

The Politics of the Jeju 4.3 *Holeomeong* Bodies: “Speaking” and Emotion as Embodied Language*

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(In lieu of an abstract) This paper is based on ethnographic research on the *holeomeong* (widowed women) who lost their husbands and witnessed countless deaths during the April Third (4.3) Jeju Uprising, after which they were left to raise their children and reconstruct their villages. This research focuses on the ways in which they remember the Uprising, how they represent and re-enact it, as well as how they understand it. The *holeomeong* are those who stayed in the villages during the events of the Jeju Uprising when their husbands left to hide or die; they are the witnesses of violence, of massacre, and of death at the time of the Uprising. Generally, the testimonies and oral statements of women who have historical experiences are described as secondary or minor materials when inquiring into historical events. When women who have historical experiences of war or state violence speak about their lives they often avoid direct reference to those events, or they avoid speaking about them altogether. Instead, they speak about strife and how difficult the times were, which reflects their status in families and the gender roles assigned to women.

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1. Starting Words

This article is based on ethnographic research on the *holeomeong* (widowed women) who lost their husbands and witnessed countless deaths during the April Third (4.3) Jeju Uprising,¹ after which they were left to raise their children and reconstruct their villages. This research focuses on the ways in which they remember the Uprising, how they represent and re-enact it, as well as how they understand it.² The *holeomeong* are those who stayed in the villages during the events of the Jeju Uprising when their husbands left to hide or die; they are the witnesses of violence, of massacre, and of death at the time of the Uprising. Generally, the testimonies and oral statements of women who have historical experiences are described as secondary or minor materials when inquiring into historical events. When women who have historical experiences of war or state violence speak about their lives they often avoid direct reference to those events, or they avoid speaking about them altogether.³ Instead, they

¹ The April Third (4.3) Jeju Uprising is among the greatest tragedies of contemporary Korean history, starting on April 3, 1948, and lasting 6 years and 6 months, during which approximately 30,000 Jeju residents died; nearly a ninth of the population at the time. However, this incident was kept silent for many years. Borrowing strength from the 1987 democratization, in 1988 an April Third column was started at the *Jemin Ilbo*, where it began the serial publication “April Third Speaks.” In the nineties, after the provincial self-government system was started, an “April Third Special committee” was formed in the Jeju provincial assembly, where they issued the “Jeju 4.3 Damage Report.” In December of 1999, the Jeju 4.3 Special Law (Special Law for Investigation of the Jeju 4.3 Incident and Honoring Victims) was passed, and in October of 2003 the “Investigation Report of the Jeju 4.3 Incident” was published. In 2003, 55 years after the 4.3 Incident had transpired, the Korean government acknowledged the misuse of state power, and the president offered an apology to the people of Jeju. Following this, the project of exposing the facts and truth of the 4.3 Incident continues, as well as rising demands for the restoration of honor and reparations to victims. In March of 2014, April 3rd became a designated national memorial day.

² (Translator’s note) Though nearly 70 years have passed since these events, there does not seem to be an established English nomenclature for them. It is often referred to in English as the Jeju 4.3 Incident, the Jeju Massacre, the Jeju Uprising, and sometimes more vaguely as the Jeju 4.3 Event, or Jeju Tragedy. In this translation, I intend to primarily refer to events as the Jeju Massacre, Massacre, or 4.3 even though the author refers to this incident as just “4.3.”

³ Because oral narratives are based on experiences, scholars of both women’s studies and oral history have found that women’s oral narratives of war tend to be voiced in a manner deeply related to women’s gender roles (Yun Taekrim 2012; Yi Imha 2004; Yi Jeongju 1999). Kim Gwiok suggests that the discussion of women’s experiences of war as being steeped in women’s gender roles is the result of Korean society’s gendered

speak about strife and how difficult the times were, which reflects their status in families and the gender roles assigned to women.

The testimonies and oral accounts of women who experienced 4.3 have thus been described as their own memories of how an event changed their lives rather than as concrete “facts” about the Jeju Uprising as an historical event. Testimonies of loss and suffering of the women who lived through 4.3 are not whole, but partial; when cross-examined, some of them lack substantiation. Women’s suffering and victimization confirm the violence and destruction of historical events, but are used only as secondary references to convince us of the level of cruelty; their testimonies are not considered primary information in the investigation into the truth of these events. This article intends to demonstrate that testimonies and oral accounts of women who are at once both victims and survivors are not only speaking about themselves as experiencers of events but are also addressing the events or situations themselves. It also proposes that speaking goes beyond oral narratives to include embodied emotions and body politics. Further, these women’s unspeakability testifies that having witnessed horrifying and atrocious circumstances, they become in their own eyes “filthy beings” who are unable to speak about their own loss, suffering, and truths.

The *holeomeongs* survived through the time and space of the unfathomable violence of the Jeju Massacre and survived again after it had ended, through an era in which it was likened to a “commie” experience. In Korean society, where a so-called “red complex” continues to operate strongly, the Jeju Uprising became framed as an incident incited by communist rioters. Thus, *holeomeongs* refrained from speaking out of fear that the deaths of their husbands would serve only to implicate their sons; the women locked away all accounts within their bodies for years in order to conceal that their families had been implicated with those who died in the Massacre. The truth commission into the Jeju Massacre and criticism of state violence, as well as the discourse of honor restoration to the victims of the Massacre expanded the breadth of language used to describe experiences of the Massacre and to render it speakable. However, the *holeomeongs* did not see this expansion of the discourse as something that enabled reconstruction of their experiences, communication of the suffering they endured, nor as something that enabled sharing with the

epistemology in researching war (Kim Gwiok 2013: 102).

many people in Korean society who had not directly experienced the Jeju Massacre.

In this article I intend to show the necessity of approaching the experiences of the Jeju *holeomeongs* not only through linguo-centric oral representation, but through social circumstances and cultural norms surrounding the *holeomeongs*, as well as the body politics that locate their experiences within their bodies. In order to understand the cruel, fearful, and deeply sorrowful historical experiences of women victims, and in order for the community and nation to communicate and heal these wounds together, we must access the “silences,” “unspeakability,” and “feelings and emotions beyond words” that are not captured in “facts” or political truths. For the community must be able to sympathize with these bodily experiences.

2. Research Materials

Data for this research was collected over the course of 3 rounds of fieldwork and multiple rounds of interviews with women who were widowed during the Massacre. The first round of fieldwork took place between 1997 and 1998, in H village, one of the regions with the most 4.3 casualties.⁴ Data for this research centers on a total of 4 cases (Table 1) in which, during the course of multiple meetings, the data’s content was deepened. Illustrating the complicated trajectory by which woman came to articulate their stories, testimony provided in later meetings often exhibited changes from testimonies collected at the beginning of research. Following the 1990s, Korea’s approach to the Jeju 4.3 Incident changed its focus from rebellion to massacre. In doing so, the project of uncovering historical truths and facts about the victims and casualties of the Jeju 4.3 Incident began. The year 1997, in which the first round of fieldwork was completed, was a time in which the discussion of uncovering truths and restoring honor to victims was progressing. It was an era of finding witnesses who could speak to the suffering of the time. Informants in this study had

⁴ This research was started as part of a collaborative research project on the 4.3 Incident in 1998 by a group of 4 anthropologists and two other social scientists. This joint research was published later as “Transformation in village communities and experience of Jeju 4.3” (Kim Seong-rye et al. 2001).

received requests to testify about the Massacre from journalists and broadcasters and had experience giving such testimonies.

The second round of data collection took place in June of 2010. In this article, I use as my research data the life histories of four of the bereaved *holeomeongs* I met during this time. Two of the women whom my research team had met during the first round of fieldwork in 1997 had passed away, and I re-interviewed the one woman who had remained in the village. Additionally, I conducted interviews with three new informants; three women who were living in a different village. 2010 was a point in time during which Jeju residents were reflecting on the 2003 apology regarding state violence of the Jeju 4.3 Incident by the head of the Korean government, the president, on behalf of all of Korea. It was also an era in which honor restoration for victims of the 4.3 Incident was being actively pursued. In 2005 the Association for Bereaved Families of 4.3 Victims first came together, and sons of the *holeomeongs* began to participate in efforts for honor restoration and victim reparations. Ms. S, whom I met during this second round of fieldwork, was a victim who had not once told her story officially, and whose son was working at the Association for Bereaved Families. Ms. I, another *holeomeong*, met President Roh Moo-hyun when he travelled to Jeju to deliver his official apology for the 4.3 Incident to the Jeju people. The final *holeomeong* was Ms. L, who was awarded the “admirable mother prize” (*jangban comeoni-sang*). One secondary case was a woman who had married into a family that had been affected by the Massacre. The third data collection took place in 2013-2014, during which I met again with the surviving *holeomeong* and conducted additional

Table 1. Research Cases

Number	Gender	Name	Interview Period	Remarks
1	F	Ms. B	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd round	
2	F	Ms. C	1 st round	Passed before 2 nd round
3	F	Ms. O	1 st round	Passed before 2 nd round
4	F	Ms. K	1 st round	
5	F	Ms. I	2 nd round	
6	F	Ms. S	2 nd round	Passed before 3 rd round
7	F	Ms. L	2 nd round	

Table 2. Secondary Research Cases

Number	Gender	Name	Interview Period	Remarks
1	F	Village Leader, Head of Women's Association	1 st round	47 years old in 1998
2	M	Mr. D, (Former) Village Leader, Head of Senior Citizens Association	1 st round	Passed before 2 nd round
3	M	Mr. P	1 st round	Policeman at the time of the 4.3 Incident, passed
4	M	Mr. U	1 st round	Arrested at the time of 4.3, imprisonment, passed
5	F	Ms. C's daughter	2 nd , 3 rd round	Mr. D's daughter in law
6	F	Ms. I's daughter	2 nd round	Passed before 3 rd round
7	M, F	Ms. S's family (son, daughter, daughter in law)	2 nd , 3 rd round	

interviews with them as well as family interviews. (Tables 1 and 2 list primary and secondary research subjects including several men.)

3. Victim/Survivor Experiences: The Partiality and Impossibility of Representation

It was 1997 when I made my first visit to H village, which is situated in the central mountainous region of Jeju that saw some of the most damage during the Uprising. When I arrived the men and women who had lived through the Jeju Uprising were gathered in the senior center in the village hall. At the time, the *Jemin Ilbo* newspaper's reporting on the Massacre was beginning to pick up, and social support for witnesses and survivors to come forward and testify about the Massacre was mounting. At the time, when outside journalists or authors came to Jeju for the sake of inquiring into the Massacre, many of them interviewed Mr. D, who had lost his family to the police and military during the Massacre, and was, at the time of interviews, the former village leader and head of the Senior Citizens

Association, as well as being actively involved in the Association for Bereaved Families. Women gathered at the senior center all listened to him speak, but the women's silence operated as meaningful agreement and cooperation. At this point, the only elderly men left in H village who had experienced the Uprising were Mr. D, Mr. P, who was a policeman at the time of the Incident, and Mr. U, who had gone into hiding during the events of that April, but was later arrested and spent a long period of his life imprisoned. The elderly women met each other nearly every day at the village hall, but whenever my fellow anthropologists and I would stop by the hall they barely spoke. When we asked, "Are you not speaking because of us?" they would reply, "Who'd have much to say when you're meeting the same people every day?" And when asked, "Do you talk to one another about what you experienced in during the Massacre?" they would give responses such as "Everyone knows, so why bother talking about it?" or "We don't have anything to talk about," "I've forgotten it all," "It was just because of the times..." Along with the other anthropologists conducting fieldwork, I went to the village hall often in order to listen to their experiences and memories of the Uprising. However, what we heard while at the community center never strayed from the boundaries of Mr. D's telling of the village's story that we had heard on our first visit. Nearly all the women simply reaffirmed the already formulated story of the village's suffering, adding personal experiences to confirm its validity.⁵

At first, even when we visited the individual homes of the widows, they would avoid telling personal stories about the Massacre. They would mostly talk about how difficult and hard life had become in the wake of the Massacre. Furthermore, when with others, their stories, comprised of descriptions of poverty as well as sacrifice and suffering for their children, fit neatly into a mutually agreed upon normative story of village life. But although their descriptions of suffering and family took place under the premise of state violence that had inflicted great harm on them and the people of their village, the Jeju Uprising itself was positioned outside such personal narratives of suffering as a problem "of the times." The tales of suffering of the *holeomeongs* were bound to the large framework of a Jeju in which "all were poor," and, more concretely, were related to the social

⁵ Primo Levi, a survivor of Nazi concentration camps, often said that though frequent speaking can preserve memories vividly, such memories make the past decided by an archetypal frame and fixed in embellished form (Levi 2014).

relations of the village and their families.

Anthropology, women's studies, and the study of cultural history, all criticize those powers that have suppressed or silenced the experiences and memories of marginalized peoples and challenge authorities for approaching such memories as a subversive strand of reality. Scholars propose a counter discourse that calls into question the ethicality of the ruling power (Scott 1999; Yun and Ham 2006). Thus, memories of those who were not included in official histories are an indication of an alternative historical reality that has been oppressed, re-emerging as an effect of the social critique of that power that originally suppressed and obscured such reality. The testimonies and statements of victims of the Jeju Uprising take place in a framework such as this. In this instance, suffering has a tendency to become a marker that fashions the identity of victims, and thus my research pertains to Jeju as victimization created by the dynamics of state and international society that surrounded the Uprising, as well as to Jeju residents as passive victims. Along with criticisms of historicism, questions have been posed such as how people live with the past, what sort of past time the present is built on, and how we can access the cultural-political meanings of memories that did not become history, launching a new approach and project of signification for the past, for memory, and for history, as well as for their representations (Chakrabarty 2000; Spivak 1988; Das 2003). My research on the women of the Jeju Uprising is situated in this context.

The problem lies in how to listen to and how to communicate experiences of suffering and loss that took place within a space and time, and how one's personal memories can be shared with a community and become such a community's historical knowledge. Representations of victims' experiences or memories are fragmented and partial, and are complicated by unspeakability and suspicions about the listener, as well as the insufficiency of language to explain these experiences. The narratives of the 4.3 *holeomeongs* cannot be heard without considering the inadequacy of the language in which they represent their experiences, as well as the impossibility of representation. Much of the recent research into oral history poses questions regarding how to understand an orator's narrative, sparking many debates on oral history as social memory and oral history as a methodology. Particularly in Korean society, the project of recording and documenting testimony from the Japanese Imperial Military's Comfort Women between 1993 and 2001 played an extremely important role in the

making of Korean oral history research. The book *Rewriting History Through Memory*, published in 2001,⁶ first approached the Comfort Women's testimonies not as evidence, but as memories, igniting a methodological shift in oral history studies that proclaimed "speaking" was not fact, but was about experiences, and that oral material should not be centered on asking, but must be grounded in listening (Yang 2001). Following this, discussions surrounding the collection of oral data and its interpretation, as well as explorations into the purpose of oral history research continued, giving rise to a considerable number of studies emphasizing researchers' reflexivity – the place of reflexivity in data collection and interpretation, as well as the dynamics of power arising between researcher and research participants and the implications for processes of data collection and the problems posed for results (Yi J. et al. 2012; Yun T. 2010). Kim Seong-rye (2002) also proposed that rather than understanding oral history as the discovery of the "truth" of an event, we must approach it as a result of interpretation of the speaking subject's positionality. Further, Yu Cheolin (2004) suggested in his work that we must approach oral accounts as the story of an empirical subject orating the narrative truth. The research into the 4.3 *holeomeongs* presented in this paper accepts the outcomes of such previous investigations. However, to understand the representation of experiences and testimony of the widows who were witness to terrible dread and innumerable deaths, not only do we require reflexivity, but we must make a new methodological attempt to overcome linguo-centric representation and interpretation.

Research on trauma is an important reference for understanding the representation of experiences by the 4.3 *holeomeongs*. In anthropology, navigating social suffering and the problem of embodiment are Allen Young (1997), Veena Das (2003), and Margaret Lock (1997), who analyze how social and institutional structures as well as political and economic powers construct and produce personal and collective experiences of anguish and trauma. Furthermore, in women's studies and queer studies, which were influenced by the anthropological study of social suffering, there have been methodological advances in studying the representation and interpretation of experiences (Kennedy and Whitlock 2011). In

⁶ (Editor's Note) It refers to the book 『기억으로 다시 쓰는 역사』 [Rewriting history through memory], published by Hanguk jeongsindae munje daecheak hyeobuihoe [The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan].

focusing on the forms of suffering, degradation, and violence experienced by women, girls, and people of color, which had not been included in previous trauma research, Sarah Ahmed and Ann Cvetkovich, amongst others, expand the psychological and psychoanalytic field of trauma into a social, cultural, and political epistemology. These two scholars navigate the explicit connections between emotion and politics; Ahmed (2004) through the political and cultural aspects constructed by emotion, and Cvetkovich (2003) through approaching trauma as the experience of political violence, the location of which has been socially erased. In approaching the experiences of the 4.3 *holeomeong* women through trauma, this article intends to explore a new epistemological framework in which these Jeju women experience, understand, and interpret the world via the emotion and suffering inscribed on their bodies.

4. Silence, Partial Speaking, Telling or Hiding: “How can I tell you everything? You know I can’t!!”

Survivor of the Nazi concentration camps, Primo Levi, once said that because not only victims, but perpetrators as well, are keenly aware that others will not believe what they have experienced, and that in fact it is difficult to believe, speaking about such experiences is no easy task. Because of this, again, not only victims, but perpetrators as well, hold secrets not known even to their wives or children, and witnesses stay silent through willful ignorance and fear (Levi 2014 [1986]: 11-15). As man’s memory is not etched in stone, over the passing of time it can be erased and transformed, even injected with wholly unrelated things. As such, memory is a fallible tool (Levi 2014: 23-24). In order to explain the reliability of memory, he explains that an understanding of the mechanisms that distort memory, such as trauma, interference of competing memories, states of abnormal consciousness, suppression, and oppression, is necessary. However, what Levi considers more important is the distance, which grows over time, between those who have experienced and witnessed suffering, and those who listen to their stories. How can we listen and understand the stories of those who have experienced unimaginable, horrific violence, and death? Understanding always approaches that which is unknowable as mediated through that which we can understand. Those who listen to these stories already hold within them an imagination that has been

fostered by similar experiences, in books and movies, and even myths. This imagination constructs a context in which to understand the horrific world which is unknowable. In the process of telling his experience in the concentration camps, and the process of others reading his first book *If This Is a Man* (2007 [1947]), Levi became aware of the fatal oversimplification and stereotypes with which people listened to the stories of victims and witnesses. They understand the starvation of those in concentration camps as something comparable to skipping meals, the concentration camps as something not dissimilar from the prisons of Rome (Levi 2014: 192). He says that it is inevitable for those who listen to show errors in judging a time and place far removed from the standards of their context, but we must remain vigilant against these errors (Levi 2014: 201). In this research into the memory and speech of the 4.3 *holeomeongs*, listening is paramount; how do these widows decide to speak and choose the time of which they speak, and what is it that they want to say?

For many decades, both social and personal references to the Jeju Massacre were silenced. However, since the mid-nineties, demands for dialogue about the Massacre began, and speech was socially and morally acknowledged as well as rewarded. However, “speech” operates within a specific framework of social and linguistic norms. Those connected to the Massacre are sensitive to the politics surrounding speech and silence. The experience of the Jeju Massacre had been positioned within the framework of anti-communism, which had formed the basis for South Korean sovereignty, as a rebellion by “commie” rioters, for 55 years, until the president acknowledged it as state violence and offered an apology in 2003. Because of this, victims of the Massacre already knew that speaking about it meant confronting the anti-communist political culture present within Korea, something that they could not control. Thus, “that which can be said and that which cannot” and “that which must be hidden and that which can be said” were always consciously and unconsciously strategized. Within the term “April Third” itself a complex politics of meaning implicitly surrounds the significance of those implicated in the events who were called “rioters” and “mountain people.” This politics of meaning includes the prejudices of people about the poor and miserable widows who experienced all that we should and should not see, as well as the outside views of the Jeju people as a feeble people who were historically subject to violence from the mainland. A “red-complex,” social norms concerning women, and prejudices of the mainland towards Jeju, amongst

other things, interpose themselves in the politics of “speaking” and the body/gender politics of the female victims of the Jeju Massacre as well.

Ms. B was born in H village and later married into a nearby village in the *Jocheon* region, but as the violence broke out during the Uprising, she returned to her parents’ home in H village. The testimony of Ms. B, who we first met in 1997, began with the official history of the village. Villagers’ stories of the Massacre are a recounting of the history which had already been formalized during the truth commission, from a personal dimension. Only after repeatedly meeting with Ms. B, only to have her reiterate the same story several times, did she begin to tell the story that “could not be told to others.” That is to say, she began to tell the underlying story which had been shrouded by the village’s official story. For many of the widows, the contents of their stories varied depending on where they were speaking, who they were speaking to, whether those who were listening were amiable, and whether they were on the left or the right. Ms. B said, “We are those who have died multiple times, and those few who have survived. How would people nowadays know what it is we’re talking about? We’re only saying the things that they can comprehend.”

Reticence regarding the Jeju Massacre was an official matter within H village. However, fragmentedly and continually, words circulated through whispers. Many of the points which Ms. B had claimed as secret were already known by many people. The village’s younger generation did not attach much importance to that which Ms. B distinguished as “hidden,” or “revealed”; they already knew it all.⁷ In 1998, the village leader and head of the Women’s Association, who was 47 at the time, said that widows who had lived through the Massacre had truly suffered a great deal. But because her generation did not know much about the events of the Massacre, they could not understand of what the widows spoke, and furthermore because

⁷ Ms. B’s statement about that which “could not be told to others” occurred when first starting our research in 1997. This information had not been used even once until 2014. Ms. B’s story had never officially been told in the village. However, it was a story that circulated on a personal dimension between the people in the village and within the family. Seventy years have passed since the violence first broke out in Jeju and on an official level there are talks of reconciliation and restoration, but within the village itself there still remain differences in understanding and conflict regarding the Incident. This is the reason that information is circulated by mumbles and whispers. When we met again in 2014, Ms. B said that since she wasn’t sure when she would die she might as well say everything she wants to say. She also gave approval for her oral statements to be used for the sake of research.

they were born in a time after the Massacre, they never sensed that the stories of the old women held importance to their current life. Like her twenty-something daughter who could not comprehend the stories about her own life, that generation had listened to their parents' tales of strife and understood these along the lines of, "you know what it was like back then." She said, "When the women tell their stories of the past most of them cry. They cry because they're still in grief about their suffering."

While speaking, the women would say "it's horrible" and close their eyes, saying "my heart hurts" and begin to cry. Saying "that's enough," they end their stories there. After her husband died during the Massacre, Ms. B was divorced by her in-laws; she says because she had no children and there were problems with property, they sent her back to her parents. Ms. B had done all the housework, participated in ancestral rites, raised her nieces, and tended to the estate, but because of the Confucian governance of Mr. B's household she was unable to receive any rights to ancestral rites or land inheritance. Through a sham marriage she had a son with a married man and returned once again to H village. She had been born in the village and carried a heartfelt attachment to it, even doing many things for the sake of it, but on a substantive and official level, she was not granted any form of membership in it.

In the winter of 1997, Ms. B slept together in a room with one of the research assistants, and would often wake up at dawn and tell this assistant stories about the village, instructing her not to tell anyone, then falling back asleep. For example, she said of the most influential elder in the town in 1997, "Actually, he was adopted." Because mountain people killed everyone in his family in the village, he had been adopted from Jeju City into the village. Ms. B told us, "But that man would never admit it." "They're living as a family victimized by police, but actually there are a lot of rumors about that household," she said. Instructing to "tell" or "never tell anyone," Ms. B's remarks show her desire to expose truths about the village to the outsider researchers. To a woman who read the paper and listened to radio news every day, the researchers seemed to hold status in an official institution outside of the village, and she considered them to be objective observers who could make judgements. The village had a more complex hierarchical structure for those belonging to it than was visible from the outside, and this hierarchy was also subject to change after the Uprising. Living as a woman in a village devoid of husbands, sons, and brothers, Ms. B understood that the village's patriarchal order had placed her in an

ambiguous position. Despite this, Ms. B's memories and life experiences belonged in the village, and one method of affirming this was the act of narrating her personal history and the history of the village to those who came from outside of it. Consequently, in showing momentary flashes of "I know everything about this village and am a true villager" Ms. B was able to confirm her identity as part of the village. Furthermore, by divulging the village stories that were not officially known, but experienced by her, she revealed a resistance to the village's counterfeit order and peace. I understand this as a manifestation of her desire to prove herself as a long-term member of the village.⁸

Because Ms. C was dragged to the police stations and battalion headquarters in Jeju City where she was beaten and tortured, her victimization is recorded in the Jeju April Third sourcebook. She also had her picture run in a newspaper as a victim of the 4.3 Incident. For this reason, many reporters and broadcasting stations, as well as researchers sought her out. Owing to this, when researchers asked her about her experiences during 4.3, she would retaliate with, "I've already said it all and it's all been in the papers, so what more do you want me to say?"

In the Jeju April Third sourcebook her deposition is organized neatly into two pages (*Jemin Ilbo* 4.3 reporting group 1997). Ms. C was happy that a reporter put her picture in the paper, but remarked that she had not said all that she had wanted to. The newspaper only reported the story of how she had been taken during the Uprising and beaten. When MBC also went looking for her, Ms. C said that she "didn't know much of the world, and wasn't sure if what I said would make people mistake me for a spy" and because of that she "couldn't say everything to be said." So, Ms. C did not explain in detail "why she had been taken to Songdang." She thought that even if she were to speak about it, no one would understand, so what was

⁸ Conflict within the village failed to reveal itself for many years, but was latent in the society. The special April Third program, *Three Tales from Mt. Nuksi*, aired on Jeju MBC on April 5, 2013, shows how different the thoughts and lives are of those with different experiences of the 4.3 Incident to this day. By examining the village conflicts surrounding writing of village historiography, it shows that, in the small village of Uguiri in the mountainous region, there are still conflicts among the bereaved families of soldiers and policemen, bereaved families of the mountain people, and bereaved families of civilian casualties. The wounds of these groups are still fresh. The official discourse of the "Jeju 4.3 Special Law" is one of reconciliation and coexistence, but at even the level of the village no attempts at reconciliation between the diversely bereaved families have been made.

the use of speaking about it?

Ms. C resolved to never speak about her experiences of the Uprising again, yet she said to me “Since you want to know; since it’s you, I’ll talk,” and began to recount what she endured during the Massacre to me, whom she called a “teacher lady.” What brought Ms. C to Songdang was that the police caught sight of her husband making contact with the mountain people and brought her in to be interrogated. Truthfully, her husband was a carpenter who had nothing to do with the armed communist forces in the mountains, but because speaking about being taken to Songdang could produce such a misunderstanding, she purposefully avoided talking about it. When I first met Ms. C she said that even after death the spirit (*hon*) remains, and because of that if a woman were to remarry, the ghost of her first husband could harass that of her second. Because of this, the problem of remarriage was not a simple one for the *holeomeongs*. Additionally, she said that this was a former gentry village, and thus widows who remarried left the village. In cases when they did remarry, it was necessary for the woman to appease the ghost of her first husband for her second husband to flourish. Ms. C married a man who had already been married, and thus when he passed, she held the ancestral rites for the first wife as well. The case of Ms. C, a victim of the violence of the Massacre, exposes the complex social relations involved in living as a victimized woman in the wake of the Massacre. However, as the Jeju Massacre entered the sphere of officialdom and politics, all that was not ostensibly political was excluded from the lexicon of Jeju Uprising experiences, for in constructing the parameters of victimhood the complexity of women’s private experiences were thought unnecessary. The public discourse of the Jeju April Third became both masculine and institutional.

When Ms. I met President Roh Moo-hyun, he asked her to speak, but she said that she could not tell it all. She worried that if an old granny from the countryside talked too much it “could seem unimportant,” and at the same time she had to be careful considering she was representing all of Jeju. Because of this she could not speak. Men of high stature in Jeju would seek her out as well and ask her to speak about the Massacre. However, she was not sure what she should say so she barely spoke at all. She told her story to me because her daughter asked her to tell the bitter story that remained in her heart to me; she told to Ms. I that I, “the teacher lady,” was coming.

Ms. I had recovered the body of her husband in the field where he had

been discarded by the police after they crushed his skull. At that time, crows had been picking at his corpse. Trying to take away the shop that her deceased husband had left behind, the police dragged Ms. I to the police station with a baby on her back, beating her to within an inch of her life. Her leg was broken and she was covered in blood; the police threw her in the street to die. Her father came to pick up the nearly dead Ms. I, thus saving her. While lying in pain at her parent's home, she experienced a shocking ordeal; soldiers came to her house in order to rape the nearly dead Ms. I, ordering her father and grandfather to come out from her room. She begged for mercy, telling them her husband had died while suppressing rebels, and that her brother in law was a soldier. Dying a widow, she was driven to the brink of insanity after losing her son in an accident while he was in high school. When Jeju "men of stature" sought her out and asked her to speak about what happened during the Massacre, she could not tell them these details. When the president had asked her how best the country could compensate victims of the Massacre, she responded that providing the ceremonies (*suui*) and a coffin would be adequate. She told me that she actually knew what she could and could not say to the president. Ms. I was always grateful for those who listened to her stories from the Massacre, but she knew that she could not disclose completely her story in any place. Whom she was speaking with, and how she would speak, already decided what it was she would say.

Ms. S, who passed away in 2012, held fast to the thought that she could not speak at all about the events of the Uprising. No matter what her experience with the Uprising was, there was a possibility of being implicated as a commie, a mountain person, or a rioter, and she believed that this could cause detriment to her son. Occasionally, while her son was young, she would try to speak about the Uprising, but when she did her son would say, "They'll take you away. Don't talk about it." Later, her son took the police officer exam and passed, but failed the background check because of the guilt-by-association system (*yeonjwajwoe*). Even while facing deathly dread, Ms. S would not speak a word about where her husband had hidden during the Uprising. Because she had kept declaring that she did not know, while later raising her children she said the same, not knowing if someday they would be harassed for it. To avoid implicating her son with her husband, she intended to claim that her family had nothing to do with her dead husband. Ms. S had helped her husband hide, but denied it for 60 years. She had been at her parent's home

in Jeju City, but fled to the mountains with her son after they told her that she would die anyway if she did not go to the mountains. While in the mountains, her husband was sending her and their son food when he was mistaken for an armed rebel and arrested; he later died in jail.

Ms. S claimed that she alone knew the whole truth. Stating that she did not know how much longer she would live, and wanting to share the story she had hidden deep within her heart with her family, she asked them to come together in June of 2010, when I went to visit her for an interview. She began her story by saying that since everyone else who was around at the time of the Uprising had already died, that no one else knew about what had happened to her husband at the time. Up until this point, Ms. S had not spoken even once about herself at the time of the Uprising. However, that is not to say that she did not speak at all. Her son and daughter, as well as her daughter-in-law were all intensely curious about what it was that Ms. S had wanted to say this whole time. They disclosed that “Mother would speak every once and a while, so we knew everything.” But Ms. S replied, “How could you think that the little that I said is everything still festering in my heart?” And she went on to say that she “truly did not speak” about it. That is why all had gathered to listen to her story. After the April Third truth commission was made public, the family had come to know the events of the time well.

But they could not know where their father had hidden, or how their mother had hidden him. All who were gathered awaited her story – the story that Ms. S knew she had kept hidden all too well – but the moment that she attempted to tell it, she realized that there was nothing left of it. She had buried her husband’s story deep within her heart, and after 60 years of hiding it, had forgotten its contents. Thus, the story remained untold. Having left them unspoken for too long, memories she thought were firmly fixed in her mind had already faded away. Despite finally wanting to speak, she had become unable to remember what it was she wanted to say. Furthermore, because she had forgotten how to speak to others about these stories, she was confronted with a situation in which she desired to speak but had lost her ability to do so. All who were gathered held onto the silence, awaiting her next words. Because she could not speak for herself, Ms. S requested that a *gut* (shamanic ritual) be performed by a *simbang* (Jeju term for shaman) after she passed so that the *simbang* could channel her thoughts and tell the story that she had forgotten. Before dying, she asked her children to hold a *gut* for her to tell the story she had

wanted to tell, the story she would attempt to tell, through the borrowed voice of a shaman. She promised to them that after dying her spirit would speak through the shaman. Not long after the interview she passed away, and, in accordance with her wishes, the family gathered for a *gut*. However, to their disappointment, the shaman did not have much to say about Ms. S's life or family.

Simbang is a term used in Jeju to refer to shamanistic priests. When "April Third" was a taboo term, and when innocence and victimization from "April Third" were unable to be spoken about, *simbang* would protect the innocence of vengeful spirits and mollify their persistent resentment. Thus, through a *gut*, those who had died would use the voice of the *simbang*, re-enacting their personal stories of misery for the living, making the stories into tragedies of history. Thus, *simbang* divulged the state violence of the Uprising, and exposed the weary lives and enmity of victims. This was the healing for the community, and an alternative space of making history (Kim S. 1989b: 74-75). Ms. S, who still believed that "April Third" was a taboo and dangerous word, thought that the moment she would be able to speak about this pain and fear would be after she died, assuming the voice of the *simbang*. However, the Uprising had already become an official event recognized by the state, and the stories of victims had already been reconstructed and recorded within the framework of reparations and honor restoration. In this situation, the accusatory, subversive, and idiosyncratic stories of the *simbang* could not help but be positioned within the context of the formalized and institutionalized testimonies.

Regardless of an orator's intention, their speech is imbedded within language's social and normative semantic network through which meaning is created. Thus, to control the meaning of their speech, the orators must calculate who the listeners are, where they are speaking, and who they think these listeners deem the orator to be. The 4.3 *holeomeong* victims believed that the term "April Third" itself carried a prejudice about those who were involved in the Massacre – those called "rioters" or "mountain people" – and about the poor and powerless Jeju people who experienced that which should and should not have been experienced. Because of this, in the process of the truth commission and honor restoration the 4.3 *holeomeongs* said that they were normal people distinguishable from the mountain people, and endeavored to prove this. For the truth commission

was, in itself, an investigation into civilian suffering.⁹ Thus, to construct an official memory, there must first be a screening of memories. More than exposing how the relationship between memory and personal identity came together, the method in which memories or testimonies about the Jeju Uprising were selected was contingent on how personal memories conform to socio-cultural and political collective memories. Because of this the sufferers were careful with their words and often omitted things or would not speak. Rather than saying that memory is an objective thing, it is the point at which a person's identity becomes problematized. Because memory is full of manufacturable things, the idea of remembering something itself is already a matter of being conscious of the self (Roth 2011: xv). Thus, a situation in which one constructs their identity through words is not only that, but is a process of creating a context for that memory.

In the process of the truth commission, speech was not only permitted, but intensely demanded from victims. However, speaking was difficult, speech was dangerous, and no speech was adequate in disclosing oneself. What I felt while meeting these *holeomeong* women was that more than the data being collected by a researcher and interpreted in that intersubjective process subject to a researcher's reflexivity, the *holeomeong* women were choosing the subjects to whom they would speak. In this research, the widows made clear that they were speaking to the "teacher lady." This means that the informants were selecting which stories to tell, as well as deciding to whom they were telling them. Thus, in the process of this research, the informants were defining me within their relationship to them, and I was receiving data that had already undergone primary reflection from the position of the informant. Because of this, in many cases collecting data beyond the bounds of what researchers ask in their questions, or beyond that which can be perceived, is not simple. In discussing the impossibility of representation of experience in the context of testimonies by the Japanese Imperial Military's Comfort Women, Hyunah Yang (2007) reveals that, within the relationship between speaker and listener, as well as reader reading what is represented by the listener-turned-author, the meaning of the Comfort Women's memories are constructed, suggesting the important point that finding a map of a

⁹ (Editor's note) The author appears to imply that in the official context of the truth commission, "civilians" were exclusive of the so-called mountain people.

memory is a collective project.

5. “The Times” (*siguk*): The Jeju Uprising as a Site of Necropolitics

When looked at from the frames of survivors’ perceptions of reality and the possibility of understanding, the Jeju Massacre was an utterly incomprehensible phenomenon. Those from H village say that the Massacre was “because of the times.” For the people of H village, the 4.3 Massacre is something beyond explanation.¹⁰ It was an event in which the village order was no longer able to control time and space; it shattered the temporal continuity of life in the village, putting on hold the relationships both between people and within the community. Representing or understanding what they experienced during the Massacre was an impossibility for the people of H village. People claimed that this situation was because of “the times.” The times (the state of political affairs, *siguk*) is a term which points to an unknowable, exterior time and politics, independent of the “here and now”; a term that suggests the village’s position of powerlessness in which the state of the “here and now” occurs via operation of “the times.” Primo Levi once said that in the concentration camps, prisoners surrounded by death could sometimes not gauge the scale of the tragedy unfolding before their eyes; they would feel that they were being dominated by some great edifice of violence and threat, but could not devise a single explanation for it (Levi 2014: 17). The times denotes a situation where one cannot grasp the positionality or context of the place to which one belongs. One could say that to the people of the village the times was a concept of unknowability, hopelessness, mental dystopia (Roth 2011), a state of exception to the normal and the lawful (Agamben 2008), and trauma indicating the impossibility of understanding (Harmon 2007).

“The times” signified a world outside the village, the world of national politics. However, that world was an unknowable one, and one that could not be understood. Levi writes that the German Jews could not foresee the terrors even while they encroached upon them. Essentially, they did not

¹⁰ Kim Seong Nae’s research into the 4.3 Incident in the 1980s focuses on what people call “the times,” approaching it through a type of imaginary people have when speaking about the historical era (Kim S. 1989a).

even have the capacity to imagine terror being committed by the state. Because of this they only knew it once it had already occurred (Levi 2014: 200-201). The Jeju Massacre was also this type of unintelligible reality, during which there was no concrete subject to resent or attack. They only happened to be born in the wrong times. Because of this, the disclosure of the origins of the Incident or a solution to it was something beyond their capacity, and something that could not be accomplished within the village. “The times” was an order made by a world beyond the village that they could not control.

Ms. B: I don't know how that incident came to happen. 'Cause after it happened we suffered to death. No matter how much I think about it, I can't understand how it started, why they killed people like that. Y'know, when it first started the constables didn't kill people like that. From what I heard, it started when the mountain people attacked a police officer, and after that they say the police started killing people too. But how should we know what's really true? We're just out in the countryside. Back then we didn't have a radio and we didn't have a phone either, so we didn't even know that anything was going on. We didn't even know we'd been liberated and were still paving roads for the Japanese soldiers. My older cousin came back from Japan and told us we'd been liberated and asked what we were doing, so we stopped paving the roads. The “mountain” people all died and a lot of people who didn't do anything wrong died too. It'd be bad if a war broke out but now's the era of science so even if a war did start they'd kill them all at once. They wouldn't take so long to kill everyone like the old days, would they?

Ms. K: I don't know how 4.3 started. How would women know the reason why it started? Even the men probably don't know why it started. It didn't just happen in our village, but was happening everywhere from Jeju City to fishing villages, and on the mainland too. The Northwest Korean Youth Association (*seobuk cheongnyeondan*) came from the mainland and the leaders were from Jeju City or other villages, but as people who lived in H village we couldn't know why it happened, could we... At the time, I didn't know nothing about nothing, so I happened to live, but if ever another time (*siguk*) like that comes I'd kill myself. If another 4.3 were to happen I think everyone who'd experienced it the first time would choose their own death. Too many people died, and the people that died don't even know the reason they died. How could dying people think they have a reason they should die? I think it all happened because of the mainland. Don't you think the mainlanders destroyed Jeju?

Ms. C: Even if I tried to tell you everything that happened then, I couldn't tell you everything. How could I say everything that happened then? They'd go into caves and kill all the people hiding there. Even if they were in their house they'd just shoot them all while walking around. Some of them they'd take people to the field and kill them there. Every family had a few people who had died or they lost. My husband died on September 21 on the lunar calendar. That was right when the evacuations started. My younger and older brothers both died. Every single day I saw people die, and the mountain people would drag away the cows and horses to eat in the mountains. If I were to face another 4.3 I would just die here. You'd die even if you hide. I had a baby so I couldn't hide. People would say that if you had a baby there was a threat of being detected and told me to stay away. So, I went home thinking to kill myself by starting a fire, but I just lay down. At the time, I couldn't imagine that I could live, and thought that if not today, I would die tomorrow. If not tomorrow, the day after that. How could I know the reason why the 4.3 Incident started? I still don't. My parents and brothers all died in those times, but even I don't know why I didn't die. How could I know why that all started? All I could do was somehow manage to care for a baby that was alive, so I had no choice but to live.

For many of the widows, the Massacre is a reality that they do not understand. Because everyone was in a hopeless, servile, precarious, and vulnerable situation, the people of H village had no friends, or neighbors, and in some situations even when they appeared they could not say a word. It was a situation in which candor could not exist. If you were to misspeak, or talk to a policeman during the day, at night the armed rebels in the mountain would drag you away. Or if you were to talk to a mountain rebel at night, the police would drag you away the next day. This was what the Jeju Uprising looked like. It was the same even if you did not speak of your own volition, but they sought you out and spoke to you. During the day, the police would come and ask pryingly "Where's your husband, where's your brother?" and at night the mountain people would come and take everything, including the food. No one would loiter around Ms. B's house, which had been marked by the mountain people, and no one would give or sell anything to her family. Because of this, Ms. B's mother asked her (Ms. B) if she would take her brother into the mountain, imploring her to save him. One day, through a meeting arranged by a neighborhood friend, Ms. B met an important person from the "mountain" side, and because her eyes were closed she thought she was going to Mountain *Halla*. But when she arrived it was the house next door to hers. Entering, she saw that everyone

inside was from her neighborhood, friends of her older brother, and youth from the area. Ms. B fell to her knees and begged them to save her. Sometime later they all died. There was no way by which to understand this shocking reality. It was simply because of “the times.”

Completely isolated from the outside world, indiscriminate massacre and violence were carried out; in the space of the Jeju Massacre, the power of fear operated through open displays of violence perpetrated on the body as well as death. Powers exercised on the body have often been defined as the Foucauldian power of bio-politics that asserts control over the domain of life. Within the space of the Jeju Massacre, life was reduced to Agamben’s completely “naked life” in which all status is forfeited, and concepts of individual rights or legal protection become entirely meaningless. Agamben described the Nazi concentration camps as places in which an absolute bio-politics emerged, where life was reduced to meaninglessness and nakedness (Agamben 2008: 323). However, Achille Mbembe argued that this concept of bio-politics did not include the rights to kill under certain conditions, the right to let live, and the right to be exposed to death perpetrated by power, and thus was inadequate in explaining non-Western modern sovereignty. In doing so, he developed the concept of necropolitics as sovereignty. In both necropolitics and biopolitics, the most important concept is “sovereignty,” which ultimately was the power and capacity to ascertain who should live and who must die. Permitting killing and living is the boundary of sovereignty and forms its ultimate properties (Mbembe 2003: 12). In war, political resistance, or war on terror, the political places the annihilation of animosity as its paramount objective. Mbembe’s necropolitics is thus the inverse of bio-politics; it is the political process which intervenes in individual lives and the collective lives of the populace, producing death and violence. In this way, war is a means of achieving sovereignty through exercising the right to kill. If we imagine politics enacted through the mode of war, life and death and the bodies of those who are killed or injured would be located within a space of both physical and social death; it is that which carves economic and socio-political power relations on the human body. One can see that the events of that April, which aimed at wiping out the “commies,” constructed a political subjectivity for the Jeju Uprising under the larger anti-communist system through such necropolitics.

Mbembe sees criticisms and explanations of modern political events as primarily springing from the West’s strong normativity of sovereignty

based on reason and democracy. However, while creating states of exception, the powers at play break away from the context in which the state of exception was based, and remain as something applicable to the state of normalcy; as the sovereign power creates states of exception, death camps can be constructed as the *nomos* of the political space in which people live (Mbembe 2003: 14). In such a case, Mbembe states that criticism and reflection on the contemporary experiences of human annihilation do not arise from a philosophical discourse on modernity, but rather from the less abstract and more sensory foundational categories of life and death (Mbembe 2003: 15). From this angle of necropolitics, I examine the politics of emotions that are formed by the experiences of indignity, fear, and violence of the 4.3 *holeomeong*, until now overlooked, and consider the potentiality of emotions as embodied knowledge in constructing a political sphere.

6. Witnessing Indiscriminate Death: Fear, Resentment/ Filthiness, Sorrow

For the *holeomeongs*, to articulate the Jeju Massacre was beyond the limits of their ability to wield language and speak. In this place beyond language, there are reactions such as the bodily aches at the distress from that time, tremors that shake the body, retching feelings as if one is about to vomit, and defecation. Extreme events resist representation and challenge the creation of meaning (LeCapra 1998; Harmon 2007; Roth 2011). Because of this, historiography is made difficult by emotions, but recent scholars of trauma have focused on how individuals and groups live with the past, as well as how the apparatus of memory differs between those of individuals and groups and those of social memory and history.

Individual interviews revealed that what made nearly all of the *holeomeongs*' experience pandemonium of the heart, incomprehensibility, or extremes of emotion, was death. In the process of the Massacre, the people of H village witnessed incalculable deaths, widespread straightforwardness and the violence of death, violence committed on corpses, as well as discovering that the ability to avoid death did not operate on the level of personal effort or will, and that no form of social relations could exempt one from death. Rather than raging at those who killed, they had doubts about why they happened to survive and not die. These women, who were

in their twenties at the time of the Uprising, thought “Well, how did I manage to not die when my husband, my brother, my father, and mother all did?” Families of police and families of the rebels both died. At the time, there was no place safe from death, no single person beyond its grasp. I understand the longstanding silence and lives of these women as closely related to the incomprehensibility of their own survival, characterized by thoughts such as “Everyone else died, so why did I survive?” Additionally, after experiencing death repeatedly, they felt themselves to be already together with the dead.

1) Fear

Ms. B said that when she thinks of the Jeju Massacre she feels that it is too frightening. She has said numerous times that she actually died multiple times only to live again, so it would be difficult for normal people these days to understand her life. The village leader and head of the Women’s Association remarked that the world was changing, but the widows who had lived through the Massacre had no capacity to adapt to reality. Ms. B thought that a person’s way of understanding the world depended on how much they experienced in the era in which they were living. It is unsurprising that the younger generation could not understand those who had died over and over. She said that “everyone lives their own lives in the end.”

For Ms. B, the most frightening memory was when the whole village was engulfed in flames; an experience so terrifying that she could not move. It was night, and she was lying in bed when the red light of the flames shone through her window and she heard soldiers encasing the village. There were gunshots, and all those who had gathered in the small house of the Senior Center leader, Mr. D’s grandfather, died. Immediately an eviction order was mandated and all those in the village were told to head down to the shore. The soldiers barked at them that if they did not hurry up and leave they would kill them too, so everyone quickly headed to the shore. Some of the young people went to the mountain to hide. There was no way of knowing which side you had to go to in order to live, so there was not much of a choice. In that instance, everyone that went to the shore lived, and everyone that went to the mountain to hide, died. Even women. In those times the question of life and death was that simple and that arbitrary.

Saying “Don’t tell this to anyone. I said this for the first time today at the Senior Center,” Ms. B went on to say, “While I was at my in-laws’ house I saw for myself someone get killed.” She said that a policeman had dragged an old man and two young students out of hiding, shooting and killing the old man right there. Dragging the kids further he threw a bamboo spear to a young woman who had already been dragged there, telling her to stab them. Saying that he would kill her too when she hesitated, she took the spear and stabbed the two students. After seeing this, Ms. B left her in-laws and returned to H village where her parents were located. “How could I continue to live there after seeing that? I still remember the police officer’s face,” she said.

Ms. C too said that “too many died during 4.3,” adding that after seeing that kind of death, you end up not being able to think at all. She said that while killing is also something frightening, if you come to see it repeatedly you grow apathetic and numb to death. Rebels would come down from the mountain and kill nine members of police families, then in revenge the police would go and kill nine family members of those in the mountains. She said it was impossible to express how truly horrible it was. There was no fuss about taking people away, the bigger problem was that no one could speak. There was no one who shed a single tear. Ms. C said that they were “so afraid that they couldn’t cry. It’s truly been a long, punishing time since then.” Ms. C did not hear well, and she told us that this was because of a time that soldiers dragged her and her father to a ravine, demanding that they turn over her husband. There the soldiers stood them up and shot at them, a bullet deafening her. It was not to kill them but to threaten them that they did this.

When I went to Ms. S’s after she asked me to come, saying that she would say everything she had concealed this whole time, the first words she started with were “It was too frightening.” Back when her son was only an infant, she was out tending the field when she came back to her house to breastfeed him. Her father-in-law was watching over the baby and Ms. S was sharpening the hoe just outside the kitchen. At that point, three men came into the house and asked her why she was sharpening her hoe. Among the three, there was one who looked especially wicked, who told Ms. S to come into the shed. When she went in, he said to her “if you don’t tell me everything I won’t stop,” as he unsheathed the knife that had been hanging at his waist, pricking her with it suddenly. He said that if she told him where her husband was he would let her live, but if she did not tell

him everything he would kill her. Ms. S said that in that moment she was so terrified and panicked that she defecated herself, not even knowing that she had done so. The two policemen outside said that if she had anything to say about her husband, she had better tell them. They told her that the man who stabbed her was a policeman infamous for being terrifying. The policeman grabbed her father-in-law by the collar, telling him that he better give them the location of his son or they would beat him to the ground. After that experience, whenever she became worried or scared, Ms. S would unknowingly defecate. If her body experienced panic she would defecate, and these panic defecations have stayed with her body as a physiological function.

In a place where everyone is dying and survival is incomprehensible, the survivors are the exception and chance occurrences. In that situation, dying is the usual outcome. Therefore, those who were enlisted in the necropolitics of the Jeju Massacre all perished. To those left who witnessed such violence, life was arbitrary, and violence had the effect of chaining survival itself to the context of death. Primo Levi writes that the violence within concentration camps was useless and without point, but if it were to have one utility, it would be that it makes one feel humiliated, and makes one beggarly, and that it also changes the senses of one's body. Because of this, when leaving the concentration camps, people felt distressed regaining consciousness that they had forfeited a part of their existence, and said that it changed their moral standards about life (Levi 2014: 87). Memories of the fear that overpowered their own bodies are an important experience in the construction of 4.3 *holeomeong* subjectivities.

2) *Resentment* (eogulham), *Filthiness* (chujeopham)¹¹

Ms. C's husband had not hidden or run away, and was caught while on his way back home. Police had caught 16 people at that time, killing 8 of them and releasing the other half. Ms. C's husband was amongst the 8 who were shot. Because life and death were a matter of chance, from the perspective of someone who died, it was wrongful. But, in a matter of time those who

¹¹ (Translator's note) The terms used here encompass many meanings that are hard to salvage in a concise translation. Depending on context, *eogulham* can refer to bitterness, injustice, resentment, unfairness, depression, the sense of feeling wronged, and dejection. *Chujeopham* refers to odiousness, dirtiness, indecency, banality, and much more.

had survived would die as well. And thus, all deaths were wrongful.

Ms. I said that her life story was exceedingly unfair. At the same time, she said that which she experienced was “filthy.” She asked me why I wanted to hear those “filthy” things. They were “filthy” so they were not worth saying to others. Going through the Jeju Massacre was too “filthy.” Carrying back her husband’s corpse, that had been picked at by crows, being beaten by the police and becoming a cripple in her leg, nearly being raped by soldiers in front of her father and grandfather, and her son dying before her – she called all these things “filthy.”

Ms. I also said that which was unfair was “filthy.” In Jeju the word “filthy” (*chujeop*) was generally used to refer to something that was dirty, and was used to contrast terms like cleanliness and purity. Because of this, at first, I thought that it was being used to denounce “injustice” on a social dimension as a type of political metaphor. However, rather than the social significance that “justice” has, “filthy” was the expression of an emotion or effect of a much more personal and experiential construction. To Ms. I, “filthy” things were just filthy things. They happened to be humiliating things as well. That which she experienced during the Massacre was unjust. What was unjust was that despite not being the cause for the problems, one had to protest that they were not contributors, and one’s blamelessness had to continually be proven. In that process, one always felt scornful eyes on them and felt insulted. Having to argue one’s innocence meant always knowing what was problematic and proving that you were not part of what was problematic. Thus, one had to recognize that their own existence itself was in a position of contempt, and that was a wrongful situation. In the political situation of the Jeju Massacre, existence itself was wrongful. It seems that because of this, Ms. I’s “filth” was related to the situation in which, against her wishes, she was put in a wrongful and problematic position. It also seems that the use of this word connoted that which contrasted with cleanliness or purity; that is, pollution, filth, abnormality, and impossibility. When you look at the life history of Ms. I, this seems to be related to witnessing terrible things which should not have been seen with her eyes or felt by her body, and the irreversible feeling of contamination by perceiving such things through her body’s senses. It was a state in which her eyes and body were no longer pure or free from “filthiness,” precisely when she came to know the terrible situation by witnessing or experiencing it. That embodied knowledge became contamination and “filthiness.”

After witnessing the young woman kill two young students at the command of the police officer in *Jocheon*, her in-law's village, Ms. B fled to her parent's house. Secretly, she told me that she was unable to escape from the dreadfulness she witnessed for those 60 years. I wondered if "filthiness" meant exactly this – the state in which the images, the feelings, that they witnessed remained within their eyes and their body. Ms. B would repeatedly ask, "Don't you think the younger people would see us, who had died and lived multiple times, and think that we're strange?" To Ms. B, the identity she possessed as a victim and survivor of the 4.3 Massacre differentiated her too much from others, because of which she asked whether or not it looked like a brand to others. I guess that "filthiness" or "contamination" is the embodied knowledge and recognition of the horror they witnessed in the atrocities of the Jeju Massacre. From this perspective, one can see that the experiences of Ms. I, Ms. B, and Ms. S construct a subjectivity that differentiates them from those who did not live through the events of the Massacre.

Referring to the shame felt by Auschwitz survivors, Agamben argued that the explanation of such shame as a survivor's guilt identified in a majority of studies was not only superficial but wrong. On this matter, Agamben claimed that at the concentration camps, a place where one saw death intimately and experienced that death and survival were equally meaningless, the basic emotion that constructed the unified subjectivity of survivors was shame. Furthermore, he explained shame as a self-conscious sentiment that arises in the ethical emotion when one is in a place that terminates dignity (Agamben 2002: 104). There are a number of debates on the subject of shame as it pertains to the limits of ethics, and the limits of representation from Agamben and Levinas, as well as Žižek. On the mere pretext of being a Jew, Jean Améry was transferred to Auschwitz where he was tortured after participating in the Belgian resistance as an Austrian philosopher. He wrote that those who have been tortured remain continually within the suffering of that torture. The sense of disgust coming from torture turning oneself into nothing does not disappear (cited in Levi 2014: 25). For the 4.3 *holeomeongs* as well, filthiness and contamination, embarrassment, and shame can be seen as embodied knowledge, which constructed one's "self" identity as someone who has witnessed terrifying and terrible death.¹²

¹² This section should be more closely examined theoretically, but as this paper is mainly

3) *Sorrow* (chingwon)

Such phrases as “guts on fire” (*aega tanda*), and “melting guts and bowels” (*aeganjangi nongneunda*) that center on the “liver” (*ae*) exist in Korean. Especially families that have lost their children, or women who have lost their husbands often use the phrase “guts burned up” (*aega tabeorinda*). In the discourse of traditional Korean medicine, the intestines were the bodily organ that allowed one to feel sorrow. Thus, in the phrase “burning guts and bowels” (*aeganjang*), the organ (*ae* or *ganjang*) which allows one to feel emotions is burning, meaning the person is in a state in which they cannot control their emotions.¹³

When asked how sad they are, the 4.3 *holeomeong* women respond, “I’m not sad. My guts are all burnt” or that because they “don’t have their intestines, [they] can’t feel if it’s sad or something else.” If one were to visit these *holeomeongs*, who are publicly known as being victims of the 4.3 Incident, and tell them that you want to listen to their stories, they would say “I have nothing to say,” “What can I say?” “I’ve forgotten,” or “I’m indifferent about it.” After saying the often used “I’m indifferent to it” they will add “Sorrow’s gotta be sad for it to be sorrowful.” One must be adequately sad to have feelings of sorrow, but the *holeomeong* women have lamented so much that they have eclipsed the boundary that allows them to feel such sadness. Their intestines have all burnt or have snapped so they no longer have a bodily organ that allows them to feel sorrow. Because of this, they say things like “I’m no longer sad” or “I don’t know if it’s sadness or something else.” When speaking about their experiences, they will close their eyes, bite their lips, change their words, say that they forget, or talk about some other place. Or instead of talking specifically about their experience, they will digress to another story. Then they will say that their “intestines” have broken, so what could they have to say.

In passing through terrifying and atrocious times that brought about

focused on ethnographic description I have not done so here. On shame that survivors feel, as discussed in Agamben’s *Remnants of Auschwitz* (2002), as well as Primo Levi’s shame as discussed in *If This Is a Man* (2007 [1947]), there has been much discussion and debate by scholars such as Claudia Welz, Michael S. Roth, and others. The “filthiness” that the 4.3 *holeomeongs* feel necessitates a similar discussion and debate.

13 (Editor’s note) Either *ae* or *ganjang* means liver; *aeganjang* puts *ae* and *ganjang* together for emphasis. A literal translation of *aega tanda* would be “the liver is burning” and the one of *aeganjangi nongneunda* “the liver-liver is melting.”

indiscriminate death, the *holeomeongs* surpassed the boundaries of normal emotional states in which they were able to feel fear and wrongdoing, as well as sorrow. Though it was frightening, they no longer had the emotion of fear; though it was unjust, they no longer felt rage or anger; and though it was miserable, they no longer felt sad. They qualify this state as “because my *ae* is all burnt,” or “because my *ae* snapped.” The “*ae*” is often referred to as “*aeganjang*,” which is literally liver-liver as a repetition. As one of the five intestines and six parts (*ojangyukbu*) that are considered to constitute the body in traditional medicine, the liver generated vitality; if the liver’s energy was weak one felt fear, and if it was excessive, one felt anger. However, through an overload of sadness, these women exceeded the capacity of their body’s intestines, leading them to be burnt or broken. Because of this the women cannot express, speak, or feel emotional things. The fear of “the times” preyed on them.¹⁴ Because of this, they say that they cannot feel anything, and though they are sad, they do not feel it.

Grief is the emotional mode through which loss intervenes in the body, and the conventions of grief are socially constructed. For grief to become grief, there normally needs to be a recognition of loss by society. A community recognizes the loss, mourns for the dead, and the bereaved are to be comforted. Mourning and comforting are norms related to death, and the site in which this is practiced is that of ceremony. Through the community’s mourning and comforting, loss is socially acknowledged, and norms are reproduced. Through ceremony, grief takes on specific socio-cultural conventions, and through this conventionalized grief there must once again be a lamentation process integrated into society. Therefore, for loss to become mourning, the lost life must first be acknowledged (Ahmed 2004: 156). Within the space of the Uprising, there was too much death and the lives themselves of those who died had been criminalized by the governing power; death became slandered and contempt, thrown into the site of the massacre. Therefore, within the space of the Jeju Uprising, death

¹⁴ Psychiatrists call this state depression, or in some other cases, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite taking place 67 years after the events of that April, the Jeju April Third Victims and Bereaved Families Psychological Health Investigation reported that 4 in 10 survivors reported symptoms of PTSD, and that 41.8 percent were suffering from depression that required professional counselling. This is not discussed in this paper, but it is clear that the 4.3 *holeomeong* women are still unable to break free from the time of the incident (No Cut News, July 14, 2015: “Severity of PTSD in survivors of Jeju 4.3”).

and loss fundamentally bore the impossibility of mourning and grief. And, to speak in terms of Freud, the survivors of the Uprising are in a continued state of depression where they cannot mourn the deaths that they witnessed.¹⁵ Because death under the Uprising is a subject of the impossibility of mourning, though the dead died, they did not die formally, and due to this the emotions could not take on the form of sorrow. Because of this the *holeomeongs* are not sad or cannot be sad.

7. “Filthy” Existence: Witnesses of Death and Those Complicit in it

The *holeomeong* women often said, “We are those who have died multiple times” or “In the midst of it, I don’t know how I could have survived.” Continuing, they would ask me, “Do you understand why it is we survived?” Ms. B said that “My son keeps saying ‘then was then, now is now’ saying that what I say ‘doesn’t make sense.’” She said, “The things my children say hurt, but they could absolutely never know what it’s like unless they experienced it, so what can I say to them?” Many of the women say of their experience that “those who didn’t live through it wouldn’t understand even if I told them,” or they ignore the questions asked them and give a completely different response, or stay silent, sometimes making a weak face as if they are about to cry.

One woman, who had a son in Japan who sent her an electric rice cooker and other nice things, piled these gifts in another room, not using them. To her, the village leader and head of the Women’s Association said, “The old women have a kind of peculiar personality with which they believe they have to save everything, so they don’t use things and live poorly.” Ms. K said about this: “I’d feel wasteful, that’s why I can’t use it! How could I use it? It’s something that my son sent... If I were to use it now, before my son came back, and it broke, what would I do? You think it’s just a thing? No, it’s my son.” The things that her son sent are a substitute for him. The *holeomeongs* often likened their sons to a religion. Their sons are the social link that connects the *holeomeongs* in the

¹⁵ Freud differentiates mourning and depression, saying that if mourning was sending away its subject, depression meant the uniting or equation with the subject. The oral statements of the 4.3 *holeomeongs* show that they are still living with the dead.

patriarchal Korean, Jeju society with their family, the village, and the nation, as well as being a token of sacredness that reaffirms the women's place in this world.¹⁶ It is their sons who expand their existence to a social one, so that they can enter society beyond the family. These women do not live because of themselves, but because of others who have imparted meaning onto them. The identity of these women is constructed by the loss of their husbands and their surviving sons. Because of this they become a part, or the entirety of the Other, and the position of the *holeomeong* identity is set between the absence of the husband, and their son.

Ms. I said that the life she had lived had been too “unfair.” Going on she asked me, “Why is it that you want to hear such filthy stories?” When I asked her to tell me about her husband’s corpse, that had been on the *Pyoseon* white sand beach, she closed her eyes and said, “*Aigoo*, why do you want to hear something like that?” Scrunching up her face she would stop talking. She would not speak about it at the time, but while talking about something else she suddenly returned to how many bodies had been on the beach, describing it as if painting a picture.

I thought about the scene I saw when I first met the *holeomeongs* in 1997, when they said “*Aigoo*, what do you think there is to hear about those terrible things,” closing their eyes and mouths, huddling their bodies like little islands. Thinking about this, I realized that for these women who witnessed the massacres of the Uprising, remembering means, in other words, seeing. They were remembering through their eyes. Thus, the act of closing their eyes is precisely an act of stopping the memory of those appalling circumstances, and at the same time it is a conscious act of hiding what they saw within their body, or pushing it out of their body. The act of closing their eyes and staying silent was felt as a process of implicating or recognizing themselves in relation to the Other who suffered such atrocity, or a process of denying or breaking free from such a scene.¹⁷

Additionally, I have thought a long time about what “filthy” meant when Ms. I said that the situation of the times was “filthy.” I, at first, was

¹⁶ Ms. I and Ms. S both raised their sons with daughters as well. However, when talking about the Uprising, or their lives, the daughters do not appear significant at all.

¹⁷ Agamben referred to shame as a self-conscious emotion, which arises among survivors of terrible experiences. The shame here is an existential emotion, in which self-subjectification and de-subjectification occur at the same time (Welz 2011: 68).

trying to understand it as the unclean as defined by Mary Douglas in the book *Purity and Danger* (1966). Douglas defines the unclean as that which has broken with context, that which is not in its right place, that which disturbs or overturns the order. In this context, filthiness, more than solely meaning dirty, is a concept that signifies deviation, pollution, abnormality, and disorder. If so, the “filthy” thing was precisely the overturning and disturbance of the village’s community order through massacre and violence, and that which overturned and disturbed the women’s own self-identity. Thus, I thought that by referencing the “filth” the women were denouncing and criticizing the terror of the times and the violence of the Uprising, and that by calling such a situation “filthy” they were making themselves into ethical subjects.

However, after listening more to their speech, I realize that to Ms. I, denouncing the Uprising was not important at all. This filthiness was not just referencing a terrible situation. Could it be that they, who had witnessed the atrocities and by chance survived among the many who died, could not be separated from those who died? And because of this they could not separate themselves from that terrible world or they could not circumvent it, thus making that which they remember the state they know as “filth”? When one examines the life stories of these women, they had witnessed horrid things which, as young women or members of a normal community, they should not have seen and not have known. Witnessing these abnormal, grotesque, and unimaginable events signified a rupture with the world that remained unaware of them, and meant undertaking a new identity. Could the world of trauma, in which they no longer could return to the self that they were before, and in which they witnessed atrocity and underwent mental dystopia, be precisely the “filthy” world of the Jeju Uprising – one of misfortune, pollution, that had gone beyond the bounds of the normative world? I believe that, despite Ms. B’s secret statement that she witnessed a young woman kill two young students at the command of the police officer and fled to her parents’ house, the atrocity that she saw was imbedded in her body in an unsolvable state, and that this body precisely referenced contaminated filthiness. Furthermore, despite staying silent about the events which made her defecate herself, Ms. S’s experience of evacuating her bowels whenever she panics or is afraid is such filthiness. The abnormal becoming routine, the aberrant becoming the normal – this is what filthiness is. Ms. B’s incessant asking of whether the young people would find them strange was precisely a

question of whether this state of filthiness or rupture from the conventional, was visible from the outside.¹⁸

Ms. O called herself one of the people who tries not to remember anything about the Uprising. It was far too horrible and if she reflected on it living became difficult, if she spoke she would cry so she would not speak at all, and instead believed she must “untangle” her heart. Because this untangling was not possible through speaking, she said that holding a *gut*, in which everyone participated and for which everyone yearned would be the best way to untangle her heart. Three times Ms. O had used her own money to pay for the *gut* (shamanic ritual) of others, so that they could find their path to the afterlife smoothly. She also bought many clothes, with which she dressed the *simbang*. This was because she had witnessed those who had died naked, having had their clothes taken away. The living cut the bloody clothes from the corpses because they were cold, desecrating the dead, which she believed hindered their ability to go to the afterlife comfortably. Ms. B and Ms. O both felt that so many had died that more than restoration of honor, the restoration of the relationship between the dead and the living was far more important.

Ms. B said that there still are many people whose place of death was unaccounted for, and that revealing all the deaths should be a priority so that those living could do what was right. In a village where an anti-communist alliance and a bereaved family association coexist, where there are former police and former mountain people, and of which the leader was a person who was adopted in after all of his family died, honor restoration was not a possibility, although there were no outward conflicts. To mourn the death of someone is the right or qualification to approach the soul of the dead, but for Ms. B, who did not have a son, she could not approach the death of her first husband.¹⁹ Speaking of nameless deaths and deaths that were not acknowledged, Ms. B spoke about the absence of honor as a victim and survivor who could not mourn death.

Survival of the *holeomeongs* was a chance event amongst the deaths of those who they were most close to, including their husbands and other

¹⁸ The *holeomeong's* “filthiness” is closer to Julia Kristeva’s (1982) abjection, which is the symbolic process of extinction of the ego when the distinctions between self and other collapse and one is divided from their identity, and it is closer as well to the concept of the abject, which describes the self which is not the self, than it is to Agamben’s explanation of shame. Of course, further inquiry into this is needed.

¹⁹ (Editor’s note) It may be because a son is responsible for an ancestral ceremony.

family members. Because of this, it is not easy to distinguish the world of the living and that of death. Further, in the cases where death cannot be mourned in public nor in kinship space, the widows experience instability of their identities, and confusion over the boundaries of life and death. I see this as the effect of power and a trauma in which the sovereignty of necropolitics makes illegal those who have died and at the same time assigns social death to the living.

8. Closing Words

At the time of the Jeju Uprising, “the times” and the village were exclusive worlds in which different governing principles were operating. The women claimed that they could not know much of “the times,” but they did think that they knew the village well. However, the village was helpless when faced with “the times,” as the violence of 4.3 completely disrupted their outlook on and order of life. “The times” was an unknowable world to them, as well as a violent power that they could not control or approach. The policemen and soldiers who they could approach were powerless, unable to secure their life’s safety in the face of the Massacre. In fact, the scariest among the soldiers and cops at the time were those who had come from the mainland.

The *holeomeongs* are referred to as, or reconstructed as, victims and survivors of the Jeju Uprising. The suffering that they underwent is also lauded socially. However, to Ms. L, who won the “admirable mother” prize (*janghan eomeoni-sang*), this kind of celebration does not comfort her, and it is not accepted as recognition for the life that she endured. The widows do not demand or request anything, but still the violent death which they cannot comprehend with their hearts or minds as well as their memories are locked within their bodies, and they are in an ethical conflict about their relationship with the dead. Their lives as daughters, not sons who inherit rites and land; their inevitable reduction to the position of wives and brides; the internal differences of a village divided between mountain people and police; as well as the differences between the village and the country – all these things and more seem to make the women feel that honor restoration is paradoxical and contradictory. Their experiences of the Uprising situated them on the boundary of society’s symbolic order.

Many of the sons of the *holeomeongs* participated in truth commissions

and honor restoration, as well as victim reparation activism. The women said that their sons' lives were too hard and that it would be nice to receive some compensation. It would be nice if there was money to help treat the leg of the woman who was tortured, and it would be nice if they compensated the descendants of those who had died. However, the women did not seem to care much about this. They were more interested in their responsibility to those who had died, as well as things such as rites and funerals after they died, than they were in reparations. The impossibility of understanding the death which they witnessed, the ambiguity of their position as survivors, as well as their inability to mourn the dead and send them properly into the next world, made them even more concerned with their communication, speaking, and restoration of relations with the dead. To communicate and unite in solidarity with the dead, they first had to purify themselves of their "filthiness" and pollution, and they needed a site in which to lead or request such a thing.

Up until this point, Korea's commemoration institutions have chosen to acknowledge and recognize victims by creating memorials in which they record and commemorate casualties. The pain and suffering, violence, and fear lived through the bodies of female Jeju Uprising victims/survivors cannot be felt in such monumental forms of recognition. In order to access the victimization and suffering – the death witnessed and experienced through their bodies, the lives of suffering they experienced by taking responsibility for those who died, their need to conceal the witnessing of death by sealing these memories within their bodies – public space and symbolic space in which they can make new experiences is imperative. The *gut* that Ms. S wanted did not end up being one which initiated communication between the victim/survivor woman and dead husband. The daughter of Ms. C said that as the bereaved families' association gathered to watch director O Myeol's film *Jiseul* each of them prepared with handkerchiefs to untangle their sorrow, but the movie disappointed them by being "too weak." They remarked that they nevertheless "wept a lot at their own grief." They hoped that there would be a purification ritual of the public space, which would be able to transcend their bodily experiences, as well as common space set aside for connecting life and death.

Because the *holeomeong* women living in H village did not die after the Uprising, they had to "live." Due to this, they strived to attain skills that would create order in their lives for the sake of stability, as well as

exhibiting agency that they ceaselessly applied to minimize their life's incomprehensibility. I attended to the narratives of the *holeomeong* in order to understand traumatic temporal and spatial dislocation of victims who experienced the governing power of necropolitics, more than to complete an explanation of victimization through the restoration of memory. It is an attempt at understanding how to handle the problem of representation and the impossibility of healing through the life process of victims and community efforts.

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