent commentary on Han's works, urban engineering scholar Ch'oe Chonghyŏn connects Atget and Han, pointing out that Atget's photographs usually do not contain people and therefore give off a "bleak and spooky feeling," while Han sought to show a sense of "hope through his [depiction of] human beings" (Ch'oe Chonghyŏn 2017, 157). By returning to the question of how the economy of looks negotiates the double-edged problem of estrangement, we can account for the conflict between the humanistic hope emphasized in Ch'oe's account of Han and the sense of abjection and fear I have underscored.

As noted by Kaja Silverman (1996, 156), the look differs from the gaze in that it has the innate capacity to resist total inscription. The look does this by creating meaning in excess of "the increasing standardization and regulation of the observer," which Jonathan Crary ([1990] 1992, 150) has cited as one of the fundamental mechanisms of subjectification under the modern visual regime. Historically, photography has served as a powerful medium for this standardization by attempting to dispossess the democratic power of the look and channel its energies towards an increasingly bureaucratic and technocratic

Tonghwa department store, overlapping with Edward Steichen's world-famous exhibition of *The Family of Man* at the Kyŏngbok Palace.

[10]Others have used the translation "healthy alienation" (Mitchell 1986, 183; Sampson 2007, 230).

Figure 8. Eugène Atget's corset shop, published in *La révolution surréaliste* (1926) (Fuller 1976, 137).

gaze of authority. During the mid to late nineteenth century, for example, the architectural-archival photographs of Charles Marville or the ethnographic-criminological photography of Jacob Riis helped consolidate the state's legitimacy and power founded on the normative logic of the photographic gaze.

By contrast, Han's photographs eschew the position of technically mediated vision as serving as a kind of disciplining authority. This has partly to do with the extemporaneous feel of many of his shots that simulate the vagaries of embodied looking (e.g., unusual vantage points, unsteady composition, blurred details), but it has more to do with his

interest in images that refer metonymically to other media formations—an operation I have called "intermedial reflexivity." Intermedial reflexivity makes the photograph "aware" of its own place within a transnational media ecology, its meaning-value overdetermined by shifting social, economic, and geopolitical realities (rather than the centralizing authority of the gaze). While linking across media, intermedial reflexivity does not always seamlessly unite; in Han, the uncanny doubling between the commodified image and the photographed human subject, for example, never arrives at a relationship of equivalence. This stubborn difference preserves the humanity of the subjects, which the more surrealist flourishes found in Atget militate against.

The preservation of humanity is not always absolute, however. Even if they look more "alive" than the crude facsimile of Carey Grant or the mannequins outside a dress shop, the human figures in Han's photographs are also images after all. These people-as-images are estranged yet empowered in their status as image, in their attractive sheen, valorized form, and innate ability to reproduce and circulate across time and space. In this way, the actual human beings captured in Han's photographs feed the observer's desire for self-estrangement, a need to reproduce oneself as image. This is how abjection towards the commodity-sign is sublimated into a desire to see oneself as image, which is part and parcel of consumerist desire—a desire to self-estrange.[11]

At the same time, Han's photographs lay the groundwork for more utopic, progressive procedures. By capturing the human look amid an increasingly complex media ecology of proliferating foreign commodities, Han's photographs train their observers to spot postwar modes of alienation, both upon their bodies and across the urban environment. Instead of being compelled towards self-estrangement, the observer may seek to redress its causes, in the same vein as the writers who penned the aforementioned works of post-liberation and postwar reportage. This is where my "fear of remediation" and Benjamin's "healthy alienation" converge; Han's aestheticization of estrangement may have been "healthy" in that it succeeded in revealing the challenges of navigating a postcolonial urban terrain thick with commodity-forms and artifacts of mass visuality. Alert and revivified to one's surroundings, some may even have sought to cultivate the fleeting erotics and epistemology of the look until they became equal to the demands of historical vision.

The Literary Body as a Sign of Geopolitical and Commodity Abjection

Literary works during this period also sought to track encounters with commodity abjection and moments of intermedial subject-making. My readings of two young

[11]Just as the body's productive potential exists ontologically prior to capitalism's extractive procedures, the power of the look does not require commodity-signs to be animated and mobilized. Yet, what we find in Han's work is the process of negotiation and contestation through which the human look is becoming inscribed within a network of commodity-signs. In this contradictory and dialectical process, Han's photographs both animate and alienate the look after its capture from the original source. They aestheticize the look and its elusive excess through the materiality of artistic photography. They celebrate how these looks circulate around or alongside the US-led consumer culture of the postwar era, without being incorporated wholly into it. At the same time, they seduce the viewer into a complex system of estrangement through the remaking of human subject as image.

writers of the postwar generation—Nam Chŏnghyŏn (b. 1933) and Ha Kŭnch'an (1931–2007)—should be understood within a broader context of intensifying interest in the question of the human body as a site of negotiation with geopolitical and consumerist forces within the neocolonial order. The climactic point of Nam's "Warning zone" (*Kyŏnggo kuyŏk*, 1958) and Ha's "White paper beard" (*Hŭinjongisuyŏm*, 1959) occurs when the human body is marked with abjection by literally being linked to a sign. This sense of abjection is closely tied to the specter of mass visuality (more specifically cinema) in both cases. What makes these stories especially remarkable is that the intensity of abjection does not immediately produce a self that recoils in order to reassert the soundness of one's subjectivity within a social (symbolic) order. The moments of shock and disgust in these stories are figured as a kind of *jouissance*. According to Kristeva (1982, 10), "When I *seek* (myself), *lose* (myself), or experience *jouissance*—then 'I' is *heterogeneous*. Discomfort, unease, dizziness stemming from an ambiguity that, through the violence of a revolt *against*, demarcates a space out of which signs and objects rise." It is, in other words, the ambiguity of abjection that produces a disorienting affect, a passionate *jouissance* that is experienced "violently and painfully" (9), which then clears the field for "signs and objects" to emerge, producing a new subject. For Nam, this kind of self-splitting joy is linked to discharge and excretion from a woman's body, which eventually gives rise to a masculinist (if ineffectual) national body that remains alienated through extraterritoriality. For Ha, the moment of abjection is linked to preadolescent wonder, staged in a kind of postwar primal scene, in which the father's symbolic castration through wartime dismemberment calls for rehabilitation by being fused with a commodity-sign as prosthesis.

In Korean literary history, Nam's reputation has been closely linked to the legal scandal surrounding "Land of excrement" (1965), in which he was accused of violating the Anti-communist Law.[12] If, as Theodore Hughes (2012, 142) claims, Nam tends to "biologize" resistance by depicting human bodies that have "no choice but to reject the modern," which stands for "the historicist logic of modernization by the authoritarian South Korean state and the U.S. hegemon," we find a similar tendency in Nam's debut story "Warning zone," which also explores the interrelationship between sexuality, scatology, biopolitics, and geopolitics. Chongsu, the protagonist of "Warning zone," is a former soldier who lives with his wife Sugi, his sister Suni, and an old housemaid. His wife runs around with other men while his sister is bedridden from an unknown disease, pining for an American soldier named James, who left her. Chongsu goes out and is disoriented by the urban bustle around him. He thinks he sees James but is not sure, he is swindled by an old schoolmate, and he thinks he sees his wife with the same old schoolmate but is not

[12]Though the "Land of excrement" incident in 1965 marks the first case of a writer convicted under the Anti-communist Law, there were several instances of censorship during Syngman Rhee's regime, all targeting some form of perceived pro-communist sympathies. For example, the sale of critic Cho Yŏnhyŏn's book *A study of contemporary writers* was banned because it engaged with works of writers (including critic Kim Tongsŏk) who had gone north (Yi Pongbŏm 2009, 55). Yet literature of the fifties is filled with works that express deep ambivalence towards the proliferation of foreign commodities. It is likely that expressions of commodity abjection were perceived by the state as more cultural nationalist than Marxist.

sure. The story concludes with Chongsu trying to chase down the two, who have gotten into a car and are driving away.

In flaneur-driven literary texts of modernism, it is not uncommon to represent the female body as ground, nourishment, and refuge. Even while the narrative language indulges in a play of signifying possibilities, a promise of rescue from urban estrangement is held in reserve in the female body, which is linked to referential reality and domestic space. To put it schematically: female body = referent = reality = home versus male consciousness = language = signs = streets. In the case of "Warning zone," there are three types of female bodies: First, there is Suni's body, which is clearly unwell but an uncanny source of vitality, underscored in the lively description of her epileptic fits and scenes of excretion. Second, there is Sugi's body, which Chongsu has a hard time recognizing and which is a different source of abjection. (This indeterminacy is linked to her relationship with sex work—her body exists as a fungible and throwaway consumer good.) Third, there is the old housemaid, who is a living reminder of the Korean War's effects of displacement, economic hardship, familial separation, and loss. While all three hold in reserve the possibility of rescuing Chongsu from estrangement, a persistent form of indeterminacy operates across all three types, defining his very condition.

The story is rife with anxiety caused by indeterminacy and the attendant problem of the crisis of representation. In addition to Suni's mysterious ailment, which cannot be diagnosed, there is the more basic problem of visual recognition. The description of Suni's illness—symptoms shown through fits and throes—is both ghastly and erotic, a slippage made all the more uncomfortable by the similarity in name between his sister and his wife. Seeing the old housemaid, who is a Korean War refugee, Chongsu is struck by her uncanny resemblance to his own mother, who was left behind in the North. When he is outside, the problem of recognition persists. He may or may not have seen James (having a photograph of the man seems to be of little help). Chongsu repeatedly thinks he sees Sugi but cannot be sure. Ironically, what allows him to tell her apart is how she "performs" her swaying gait on the street. Tropes of cinematic performance haunt the protagonist's affective episteme. The indeterminacy of individual identity is only made more acute by the visible proliferation of consumer goods: later in the story, Chongsu sees a girl wearing an outfit similar to what Sugi owns, fondling a pink earring that also resembles Sugi's. Even the golden necklace, the brooch, and the handbag are similar. Chongsu's inability to properly recognize Sugi in public means the narrative cannot stage a reassuring reconciliation between the husband and wife, restoring a stable, sustainable form of domestic *saenghwal*.

Another explanation for Chongsu's inability to recognize his wife is the vertiginous disorientation of urban life. Just as Nam portrays Suni's sickness as a twisted form of vitality, he ironically inverts the bustling activity in the streets—of industry and commerce—by figuring it as an unfolding catastrophe. We see this at the very moment when Chongsu fears that both Suni and the old housemaid have stopped breathing, and the narrative "eye" moves from the interior to the exterior. Nam writes, "The air in the room had come to a suffocating stand-still. *Motionless interior.* It's over." Then, hearing "the sizzle of burning" from outside, he looks through the door to realize "this was not the sound of something catching fire, but the cumbersome motion of buildings, signs, masses, and machines" (Nam 1958, 231–32). "The sizzle of burning" is linked to the sound of urban capitalist spectacle—of administration, exchange, and consumption.

We see here the sublime terror of history as it unfolds—Nam's repeated reference to fiery catastrophe ("a fire like a luminous storm").

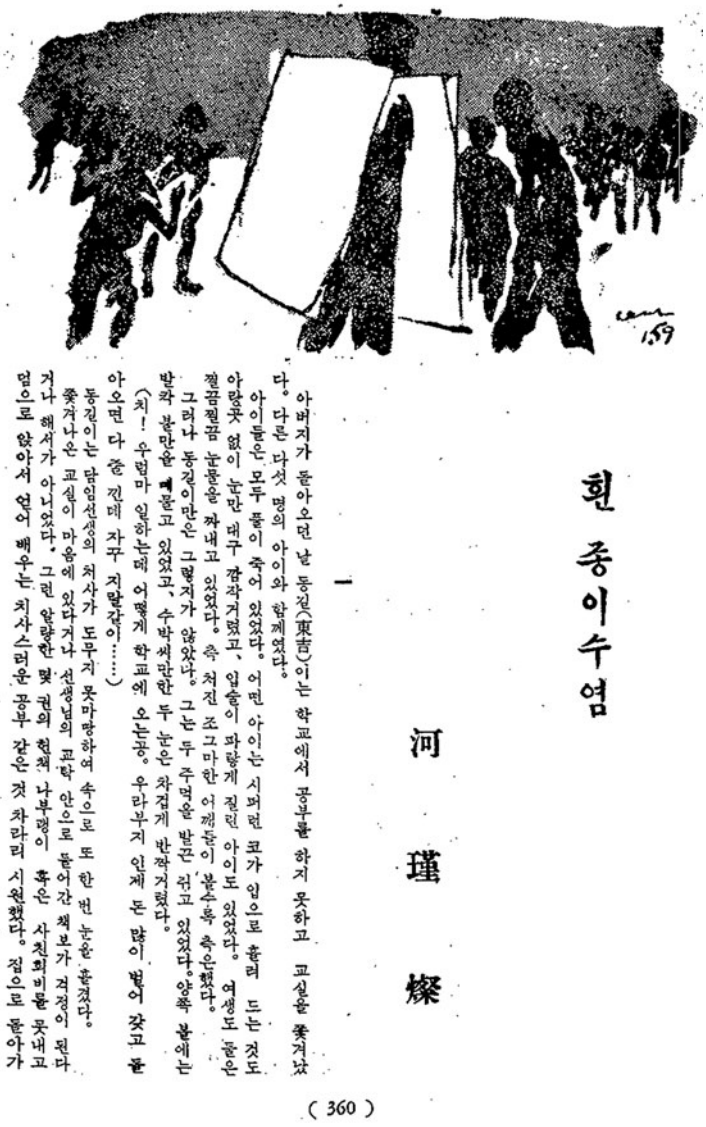
There is no hope of solace except for a brief moment when Chongsu writes "Warning zone" on a piece of toilet paper in red lipstick and places it gently on his wife's chest. Ironically, the act of labeling does not offer him escape from estrangement. On the contrary, the label, rather than helping him claim that which has been tagged, exists to serve as a reminder that he should never dare to claim it. Nam's distilling of South Korea's postwar spatial reality—of US military bases and zones of extraterritoriality—into the private realm of husband-wife relations reveals for us the allegoric legibility of the female body as national territory estranged from the people. The deliberate confusion of sexual and scatological symbology (lipstick on toilet paper) subverts the self-authorizing tenor of such signage (i.e., "Warning zone").

After taking the reader through "signs" of cinema and photography, which offer no stable ground for meaningful recognition, we arrive at a parody of a geopolitical sign linked to a woman's body, which has become a zone of "domestic" exclusion and national alienation, giving rise to the semi-sovereign masculine subject. Chongsu's wife (Sugi) is a mobile territory of uneven access even to her husband—the very embodiment of the contradictions of extraterritoriality. His sister (Suni) is westernized in her love of nudity (via magazine photos shown to her by James) but still gloriously "backwards" in her excretory habits. Sugi's stubborn unrecognizability also calls to mind both the opacity of the look and the uncanny effects of repetition and doubling we have seen in Han Yŏngsu's photography. If Han's photography offers scenes of estrangement composed on a sleek black-and-white surface, Nam's prose embraces filth, vulgarity, and roughness, presenting a carnivalesque mix of the profane and the profound; in addition to being geopolitical critique, it is literature asserting itself within the competing mediascape and tracking the deleterious encroachment of commodity-signs and mass culture in urban everyday life.

If "Warning zone" represents the female body rendered unrecognizable and estranged due to sex work and human-commodity relations, then Ha's "White paper beard" (1959) portrays a male body rendered unrecognizable by the overlapping conditions of war, consumerism, and Western mass culture.[13] Tonggil is a schoolboy who is shocked to find his father return from the Korean War without his right arm. The father, who worked as a carpenter before his disfigurement, finds a job as a film-promoting "sandwich man" outside a movie theater. The climax of the story comes when Tonggil comes face-to-face with his father, who is advertising a foreign film:

> Tonggil's eyes opened like saucers. He'd seen something truly strange. It was considerably far away, but even at a glance, he could see that it was some kind of an advertising sign. It was about the size of a straw bag. The advertising

[13]"White paper beard" is characteristic of Ha's other works, many of which problematize the representation of the father and the body. In recent studies, Ryu Tonggyu (2015, 310–12) has shown that there is a tendency in Ha scholarship to link the suffering of the father in his fiction to the ethno-nation as a homogeneous totality; Yi Ch'ŏng (2014, 229–30) focuses on Ha's penchant for depicting anomalous bodies, explaining it, on the one hand, as a consequence of Ha's frequently dealing with topics of war and, on the other, as an opportunity to reconfigure what constitutes the human within the context of "modernity's barbarism."



흰 종이수염

河瑾燦

一

아버지가 돌아오던 날 동길(東吉)이는 학교에서 공부를 하지 못하고 교실을 쫓겨났다。 다른 다섯 명의 아이와 함께였다。

아이들은 모두 둘이 죽어 있었다。 어떤 아이는 시퍼런 코가 입으로 흘러 드는 것도 아랑곳 없이 눈만 데구 껌적거렸고、 입술이 파랗게 질린 아이도 있었다。 여생도 둘은 쩔끔쩔끔 눈물을 짜내고 있었다。 속 처진 조그마한 어깨들이 불수록 축은했다。

그러나 동길이만은 그렇지가 않았다。 그는 두 주먹을 발끈 쥐고 있었다。 양쪽 볼에는 발칵 불만을 머물고 있었고、 수박씨만한 두 눈은 차겁게 반짝거렸다。

(치! 우럽마 일하는데 어떻게 학교에 오는공。 우라부지 인제 돈 많이 벌어 갖고 돌아오면 다 줄 껀데 자꾸 지랄같이……)

동길이는 담임선생의 처사가 도무지 못마땅하여 속으로 또 한 번 눈을 흘겼다。

쫓겨나온 교실이 마음에 있다거나 선생님의 교탁 안으로 돌어간 책보가 걱정이 된다거나 해서가 아니었다。 그런 알량한 몇 권의 헌책 나부랭이 혹은 사친회비를 못내고 벌으로 앉아서 얻어 배우는 치사스러운 꼴부 같은 것 차라리 시원했다。 집으로 돌아가

(360)

Figure 9. From the opening page of "White paper beard" (Ha 1959).

sign was walking in the middle of the road and headed in this direction. The rowdy children clamored around the moving signboard.

Before he knew it, Tonggil was running towards it. Now that he was closer, it was definitely an advertising sign. But attached to this sign were two legs, even a head. It was a person. It was a person who was walking towards him with a large signboard hanging over his neck. (Ha 1959, 368)

The "strange" appearance of Tonggil's father is exaggerated by the childlike perspective provided by the narrator, which first sees the form as a thing that is somehow animate and has person-like qualities. Even when the moving signboard is recognized as a "person,"

the uncanniness of the human form, which has been both diminished and augmented, never quite fades. The dismemberment of the father's arm, formerly the source of his creative and productive power as a carpenter, has given way to the prosthetic of the commodity-sign. Rather than producing objects of practical and social value, his body is reduced to a medium that collects and then transfers attention to a separate site of spectacle. The childish fascination lacks the discomfiting perversion of Chongsu's gaze directed at his wife or sister, but because the boy's wonder is presexual and the father's maiming a kind of castration, the moment functions as a primal scene through which Tonggil is seduced into consciousness about a new kind of subject: part human and part spectacle, a body that derives its value from the ability to organize and redirect attention.

A mental visualization of the title "White paper beard" is necessary to fully appreciate how Ha is deploying the uncanny in his characterization of the commodity-sign. For the imagery to work, we must block out the human forms even more radically than the illustration in the story's first publication does in figure 9 (rendered as dark, featureless figures). Once the human beings are completely disappeared, only the sign remains in our mind's eye, forming the shape of a white beard, which floats ghostlike above the ground without any visible support. The image's eeriness (or, as Ch'oe Chonghyŏn referred to Atget's photographs, a "bleak and spooky feeling") comes from how the commodity-sign has displaced the human as the only visible sign of life. Remarkably, the fetishism is not linked to the commodity-form as such (as we find in Marx's commodity-fetishism) but to a "sign" in the literal sense, which draws its vitality from a war-damaged human body. The story's emphasis on the embodied materiality of this commodity-sign—oscillating between the mundane and the marvelous—demonstrates how literary fiction of the era was straddling the line between realist documentary and modernist phantasmagoria, linking itself to, while asserting itself against, competing media formations of its time.

Conclusion

The collapse of the Japanese empire unleashed in the streets of Seoul new everyday epistemologies and affects closely tied to evolving relationships across media. The inward-looking flaneurs of the colonial period turned their critical gaze outward as they indexed changing social and geopolitical conditions of liberation through observations of daily life on the street. While curated as a form of reportage, the pieces were not content with sticking to the facts. They deployed symphonic tropes of harmony and disharmony, for example, in an effort to capture South Korea's postcolonial reality and make it available for circulation and critique. In addition to their literary and historical orientation, they trafficked in postcolonial affects of terror and disgust when faced with foreign signs and commodities on display in the streets. In one case of postwar reportage, the writer directed his ambivalence towards signs of US extraterritoriality throughout the war-torn city.

The penchant for including illustrations in post-liberation reportage foreshadowed the rise of street photography as a powerful method for documenting life on the street in the early years following the Korean War. The popularization of photography brought fundamental changes in how the everyday would be captured, reproduced, and

circulated for consumption. I have shown how the earlier realist works of Im Sŏkche differ fundamentally from the later works of Han Yŏngsu, by distinguishing Im's "realism of labor" from Han's "realism of looks." The uncanny doubling and replication we see across the diegetic field of Han's camera and the shots of magazine covers, movie posters, and shop windows do not inspire the same intensity of disorientation and disgust we observe in post-liberation reportage. Instead, commodity abjection is internalized as self-estrangement as the bodies on the street are demobilized and isolated from one another. Estrangement energizes these bodies towards another form of animation; the human subjects (and the viewer) find themselves seduced into an economy of looks and their self-production as image. Conversely, this very self-estrangement may be read as salutary; because the figures and faces are kept suspended and apart, they yield potential for further critical perception and contemplation and the possibility of reform.

Next to the mute ambivalence of Han's pictures, the critical spirit of Nam and Ha's stories is more trenchant. The objects of their critique are cultures of consumerism and mass visuality. The authors go a step further by linking these processes not only to US cultural hegemony and conflicted attachments to Japanese occupation-era mass culture but also to the looming specter of American militarism and neocolonialism. Jin-kyung Lee (2010, 5–6) has defined "necropolitical labor" as a "certain 'fostering' of life, already premised on their death or the disposability of their lives," which is "limited to serving the labor demands of the state or empire." Soldiers and sex workers, then, can both be categorized as necropolitical labor, in that the very nature of their labor is predicated on the fungibility and the disposability of their living body. Nam's linking of Sugi's body to the national territory renders the symbolic violence of her necropolitical labor (and the abjection it entails) secondary, prioritizing instead Chongsu's wounded masculine subjectivity, which seeks to claim her body as referent = reality = home. Chongsu's visual-olfactory apparatus is primed to buck the assimilatory logic of hygienic governmentality: even in sickness and abjection, a female body mid-excretion can be described as a source of vitality and exultant excess. Meanwhile, the body of Tonggil's father goes from being a carpenter to a soldier to a human advertisement. The arm's dismemberment and the abjection it entails provide the condition of possibility for the father to be rebuilt as half-body, half-sign. Both stories go beyond what Andreas Huyssen (2015, 8) has called "remediation in reverse," describing "moments when an older medium reasserts itself by critically working through what the new medium does and does not do"; in addition to asserting their medium-specificity through vibrant disruptive language, the works enfold into their diegesis fraught moments of abject contact with artifacts of consumer culture and mass visuality.

The works of reportage, photography, and literature I have discussed were especially significant during the Cold War's early years, when the entrenched national division and the tyranny of Syngman Rhee's anti-communist state led to suppression and negation of leftist thought. While a sustained, class-based, decolonizing struggle was becoming all but impossible, critiques of the commodity-form persisted across popular and literary media as an alternate way of contesting US neocoloniality. In this milieu, the cross-media mapping of Seoul provided more than descriptions of urban sights and sounds; it achieved what Giuliana Bruno (2002, 224) might call inscription of "affects onto the architectonics that [serves as a] social map." As my intermedial approach has shown, despite the forces of competition within the media ecology, the shared social goal of

these representations of the postwar city was to simultaneously produce a map of psyches and bodies that were contending with—while being products of—the everyday encroachment of the commodity-sign.

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