

**STORYTELLING AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STATE OF  
AMERICA: KOREAN WAR STORIES FROM  
THE COLD WAR TO POST-9/11 ERA**

by  
**Jingyi Liu**

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**STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

**Dr. Bill V. Mullen, Chair**

Department of American Studies

**Dr. David C. Atkinson**

Department of History

**Dr. Susan Curtis**

Department of History

**Dr. Monica M. Trieu**

Department of American Studies

**Approved by:**

Dr. Rayvon Fouche

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## ABSTRACT

My dissertation is an interdisciplinary study of the Korean War stories in America in relation to the history of the national security state of America from the Cold War to post-9/11 era. Categorizing the Korean War stories in three phases in parallel with three dramatic episodes in the national security of America, including the institutionalization of national security in the early Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar Cold War system in the 1990s, and the institutionalization of homeland security after the 9/11 attacks, I argue that storytelling of the Korean War morphs with the changes of national security politics in America. Reading James Michener's Korean War stories, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) in the 1950s and early 1960s, I argue that the first-phase Korean War stories cooperated with the state, translating and popularizing key themes in the national security policies through racial and gender tropes. Focusing on Helie Lee's *Still Life with Rice* (1996), Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998), and Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996) in the 1990s, I maintain that the second-phase Korean War stories by Korean American writers form a narrative resistance against the ideology of national security and provide alternative histories of racial and gender violence in America's national security programs. Further reading post-9/11 Korean War novels such as Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012), Ha Jin's *War Trash* (2005), and Chang-Rae Lee's *The Surrendered* (2010), I contend that in the third-phase Korean War stories, the Korean War is deployed as a historical analogy to understand the War on Terror and diverse writers' revisiting the war offers alternative perspectives on healing and understanding "homeland" for a traumatized American society. Taken together, these Korean War stories exemplify the politics of storytelling that engages with the national security state and the complex ways individual narratives interact with national narratives. Moreover, the continued morphing of the Korean War in literary representation demonstrates the vitality of the "forgotten war" and constantly reminds us the war's legacy.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Lodged between the glorious Second World War and the infamous Vietnam War, the Korean War has eluded the national history of America for a long time and is named as “the forgotten war.” However, on July 27, 2009 the Korean War Veterans Recognition Act was signed by President Obama, and on the 60th anniversary of National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day the President passionately acclaimed to the Korean War veterans, “You, our veterans of Korea, deserved better. And down the decades, our nation has worked to right that wrong, including here, with this eternal memorial, where the measure of your sacrifice is enshrined for all time. Because here in America, no war should ever be forgotten, and no veteran should ever be overlooked” (“Remarks by the President at 60th Anniversary”). The Korean War thus turned to be a collective story of sacrifice for the nation in which “the heroism of African Americans in Korea -- and Latinos and Asian Americans and Native Americans -- advanced the idea: If these Americans could live and work together over there, surely we could do the same thing here at home” (“Remarks by President”). The state’s act to re-remember the forgotten war parallels the effort to revise the cultural memory of the Korean War in the public space. Canonical American writers such as Toni Morrison began to revisit the war in her recent work *Home* (2008), taking the scab off of the 1950s and giving a counter-narrative of segregation and racial and gender violence of the American homeland at the time. Meanwhile, classical Korean War films such as *Manchurian Candidate* (1962) was remade and released in 2004, transplanting the brainwashing narrative of the Korean War into the global War on Terror and responding to the discovery that the “enhanced interrogative techniques” used in the War on Terror were originated from the Korean War half a century ago. The momentum to rediscover and recreate narratives of the Korean War suggests the war’s continuing presence in the American unconsciousness. More importantly, it demonstrates the war’s multiplicity of meaning and capacity to morph within the continuous interaction between the state and the public to create narratives.

Perhaps exactly because the Korean War remains in the gap of history and public memories, narratives become central in shaping the cultural memory of the Korean War. especially in the literary field, the war has been open to myriad literary renderings, transformed in narratives in different times since the Cold War, and approached by diverse American writers such as white American writers, African American writers, Korean American writers and Chinese American writers. The diversity and multiplicity of the literary representation of the same experience from the same homeland of America reveal the politics of storytelling and raise the question of how to interpret their heterogeneity and evaluate storytelling in shaping the nation's cultural memory.

Storytelling, in Hannah Arendt's words, is a form of art work that reifies "the specific content as well as the general meaning of action and speech" (187). In this sense, it also retains the "agent-revealing capacity" of those who tell the stories and discloses the "in-between" constituted by interests arising from the physical and objective world as well as the intangible and subjective "in-between" in the "web" of human relationships (182-183). Focusing on Arendt's "subjective in-between," Michael Jackson stresses that storytelling results from the problematic interplay of a multiplicity of private and public interest, thus revealing the power relations between private and public realms and implies a politics of experience (31). The politics of storytelling, therefore, reflects the politics of the real human world and engages with both the public and the private spheres.

My project is an attempt to rediscover the Korean War stories and interpret the politics of storytelling embedded in the heterogeneity and diversity in narrating the Korean War in the national security state of America from the Cold War to the Post-911 era. The Korean War in many ways introduced and institutionalized the narrative logic of national security. While a centralized National Military Establishment (NME) was founded in 1947 and further strengthened by the National Security Act Amendments of 1949, it was the Korean War that materialized NME's power by multiplying the military budget from \$13 to \$56 billion over the first 5 months of the war. The escalation of the war also motivated the Truman administration's

endorsement of NSC-68 and its recommendations of a major military buildup and rearmament. With new institutions such as the Defense Production Act of 1950, the Office of Defense Mobilization and various other boards and committees for price and wage control, civilian-military cooperation, and resource mobilization, the Korean War led to the domination of the ideology of national security.<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing the close relationship between the Korean War and the national security state of America, the project historicizes stories of the Korean War in America's evolution as a national security state since the end of the Second World War and argues that, storytelling of the Korean war represents a form of interaction between the public and the private as well as the state and the ordinary citizens which morphs with the changing political contexts. Along different historical phases, storytelling of the Korean War introduces, translates as well as challenges and destabilizes the ideology of national security. The key themes in Cold War national security state, as reflected in seminal security documents and the official political discourse, include anti-communism, a perception of security changed by nuclear anxiety, and a racially and gendered outlook of "dependency."

By selecting representative stories of the Korean War in three phases respectively—works written in 1950s and early 1960s, works published in the 1990s that were written by first or second generation Korean Americans who came to and grew up in America since 1965, and works written by diverse American writers after 9/11 who look back into the 1950s American homeland in the context of War on Terror,<sup>2</sup> my project traces the transformations of Korean War

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<sup>1</sup> Historians such Michael Hogan in *A Cross of Iron: Harry Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (2000), Paul G. Pierpaoli, Jr in *Truman and Korea* (1999), Melvyn Leffler in *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (1992) have detailed documentation of the history of America's national security institutions during the Cold War.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Belletto, in "The Korean War, the Cold War, and the American Novel," categorizes Korean War literature into two phases in relation to the bipolar Cold War framework. In his categorization, the first stage includes works written in 1950s and early 1960s by white male Americans somewhat related to American military, and which fit into the "bipolar global imagination" in Nadel's containment model. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of works, mostly written by first or second generation Korean Americans and getting traction in the 1980s, challenges the rhetorical structure of "bipolar global imagination" by exploring the cultural memory of the Korean war alternatively. My categorization of three phases of Korean War stories is built upon Belletto, but adds a 3<sup>rd</sup> phases in which works revisit the 1950s America in association with the War on Terror after 9/11. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase takes 9/11 as a critical context and strives to question the idea of American homeland by reevaluating the legacies of the Korean War.

stories in relation to the ideology of national security, asking how ideas in classified national policies interact with the public space. Tracing the Korean War stories from the 1950s, I find that the changes in narrative patterns and modes of storytelling follow the changes in national security politics in America and the shifts in the political landscape through the Cold War to the Post-9/11 era. In particular, my categorization of the three phases in Korean War storytelling parallel three dramatic episodes in the National Security State of America—the watershed moment during the Korean War period that national security was institutionalized, the 1990s when the bipolar Cold War system collapsed with the fall of the Soviet Union, and the establishment and institutionalization of homeland security after the 9/11 attacks

The study of the first phase Korean War stories examines ways that popular narratives of the Korean War cooperate with the national security state, translating key themes of security policies in the official space to the ordinary Americans and thus bearing the ideological task of constructing a coherent national story of American homeland. It exemplifies ways that the ideology of national security is transformed with tropes such as domesticity, gender roles and epidemics in popular narrative products and transported to the public space for consumption. While security documents such as NSC-68 was not declassified at the time, I argue that tropes of Korean War storytelling helped to familiarize the American public with a foreign war in Korea and facilitate interiorization of the key themes in the national security discourse.

The study of the second phase of Korean War stories read texts by Korean American writers as forms of narrative resistance. In her study of resistance literature, Barbara Harlow argues that narrative works of resistance literature directly confront both the critic and the artist with the responsibilities of involvement in the political context in which the works are constructed (78). The second phase texts examined in my project can be read as resistance literature. Reading these works in the history of American intervention in Korea and the Asian diaspora after the Immigration Act of 1965, I argue that these stories force us to look into the emergence of Korean Americanness in relation to the ideology of national security in America.

As Jodi Kim points out, writing the Korean War from the perspective of Korean Americans offers a link between “America’s imperial presence over ‘there’ in Korea and the gendered and racial ‘return’ of the Korean subject over ‘here’ to the imperial center” (281). By reimagining the Korean War from the homeland of America, these immigrant Korean American writers bring Korea from the periphery back to the center of the American homeland. The transgression between the peripheral and the center gives new meanings to the Korean War through hindsight, and offers another critical site to survey the gendered and racial aspect of the American homeland and reevaluate the promise of American homeland in the policies of national security that intends to maintain America’s homeland security through launching a “limited” and “preemptive” war in Korea.

Lastly, my study of the third phase of Korean War stories focuses on the way that the cultural memory of the Korean War is rewritten in recent American novels after 9/11. I argue that fictions revisiting the Korean War in the context of War on Terror reveal the lineage between the war in the 1950s and the War on Terror in the 2000s. Morrison, who revisits the Korean War in *Home*, claims that telling the story of *Home* is “taking the skin or scab off of our view of the fifties in this country” (Interview by Boon). In her case, storytelling of the Korean War offers an alternative perspective and hindsight to understand a problematic American homeland in the 1950s when, as Morrison referred, war, racial violence, McCarthyism and haphazard medical experiments on prisoners, blacks and the poor were shadowed by the glorious “American dream stuff.” *Home* thus represents the way that re-exploring the Korean War experience challenges the vision of democracy, security and freedom in America’s national security programs then in the 1950s and now in the 2000s, and questions the idea of “homeland” for a current America. In the end, these fictions contemplate the meaning of American homeland as a security state for a heterogeneous American society and reveals that violence, instead of being erased, is imposed by security programs.

Recognizing Korean War stories as a meaningful category in American literature and studying systematically the transformation of storytelling of the Korean War is important to my

project. Although more than 150 American novels of the Korean War were already published before 2008, criticism of stories of the Korean War in American literature has been limited. However, the Korean War offers a historical analogy for us to reconsider the consequences of national security programs and its logic of preemptive warfare and militarization, especially in the context of the post-Cold War and War on Terror. As Steven Belleto pointed, “the recent phenomenon of non-Korean American novelists who locate in the Korean War a turning point in US history when the promises of American democratic freedom went unfulfilled” (72). Many interrogative techniques used in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib were found to be developed in the Korean War, and the continual confrontation and American military presence on the Korea peninsula and the intensified North Korea nuclear crisis contradict the freedom and security promised in launching America’s first preemptive war. More importantly, a systematic study of the transformation of Korean War stories is also a meaningful epistemological project in that

If we can locate in Korean War literature a rubric for understanding literary engagements with US global interventinalism that acknowledges Cold War logic but does not reproduce it, then perhaps this is a model for other categories or frameworks that might help us understand the dynamic—rather than one-way—relationship between the US ideological project of Cold War and the localized experiences of particular places around the globe (Belleto 72).

Therefore, teasing out the development of Korean War stories challenges the bi-polar view of the Cold War history and offers an example to alternatively understand American national security projects and the consequences of American interventions abroad, which is also essential to evaluating the problems and implications of current national security programs.

Yet, my project also recognizes the Korean War stories as an expanding category in American literature that is not only central to Korean Americans, but also important to understand and question the overall racialized and gendered landscape of the American security state. The Korean War was a defining trauma for many Koreans at home and in the diaspora and a central theme in Korean American writings, and the remembrance of this historical trauma figures in the elaboration of Korean American cultural identities in significant ways (David Kim

553). However, the three phases of Korean War stories show the way that cultural memory of the Korean War has been constructed and re-constructed not only by Korean American writers but also by writers from diverse racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds who approach the Korean War with increasingly diverse themes and topics such as gender, sexuality, homosexuality, migration, and inter-racial romance. Taking the Korean War as a site to explore the intersectionality of diverse themes and the engagement between cultural and political discourse, my project aims to evaluate American foreign policies through a literary lens and expand understanding of the dynamics and complexity of the Korean War legacy.

Eventually, the project takes storytelling of the Korean War as a site of meaning and source of power to understand the politics of national security, and reveals the complex ways that the public interacted with the state as well as the possibility of literary works in creating “grounded interconnectivity.” The Korean War resides in the nexus of U.S. militarism, imperialism and settler colonialism, a conjunction named and theorized by American Studies scholars as settler modernity. The discussion of the U.S. military government in Korea, the POW camps during the war, and U.S. camptowns in South Korea is also a discussion of different forms of settler modernity, and gives a critical view of the current global war culture. Meanwhile, current discussion of “grounded interconnectivity” in American Studies is important to rediscover and reevaluate settler colonialism and emphasize the study of the land and place as a site of meaning and source of ancestral power made up of overlapping communities and histories (Ferguson 333). My project takes the cultural memories and storytelling of the Korean war as a site of meaning and source of power made up of heterogeneous writers coming from different communities who brought together differing experiences and discursive histories. the dynamic and transnational movement of ideas, immigrants, praxis, capitals and technologies often complicates human bonds and relationalities, making what happens there in other places also shapes what happens here. Therefore, sometimes there exists hidden interconnection without material contact, and very often the creative nature of stories and literary works makes them possible to fill the gap and materialize certain interconnectivity that we have failed to see.

## 1.1 Storytelling, National Policies, and the Public

Storytelling occupies a special space in the field of American Studies and traditional American Studies scholars look at the imaginative literature as historical evidence to explore the culture of American society and its national identity. However, there is also a long-lasting debate on the distinction between “literary canon” and “popular culture.” While the traditional myth-symbol school of American Studies made great contributions to interpreting great works of American literature in relation to American culture, with the rise of European cultural theories since the 1970s, a “crisis of representation” forced many scholars to review some basic assumptions in American Studies. Scholars such as R. Gordon Kelly points out that the social significance of literature “is maintained because specialized institutions selectively conserve certain books, provide access to them, and more or less successfully justify and defend the social significance ascribed to cherished texts” (98-99). Kelly thus challenges the definition of “great works” in American literature and questions whether they can sufficiently represent American society. George Lipsitz further calls for “learning to listen” to popular culture in the 1990s and points out the value of cultural artifacts and practices especially by those aggrieved and marginalized groups. As he argues, “Issues that critics discuss abstractly and idealistically seem to flow effortlessly and relentlessly from the texts of popular literature and popular culture” (310-311). As Lipsitz contends, cultural theories since the 1970s help to question the hegemony of “high” culture in American Studies and move to consider the diversity of American culture and distinct those who were privileged and others who were excluded and underestimated.

In terms of literary works of the Korean War, so far there remains questionable if any work is included into the canon of American literature, which justifiably speaks to the naming that the Korean War is a “forgotten war.” However, how to define the Korean War exemplifies the struggle of meaning and over access among different groups of people. Fictions of the Korean War by different groups of writers represents that struggle, and a systematic study of these fictions crystalizes how hegemony over the meaning of race and nation is constructed, and more importantly, is challenged.

While storytelling of the Korean War represents the potential to challenge the canon of American literature and mainstream definition of the Korean War, individual group and personal stories at times could also echo and reiterate national narratives. As Alan Nadel observes, “personal narration oscillates, situationally, between identification with and alienation from a historical order” (4). To understand the complicated way that stories told by individual groups and individuals interacted with the state and the national narrative, analysis of the storytelling needs “historicization.” According to literary scholar Frederic Jameson, historicization of the texts requires the examination of both the “path of the object and the path of the subject, the historical origin of the things themselves and that more intangible historicity of the concepts and categories by which we attempt to understand those things” (9). A historical exploration of the Cold War politics and America’s surge of national security concern and institutionalization of national security thus is a necessary path to understand stories of the Korean War. On the other hand, tropes such as gender, family and epidemics deployed in the narratives as a pattern of storytelling as well as a mode of interpretation and communication could also reveal that individual texts could operate to solidify the national narrative of the security state, and the path that ideas were transported between the state’s official space and the wider public space.

Specifically focusing on the interaction between cultural products and national narratives and policies, scholars such as Alan Nadel and Timothy Melley have made insightful investigation. Alan Nadel studies American postmodern arts and fictions in the context of nuclear age and America’s containment policy, and argues that by performing the ideological task of constructing narratives, tropes in storytelling allow a large number of citizens to link and identify themselves with the national history (8), which demonstrates the way that cultural products can translate national policies into perceived realities for the public. Similarly, Timothy Melley investigates American postmodern fictions in relation to the programs and institutionalization of American national security. Melley’s way of conceptualizing a “covert sphere” gives insights to understand the way that narratives can work to connect the state’s confidential space and the public space. As defined by Melley, the “covert sphere” is “a cultural imaginary shaped by both

institutional secrecy and public fascination with the secret work of the state...an array of discursive forms and cultural institutions through which the public can ‘discuss’ or, more exactly, fantasize the clandestine dimensions of the state” (5). In his study, narrative fictions are a central form of cultural institution in the covert sphere. Taking the Korean War stories as a form of cultural institution that functions to communicate ideas between the state’s official space and the public space for citizens, my project also intends to investigate the close relationship between narrative stories and national policies of the American security state. Especially for Korean War stories in the 1950s and early 1960s, they constituted a way of transportation between the state’s official space and the public space that bears the ideological task of constructing a coherent national story of the American homeland. However, the mode and pattern of Korean War storytelling has gone through re-production and revision with the changes of political contexts from the Cold War to the Post-Cold War era, and the cultural memory of the Korean War has become a contested terrain between the state and the individuals. Such transformation and contest in storytelling of the Korean War offers a critical site to investigate the complex and dynamic interaction between the official space of the state and the public space, and reveals the way that the expansion of Korean War stories brings about the possibility of narrative resistance.

## **1.2 Ideology, National Security, and the Cold War America**

Ideology is a fraught and arguably pejorative term in recent history. Ideological constructs, according to Michael Hunt, “serve as a fount for an instructive and reassuring sense of historical place, as an indispensable guide to an infinitely complex and otherwise bewildering present, and as a basis for moral action intended to shape a better future” (12). In this sense, distilling ideology in national policies is essential to understand the pattern, origin, or even pathology in policy making. Broadly speaking, there are three major interpretive approaches towards the ideological aspect of American foreign policy. One interprets through a moralist and legalist view; another tends to focus on the economic motivation and the material interest; and finally, a cultural approach that is interested in the political culture of America and its origin. In

*Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Michael Hunt criticizes the first two interpretive approaches to American foreign policies—a moralist and legalist outlook as championed by George Kennan being superficial, pejorative and elitist while the economic determinist view as represented by William Appleman Williams too narrow and mechanical. Instead, Hunt delves into America’s cultural system to anatomize American foreign policies through borrowing insights from cultural anthropology in search for “a relatively coherent, emotionally charged, and conceptually interlocking set of ideas” (14) that lie at the basis of American foreign policy since the founding moment of the nation. With a detailed examination of public rhetoric by major foreign policy makers through the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the Vietnam War, Hunt claims there are three key elements in the ideological construct of American foreign policy: a vision of national greatness coupled with the promotion of liberty, a racial hierarchy that features white supremacy, and an American norm of revolution that defines the limits of acceptable social and political change overseas (17-18).

Hunt’s cultural approach reveals what is consistent in American foreign policies and the cultural fount in the domestic space that sustains foreign policy making, so entrenched that becomes even inconceivable in the national consciousness. Yet, it is also hard to deny that in American foreign policy history there are dramatic and watershed moments when changes and development occur, which is worth attention and analysis. Historians such as Melvyn P. Leffler,<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Hogan,<sup>4</sup> and Andrew Preston<sup>5</sup> have examined the increasing prominence of “national security” in the foreign policy making and political discourse of America through the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Borrowing from Raymond Williams’s cultural studies approach, Preston traces the genealogy of the term “national security” in America’s political discourse from a long term historical perspective, historicizing its evolving meaning in order to reflect on its heuristic implications and utilities. In particular, he argues that today’s concept of national security was invented “by fusing long-standing, traditional concerns about U.S. territorial sovereignty with a newer, thoroughly revolutionary desire to protect and promote America’s core values on a global

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<sup>3</sup> See details in Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> See details in Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> See details in Andrew Preston, “Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security.”

scale” (479), and it emerged during the Great Depression. According to him, the American concept of security was largely perceived physically for the nation enjoyed a “free security” with its geographical advantages and lack of imminent territorial aggressions through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nevertheless, with the advent of the Great Depression, how America perceived security began to change and national security gradually emerged as a doctrine of American foreign policy. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal provided a new centralized regime to manage socioeconomic risks for individuals, but also became an analogue for American foreign policies to intervene and manage risks in a world system. It was during that period that FDR expanded the definition of national security and brought out the modern doctrine of “national security” which regards national security as “having two equal parts—physical and normative, territorial and ideological” (492), so as to justify an interventionalist foreign policy in the world crisis against Nazism. With the Second World War and FDR’s strategy of raising fear, the modern ideology of national security was legitimized and popularized, locating the source of American security in a holistic vision and in its “economic prowess,” “social democracy,” and “military power” (497). Such doctrine of “total security” thrust America to find limitless threats everywhere during the Cold War and continues to shape America’s relationship with other parts of the world after the defeat of Nazism and then the collapse of the communist Soviet.

Differently, Leffler and Hogan focus on “national security” in the early Cold War years, locating the institutionalization of national security in America during the Truman administration period. In Leffler’s view, America’s postwar foreign policies were largely driven by a new mode of national security thinking which emerged in the early Cold War years. This mode of thinking was not only associated with the military and ideological, but was increasingly shaped by a geopolitical and economic vision of the global world. Following that mode, the world is divided into two parts—the industrial core nations and the underdeveloped periphery of the Third World that could provide vast markets and raw materials, and the American security depends on productivity of the industrial core as well as access to and control over the periphery (1-24). His focus on the Truman administration reveals the way that the idea of “national security” formed in

the early Cold War years and laid the foundation of policy making in the following Cold War years. However, the unique importance he places on America's economic interest risks limiting the ambit of foreign ideas to economic determinism and being caught into what Hunt calls a "narrow and mechanical" interpretation.

Also focusing on years of the Truman Administration, Michael J. Hogan's study of "national security" locates the origin of America as a national security state in its political culture and a Cold War context. Different from Leffler, Hogan puts emphasis on the domestic debates on and struggles with the problem of "state making," and looks into America's policy making in Cold War politics in relation to its political culture and traditions. With an incisive look into the bureaucracy and political debates during the Truman years, Hogan argues that the American security state came out from the Truman administration's effort to strike a balance between America's old political culture that is characteristic of antistatism with an isolationist and nationalist tendency, and a new national security ideology. According to him, key themes of the new national security ideology can be gleaned from four important documents, including George Kennan's long telegram in 1946, the Clifford-Elsey report "American Relations with the Soviet Union" in 1946, Truman's speech to Congress in March, 1947, and finally NSC-68 in 1950. These themes include: the conviction a new era of total war with the Soviet threats requires urgent and long-term military preparedness for America; that peace and freedom were each indivisible; that leading the free world was a sacred mission of America; that America must muster the strength of character, national will, and the moral fiber to bear the burden (1-68). Whether the summary of the four representative documents in the early Cold War years is enough to cover the ideology of national security is debatable here, as America's national security policies went through revisions with different administrations and phases. Each phase featured in its own major national security documents, with both convergence and differences from previous national security policies. Besides, Hogan's interpretation of the new ideology of national security distills some of the cultural narratives familiar to Americans, which ironically

suggests a sense of continuity in America's political culture and the legacy that the national security ideology bears.

Indeed, national security is one of the oldest ideas in international relations, and as early as in the nation's first inaugural address in 1789, the idea already appeared in the political discourse—in George Washington's appreciation of the blessed "security of their union and the advancement of their happiness" ("Inaugural Address"). From a cultural standpoint, the concept indeed inherits legacy from America's political culture ideologically and shares continuity in some way with what Hunt describes as the ideology of America's foreign policy. However, this concept is certainly not a fixed one but evolves and changes within different political contexts. As my review shows, scholarship on the ideology of national security has differences in terms of defining the idea and locating its origin. As far as I'm concerned, history always has a contingent character and it might be more accurate to see *origins* of a national security ideology instead of an origin. At the same time, there seems to be a consensus that such ideology reached its heyday in the Cold War America and has had a lasting bearing on the American political character and national identity. In this sense, a brief view of major texts and documents on American national security policies through the Cold War years would be helpful to understand the overarching narrative and conducive to cull some of the characteristic ideas in the ideology of national security that are both akin to the nation's political and cultural legacy and contingent on the Cold War political context.

From the Truman administration to the end of the Regan administration, seminal national security documents classified at the top level of the government along with public speeches by key decision makers together produced a coherent Cold War narrative of America's national security.<sup>6</sup> It identifies the communist Soviet as the consistent villain, and tells America's story of

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<sup>6</sup> Here I do not mean the Cold War started with the Truman administration and ended with the Regan administration. Studies on the Cold War potentially reveal how its origin can be traced prior to the Second World War, and how the Cold War continues in the Third World when US-Soviet rivalry ended with the collapse of Soviet in 1991. The reason I chose policies from Truman administration to Regan administration is that policies in the time covered shared the same political goal and enemy from an American perspective within its rivalry with the Soviet after the Nazis was defeated and before the Soviet was dissolved.

struggling in a crisis of freedom, making difficult choices to defend the American way of life and the free world, and finally meeting with the challenge and reaffirming national greatness with the collapse of the Soviet. Changes and differences occurred in different administrations' national security texts, reflecting each administration's vision and revision of its strategies against the Soviet and its different concerns at the moment. For example, the Truman administration outlined a containment strategy in its major national security document NSC-68, calling for a capital increase in military budget and the expansion of both conventional and unconventional forces in the early 1950s, but the Eisenhower administration promoted a "New Look" that sought for a balanced budget through curbing military cost with nuclear deterrence and covert actions. In the Kennedy era, a new strategy of "flexible response" motivated an active approach to national security, increasing military expenditures and America's interventions abroad to modernize the world. Later in the late 1960s, the Nixon Doctrine reversed the trend, claiming "a new strategy for peace" that realized the limits of American power and commitments, and asked for a partnership with allies as well as relaxing tension with the Soviet. But this was reversed again in the Reagan administration, which actively called for a "rollback" strategy to directly counterbalance the Soviet influence in the Third World. However, the inconsistency is mostly on the tactical level on how America should vie against the communist enemy and counterbalance the Soviet influence.<sup>7</sup> On the ideological level, several themes running through the American narrative of national security policies reveal an ingrained character of American political culture with a distinct Cold War characteristic.

First of all, the theme of "anticommunism" lies at the core of Cold War American national security narrative. Through national policy documents in the period, the Soviet remains the evil enemy and biggest threat to American security. In essence, the anti-Soviet sentiment is directed against its communist regime and its appealing to the world that divert from an American norm of sociopolitical change and the American version of republicanism and liberty.

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<sup>7</sup> A detailed analysis on major national security policies from Truman administration to George W. Bush administration and their differences can be found in John Lewis Gaddis's *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*.

Consequently, America regards its fundamental purpose against the Soviet is “to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity” (NSC-68 5), which are the same words quoted from America’s Preamble to the Constitution. Yet, a characteristic attribute that the American national security narrative assigned to “communism” is that communism is not only dangerous but also contagious.<sup>8</sup> The NSC-68 set the tone for understanding the Soviet threat. It identified the communist design to extend its absolute power from within the Soviet Union, to the Eurasian land mass, and finally to the world, and the communist ideas were dangerous for they affected “vulnerable segments of society” (15) in the free world. As a result, the policy proposed to develop a healthy international environment and contain the Soviet expansion. The vicious and contagious nature of communist threat seems to have a transforming power and give rise to a lesion process, requiring America to develop and maintain an intelligence system to scrutinize and evaluate all countries, “friendly and neutral as well as enemy, to undertake military, political, economic, and subversive courses of action affecting U.S. security” (NSC-162/2 582). From an American perspective, communism seems to be particularly contagious in Asia and the Kennedy administration proposed a strategy of “buffer zone” to check communist affection and protect American safety:

The definitive loss of South Korea, for example, would endanger the orientation of Japan towards the free community; the loss of South Viet-Nam or Thailand would endanger the whole Southeast Asian position and place in jeopardy the independence of Indian peninsular itself. The independence of the Indian peninsula is, like that of Japan, fundamental to the interest in the balance of power in Eurasia. The definitive loss of Iran would endanger the whole Middle East. In Laos and Afghanistan, where communist influence has gained a substantial but not definitive hold, our object is to maintain buffer states where the influence of the Communist Bloc and the free community are, at least, in tolerable balance. The definitive loss of Afghanistan would severely increase pressure on both the Indian peninsula and Iran; the definitive loss of Laos would severely increase pressure on Thailand and Southeast Asia in general. Behind the screen of Thailand

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<sup>8</sup> Priscilla Wald’s study of outbreak narrative have examined how communism became “contagious” during the 1950s by the convergence of medical language and politics. See details in her book *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*, 2008.

and South Viet-Nam, the U.S. interest is satisfied if Cambodia, Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia maintain their independence without formal military alliance (“Basic National Security Policy” 24-25).

The language infused with geopolitics magnified the dynamism and imminence of communist influence, portraying communism as an expanding threat; yet, the case of the Vietnam War with America’s “Strategic Hamlet Programs” conspicuously highlighted communist contagion in a way that characterized communism as a corrupting epidemic which should be quarantined. The core idea of the programs was to segregate village population from the Viet Cong physically and thus politically. This strategy, created during the Kennedy administration, was inherited and further honored in Nixon’s national security policy regarding Vietnam, and was claimed to be successful in preventing the communist enemy “from subverting and terrorizing the population or mobilizing it for its own purpose” (Nixon “First Annual Report”). As a result, the association of anticommunism with contagion through the strategy of quarantine not only suggests a scientific nature of anticommunism but also the legitimacy of an American intervention. Following the idea into the 1980s, the Reagan administration intensified American intervention in the Central America. In the case of Nicaragua, Secretary of State Department Shultz claimed that the consolidation of the leftwing Sandinista power would first deprive the Nicaraguan people of freedom and hope of democracy, and then “the security of Nicaragua’s neighbors and the security of the entire region” (“America and the Struggle for Freedom” 5). With its geopolitical proximity to America, communist affection seems more intolerable in the region, legitimating not only American intervention but also a preemptive one to avoid higher stakes and greater costs “leading the United States down to a path of greater danger” (5). To be noted, such idea of “communist contagion” is often interrelated with a racial hierarchy that frequently identified areas of the Third World as more vulnerable and easier to be affected, whether it was the countryside in Vietnam or the underdeveloped Nicaragua.

A second conspicuous and consistent theme is nuclear anxiety, or more accurately, the perception of security changed by nuclear power. Dealing with nuclear weaponry is one of the

key components in America's Cold War national security policy. While the policy goal changed from nuclear monopoly, to nuclear supremacy, and then to nuclear sufficiency and negotiation, it is clear that nuclear capability became a most important index in estimating national power and a key factor in shaping America's military goals and strategies. More importantly, nuclear power severely destabilized the sense of "security" through changing America's perception of power and geopolitics, thus destabilizing the boundaries between international security and internal security as well as war and peace in the American perception. Hiroshima and the atomic bomb shook the international system as it gave America a unique sense of power in the world and propelled other nations to build nuclear capabilities. Fearing an apocalyptic nuclear arms race in the world, America proposed an international control and inspection that would not jeopardize America's nuclear monopoly through sharing only theoretical knowledge but hiding the real valuable secret of engineering and manufacturing information (Leffler 95). As Alan Nadel rightly noted, the recourse to international control to perpetuate American nuclear monopoly implicates that America's national interest of maintaining nuclear monopoly serves international interest and it was implicitly an attempt to subordinate "international to U.S. national interest" (21). In other words, domesticating an international interest became a means for American security. Such logic continued to shape America's national security narrative through the Cold War. For example, NSC 68 claimed to "foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish" (21), which also underlay America's effort in a world rehabilitation. In NSC 162/2, the guiding national security document in the Eisenhower administration, it also regarded that America's assumption of "responsibility for the freedom and security of the free nations is a direct and essential contribution to the maintenance of its own freedom and security" (584).

Similar language could find their presence in consequent major national security documents, and the conflation of international affairs with internal security not only broadens understanding and perception of "security" but also continues to extend the reach of "security"

concern into private and everyday life. Outlining the national security objectives, the Kennedy administration in the Basic National Security Policy added an “ecological” dimension to the conception of national security, stating that the setting of national security was changed by “[a] rapid increase in scientific knowledge and its applications, which enables man to change, for good or for evil, his physical and ecological environment” (“Basic National Security Policy” 3). Later, President Nixon further acted on the “ecological” dimension by utilizing the collective security mechanism to address environmental security. He initiated the NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society in 1969 to “pool our skills, our intellects, and our inventiveness in finding new ways to use technology to enhance our environments” (“First Annual Report”). This was later explained as specifically concerning everyday life of Americans—issues regarding clean water, clean air and open spaces, “are not the great questions that concern world leaders at summit conferences. But people do not live at the summit. They live in the foothills of everyday experience, and it is time for all of us to concern ourselves with the way real people live in real life” (“Annual Message to the Congress 1970”). Ultimately, national security was extended to link with the quality of life in America, and thus it became an integral part of everyday experience in the private life of citizens.

Such infusion of national security into the private life was also strengthened by an obfuscation of the boundary between war and peace. Under the shadow of nuclear bombing and a “total war” of mutual destruction, America’s military strategy against the Soviet is a massive buildup of military power and through the “limited war.” The NSC 68 stated that “we should take no avoidable initiative which would cause it to become a war of annihilation...and our capabilities for the application of force should, therefore, within the limits of what we can sustain over the long pull” (12). In this sense, war and peace are not antonymic to each other: A limited war seems, if it is not equal to, close to peace in the vision of a “total war.” In Nixon’s words, “Peace must be far more than the absence of war” (“First Annual Report”), and thus the war in Vietnam had to be started and continued for the sake of a just and durable future peace;

otherwise a collapse of confidence in American leadership will lead to further violence (“Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam”), which implicitly suggested that the American war is a means for peace. When the relationship between war and peace shifted, war became more acceptable and common in life. A case in point, Nixon acknowledged the overblown rhetoric on "war" in the 1960s--the war on poverty, the war on misery, the war on disease, and the war on hunger, but he also added that “if there is one area where the word "war" is appropriate it is in the fight against crime. We must declare and win the war against the criminal elements which increasingly threaten our cities, our homes, and our lives” (“Annual Message to the Congress 1970”). President Carter continued to “fight our wars against poverty, ignorance, and injustice” (“Inaugural Address”). Increasingly “war” became concrete and common in domestic life and became closely related to personal safety and a quality life. In this sense, the nuclear age not only changed the nature of war but also introduced wars into common life, and consequently framed the way security was felt and understood by individuals. Nevertheless, while nuclear weaponry is a new creation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century America, rhetoric regarding nuclear power reveals in national security policy a familiar theme of national greatness and exceptionalism. The drive for technological prowess has been part of the story of American greatness, but the idea such as international security depends on American security and America’s war is a benevolent war for peace are also a familiar story of American exceptionalism. When those ideas were projected into the Cold War politics, they produced a particular nuclear anxiety that subtly broadens as well as deepens Americans’ perception of security and understanding of the world.

In addition, a third theme worth noting and inherits ideas of national greatness and racial hierarchy is the idea of “dependency.” The discourse of dependency in the national security narrative often revolves around the relationship between allies as well as between the American government and its citizens in defending freedom and the free society. Entering the Cold War era, the political landscape after the world war was understood within a context of postwar

American ascendancy, the decline of Western Europe, and a bipolar power gravitation between America and the Soviet Union. NSC 68 claimed that America is “not only the greatest immediate obstacle which stands between it [the Soviet] and world domination, we are also the only power which could release force in the free and Soviet worlds which could destroy it” (14). This outlook placed America in a position of leadership and responsibility. However, the language also presented an unequal relationship between America and other non-Soviet nations in the world as their security and freedom are dependent on America. Similarly, identifying a sound economy as the basis of American strength, the Eisenhower administration claimed that the “security of the whole free world, is dependent on the avoidance of recession and on the long-term expansion of the U.S. economy” (NSC 162/2 589).

At the same time, “dependency” on America legitimized various national security programs abroad under the name of assistance. Particularly for underdeveloped countries in the Third World, the Kennedy administration promoted a proactive approach to help modernization of the developing countries:

To assist constructive modernization, we should vigorously use the array of instruments available to us—including diplomacy, military force, military aid, information activities, exchange programs of all kinds, help in educational and cultural advancement, people-to-people activities, assistance in economic programing, technical assistance, the provision of capital, the use of surpluses, policy towards trade and commodity price stabilization, and a variety of other actions capable of affecting the orientation of men and institutions within their societies towards their problems (“Basic National Security Policy” 77).

The programs nearly covered all venues of national life, affecting various aspects of national sovereignty and creating a sense of American trusteeship on which a proper development of underdeveloped nations was dependent.

However, perhaps the most direct manifestation of the racial hierarchy and power relationship embedded in the discourse of “dependency” is, instead, America’s criticism and denunciation of “dependency.” In 1969, the newly elected President Nixon claimed in Guam to

“avoid that kind of policy that will make countries in Asia so dependent upon us that we are dragged into conflicts such as the one that we have in Vietnam” (“Informal Remarks”). Nixon criticized that kind of American foreign policy in Asia, stating that “Americans are a do-it-yourself people. We are an impatient people. Instead of teaching someone else to do a job, we like to do it ourselves. And this trait has been carried over into our foreign policy” (“Address to the Nation”). His criticism suggests a logic that an American independence cultivated an Asian dependency, which unexpectedly impeded the maturing and proper development of Asia. Instead, he offered a new Nixon Doctrine affirmed that “[t]he fostering of self-reliance is the new purpose and direction of American involvement in Asia” (“First Annual Report”). In essence, Nixon’s criticism of “dependence” did not divert much from previous administrations in that both affirmed that dependency on America is a reality. Instead, by portraying the failure of American foreign policy in Asia as a character defect, his national security narrative brought into focus the moral and character dimension of dependency, in addition to the political and economic dimensions. In other words, dependency of underdeveloped countries could also be understood as a character problem and thus a subjective condition that could and should be redressed.

Criticism of “dependency” continued, and the stigmatization turned an inward look to examine how dependency endangers American security. In the Carter administration, disturbance in the Middle East led to the oil crisis in the world. President Carter not only denounced the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a direct threat of American vital interest and security, he also criticized that “[t]he crises in Iran and Afghanistan have dramatized a very important lesson: Our excessive dependence on foreign oil is a clear and present danger to our Nation's security. The need has never been more urgent. At long last, we must have a clear, comprehensive energy policy for the United States” (“State of the Union Address”). In the Reagan administration, energy emergency, especially oil and gas shortage, became an indispensable concern in national security policy making, and the American principle under both normal times and emergencies was claimed to be “reliance on the market” (“National Security Directive 87” 9). Besides stockpiling, it was believed that free international and domestic markets that are free from

government involvement in purchasing, state monopoly, and price control and allocation, will be essential to stabilize the global market and contribute to American security. Such vision of the free market in addressing energy security, in essence, is consistent with Reagan's overall security outlook that "America's economic success is freedom's success" ("Address before a Joint Session of the Congress"), the key of which is the "economic freedom" that proposed major tax reductions and denounced dependency on government welfare. Reagan called to Americans, "Let us resolve that we will stop spreading dependency and start spreading opportunity; that we will stop spreading bondage and start spreading freedom" ("Address before a Joint Session of the Congress"), which put dependency in the opposite of free markets and freedom. While his criticism of dependency was targeted on the domestic welfare programs, through associating dependency with international politics, free markets and freedom, his discourse of dependency can also be understood as a meaningful part in the larger national security narrative in the sense that it further stigmatized "dependency" as a character defect. Welfare dependency in the American context, as Historians Fraser and Gordon argued, was particularly stigmatized morally and psychologically, and its pejorative connotation remains feminized and racialized since the industrial era in the 20th century (320-323). Looking from this perspective, the discourse of dependency in the Cold War national security context that conflated the domestic and international politics, is not only suggesting a racialized power relation but also a gendered one.

In short, from a cultural perspective the American national security narrative during the Cold War inherited many of the key values in American culture and demonstrated much of what Michael Hunt described as the ideology of American foreign policy which features national greatness, a racial hierarchy and an American norm of revolution. Yet, the narrative also acquired its characteristics within the Cold War politics and historical context, reflecting a particular form of idea on national security that shaped both America's domestic life and America's relationship with other parts of the world. As discussed above, themes such as anticommunism, changed perception of security in the nuclear age, and dependency, represent the intersection between historical consistency and specificity. These themes are sometimes interrelated, and admittedly

leave out other particular topics in the national security policy. However, they provide a useful fulcrum to contextualize the emergence of national security discourse which has become a conspicuous and powerful term in the American political discourse today.

### 1.3 Chapter Summary

The second chapter, “Early Korean War Stories and the Public Consumption of National Security in the Cold War,” studies the first stage Korean War stories in the 1950s and early 1960s and examines the way that popular stories of the Korean War operated in the state-private networking to strengthen the national security state of America ideologically and culturally during the Cold War. Focusing on popular Korean War stories such as James Michener’s novelette *The Bridges at Toko-ri* (1953) and his news stories of the war, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) directed by Don Siegel, and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) directed by John Frankenheimer, I analyze how tropes in storytelling translate and popularize ideas of anti-communism, perception of security, and dependency in national security policies to the public.

The third chapter, “Korean American Stories of the Korean War in the 1990s and Challenge against the National Security State,” examines the second stage Korean War stories in the 1990s by first or second generation Korean American writers and argues that the Korean War experience was reimagined and revised in the storytelling, which not only reflects the change of Post-Cold War era but also formally resists key theme of the ideology of national security. Focusing on Helie Lee’s *Still Life with Rice* (1996), Susan Choi’s *The Foreign Student* (1998), and Heinze Insu Fenkl’s *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996), I investigate the way that Korean American writers’ storytelling provides an alternative history of the national security programs in Korea and their narrative forms challenges the anticommunist perspective, perception of security, and racialized and gendered idea of dependency in the national security ideology.

The fourth chapter, “Looking Back in the Present: Post-9/11 Korean War Stories and the Homeland Security,” looks into the way that the Korean War is re-remembered in recent stories

in the current American homeland security state. Focusing on Toni Morrison's *Home* (2012), Ha Jin's *War Trash* (2005), and Chang-Rae Lee's *The Surrendered* (2010), it argues that the Korean War serves as a historical analogy to understand the consequences of the War on Terror and contemplate the American homeland in a traumatized post-911 era. Revisiting the Korean War by increasingly diverse writers offers alternative perspectives on healing and understanding "homeland" in an increasingly transnational and interconnected world.

I conclude finally with Chapter 5, "Coda: From the Korean War to the Global Trade War," which briefly discusses the way Korean War is used in the intensified trade war from a Chinese perspective and the American national security state in the context of global trade war. With the political context ever changing, the enemy of American national security shifted from the Soviet in the Cold War to the terrorists in the post-911 era, and now China in the trade war. Yet, the Korean War continues to be present while the storytelling morphs and circulates across borders. The clinging as well as the refiguring of the storytelling of the Korean War reminds us of the legacy of the war, and demonstrates the vitality of storytelling in attending politics of our world and life.

## **CHAPTER 2. EARLY KOREAN WAR STORIES AND THE PUBLIC CONSUMPTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE COLD WAR**

Mobilizing public support for government policies has been a consistent concern in different administrations, and a state-private networking is important in such efforts as it enables “the government to disseminate its message without the opprobrium that the public, traditionally chary of official propaganda, would have attached to a more direct government campaign” (Casey 11). In the private sector, popular stories and movies perhaps naturally occupy an advantageous position in reaching a wide audience and thus generating public support. As Alan Nadel argues, popular narratives could facilitate public consumption of national policies through performing the ideological task of constructing narratives to allow a large part of citizens to make sense of the self by linking to the national history and to interiorize national narratives as “knowable and unquestionable realities” (8). During the Truman administration, national security officials also recognized the interrelation between storytelling and government policies, and tried to actively employ the power of storytelling in generating public support. When drafting the NSC-68 document, Robert Lovett, then Secretary of Defense, told the drafting committee that “if we can sell every useless article known to men in large quantities, we should be able to sell our very fine story in large quantities” (qtd. in Gaddis 105). While NSC-68 was not declassified until 1975, referring to NSC-68 as a “fine story” to sell, Lovett admitted the drive for gaining public consumption and emphasized the important role of narrative stories in realizing the goal. If, as historian Pierpaoli concluded that the Korean War was the “Trojan Horse” that introduced the “garrison state” into American society (2), it is partly because that the war provided an occasion to create and sell “stories” for the security state.

Focusing on the role of storytelling in the state-private networking in shaping and strengthening the national security state of America ideologically and culturally during the Cold War, this chapter studies the first phase Korean War stories in the 1950s and the early 1960s,

analyzing the way Korean War storytelling at the time conveyed, transformed and popularized key themes of Cold War America's national security policies for public consumption. As analyzed in the introduction before, three themes are conspicuous in the national security documents through the Cold War years, including anti-communism, the perception of security that increasingly obscures boundaries and differences, and the idea of "dependency."

The interactions between popular stories and state policies operate to transport the key themes in the political discourse of national security, shaping a coherent and comprehensible national security narrative and consequently strengthening a national security state through the Cold War years. While the Korean War itself was not popular, several stories and movies created at the time, either directly or indirectly dealing with the Korean War, were widely published and circulated. Among them were well known popular writer James Michener's novelette *The Bridges at Toko-ri* (1953) and his news stories of the war, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) directed by Don Siegel, and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) directed by John Frankenheimer. Situating and analyzing these popular stories and films of the Korean War in the context of the early Cold War when national security policies and programs were institutionalized, I argue that the Korean War storytelling exemplifies a pattern of state-private networking in which popular stories transported and transformed key themes of official policies to facilitate public consumption. Such pattern of storytelling borrows familiar cultural tropes and reflects gendered and racialized stereotypes, and its success in bridging the official state and the public thus also reveals the deep-rooted cultural concerns, anxieties and prejudice of American society.

The first section investigates popular writer James Michener's *The Bridges at Toko-ri* and the war stories he wrote for and published on mainstream newspapers and magazines such as *International News Service*, *Life*, and *Reader's Digest*. Reading along with reader letters as well as America's official national security discourse reflected in documents such as NSC-68 and Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, I analyze the way the official security view and idea were racialized and gendered through a feminized representation of Japan and the trope of

adoptive family in his writing of the Korean War. In particular, a racialized and gendered perception of dependency characterizes US-Asia relationship in the storytelling and shapes public understanding of official security policies. In the end such storytelling introduces and reinforces a racialized and gendered American national security state that forebodes continued and intensified military violence in Asia.

The second section contextualizes the popular sci-fi thriller *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) directed by Don Siegel in the history of the Korean War and epidemics in the 1950s, examining the conceptual exchange between the film's discourse of "epidemic" and the theme of anticommunism in America's political discourse of national security. I argue that the film represents communism as a disease and materializes the way communism could be contagious in the discourse of national security. Further studying the construct of "epidemic" in the science fiction film in comparison with narratives of the polio epidemic and vaccination in American mainstream newspapers as well as narratives of epidemics in China at the time, the analysis also reveals the biopolitics in the epidemic narratives and the biopower of the security state.

The last section studies the classic political thriller *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) in parallel with the atomic spy narrative in the early 1950s. Reading the characterization of Ethel Rosenberg and Mrs. Iselin together in the context of nuclear anxiety and the Korean War, this section examines the way that gender roles were employed in the national security discourse. In particular, I argue that the use of gender roles explains the way perception of security was increasingly shaped by nuclear anxiety that obscures boundaries between the domestic and the international, and the private and the public. Moreover, the dramatization of female viciousness further obscures social boundaries and differences in the national security state, which in a way intensifies the security concern in the private sphere and thus helps to expand the power of the security state.

## 2.1 Characterizing Dependency: Japan, Adoptive Family, and James Michener's Korean War Stories

After the publication and success of *Tales of the South Pacific*, James Michener became one of the most popular writers in America in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was especially hailed for his “educational entertainment” that introduced “the world of the trans-Pacific into almost every American home” (qtd. in Klein 117). With the Cold War, Michener's popularity and popular education on Asian affairs took on a greater significance, and at various times during the Cold War, Michener was invited and recruited by the government to write about different parts of Asia. When the Korean War broke out which foregrounded America's relationship with Asia and concerns of national security surged, Michener visited Korea several times and worked as a war correspondent to report on the situation in Korea. He was critical of America's ignorance and lack of interest in Asia, and in his mind the Korean War was a “storm cloud on a horizon of twentieth century history. It may be merely a forerunner of greater and more sanguinary Asian troubles” (2). He wrote about the Korean War to educate the American public and explain America's interest and role in Asia, which in many ways responded to Dean Acheson's call for all the “institutions of our national life” to articulate America's foreign policies towards Asia so as to effectively execute the policies and programs abroad (238). During the earlier part of the 1950s, James Michener wrote a series of stories on the Korean War and published on mainstream newspapers and magazines, and some were made into popular films. In 1952, he wrote for *International News Service* a series of news stories which were focused on the Korean situation and were entitled “The Real Story of Korea.” The series was widely circulated and reprinted in domestic newspapers.<sup>9</sup> Later, based on previous short pieces on Korea he

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<sup>9</sup> According to INS editor Philip G. Reed, the serial stories “are receiving extremely wide play throughout the country, and abroad, too.” From Reed's letter to Michener on May 29, 1952. Reel 5, James A. Michener Papers. Microfilm collection, in Library of Congress Manuscript Division.

published in *Life* magazine *The Bridges at Toko-ri* in 1953 in its entirety. The novelette was sold 5 million copies and was made into arguably the most popular Korean War movie in 1954.<sup>10</sup>

Besides a detailed account of the situation and development in the front line, Michener's news stories often involve a "human aspect" of the war—telling stories of individual GIs, war prisoners and orphans—which makes his story both educational and emotional. Especially worth noting is his account of GI babies in Japan and the call for American support of orphans left by GI fathers fighting communist enemies. Interestingly, in "The Real Story of Korea," perhaps the most popular "human character" was Teruko, an orphaned six-year-old mixed-race Japanese girl who prompted an enthusiastic response from readers and their effort to locate and adopt her. Indeed, Japan and Japanese figures are an important part of Michener's Korean War stories and the trope of the "adoptive family" is constantly seen in his storytelling of the war. And in his more popular novelette we again meet a most enigmatic Japanese figure Kimiko, "The flower of Japan." In his later fictional creation, representation of Japan and the trope of the adoptive family become a key device to present Korea and America's war in Korea.

Focusing on Michener's representation of Japan and the trope of the adoptive family in his stories of the Korean War, particularly *The Bridges at Toko-ri*, and "The Real Story of Korea," I analyze the way Michener's feminized representation of Japan not only reflects America's official security view that marginalizes the Korean people, but also characterizes the U.S.-Asia relationship in terms of dependency with gender and racial implications. Further, reading Michener's storytelling in parallel with American's official national security discourse that were reflected in NSC-68 and the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952, I also argue that ultimately Michener's Korean War storytelling conveys and popularizes the theme of "dependency" in the public perception and understanding of national security.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Rick Worland, the film *The Bridges at Toko-ri* (1954) was the most commercially successful Hollywood Korean War film, which was the only Korean War film included in *Variety's* annual list of top moneymaking movies. From Rick Worland, "The Korean War film as Family Melodrama: 'The Bridges at Toko-ri'(1954)", *Historical Journal of Film*, vol.19, no. 3, 1999, p.375

Michener's fictional writing often develops on his exhaustive research and firsthand experience of the place, and his storytelling of the Korean War is largely based on his experience as a war correspondent. His 1953 novelette *Toko-ri* was also informed and developed from his news stories such as "The Real Story of Korea" that was published in 1952, and the two were interwoven to introduce the Korean War in a way that Korea itself was put in the offstage while Japan became an enigmatic presence in the storytelling. The "Real Story" consists of six short pieces that cover a wide range of topics, including the armistice talk, war prisoners, the soldiers and pilots on the frontline as well as Japan and GI babies in Japan during the Korean War, which represents all the major themes in Michener's writing of the Korean War. In many ways *Toko-ri* reflects and responds to "The Real Story." The story of *Toko-ri* revolves around Navy pilot Harry Brubaker's fatal task of bombing bridges in the North Korean mountains. Brubaker was a Denver Lawyer recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He resented his bombing task and the mountains of North Korea—"They were the mountains of pain, the hills of death" (Michener 76), and he fears death because he loves his wife and daughter desperately. However, the bombing task is so necessary that Brubaker has to make the sacrifice—the bridges at Toko-ri are where "all communist supplies to the central and eastern front assembled" (*Toko-ri* 36) and that Americans knocking down Toko-ri will convince the communist generals and commissars that "we'll never stop...never give in...never weaken in our purpose" (*Toko-ri* 36). Apparently, the story draws on inspiration, experience and data from the topographic representation of the mountainous North Korea, profiling of soldiers and pilots, as well as military deployment reported in "Real Story." In chapter one of the series "Fairy Tale at Panmunjom," Michener told his experience observing the armistice talk at Panmunjom and explained to the readers how the American air force and Navy pilots kept the communists returning to the negotiation table: "our air pressure has practically destroyed daylight economic activity in North Korea" ("Panmunjom" 36) and "as long as we keep hammering North Korea to a pulp the Communist will keep returning. That's the kind of argument they can understand" ("Panmunjom" 36). Brubaker's bombing task thus showcases the philosophy of America's strategic bombing in North Korea,

and his necessary sacrifice is the same kind of argument that Michener emphasized on the negotiation table at Panmunjom. Just as Brubaker's superior, Admiral Tarrant, envisions, the communist aggression will expand, from Korea, Japan, to Philippines, and finally to Hawaii, and then maybe California, Colorado, but when Americans knock out even the bridges at Toko-ri, that is "the day they'll quit.' Then reason might come into the world" (*Toko-ri* 42). Similarly for Brubaker, he finally understands the meaning of his sacrifice in Korea is to protect his wife and children at home. Before he is fatally shot and dies after he bombed the bridges, the only thought he has is the memory of families and the vision that his girls back at home are in the garden now, and it is in this millionth of a second that he "understood in some fragmentary way the purpose of his being in Korea" (*Toko-ri* 123). In this way, fighting in Korea becomes important only for its symbolic meaning in demonstrating American resolution and capability against communist enemies and protecting the core of America.

Together with *Toko-ri*'s genre of family drama that sentimentalizes Brubaker's war experience and foregrounds the American family, Michener's stories transport and translate the Truman administration's view that America's military intervention and tactics in Korea were for America's global struggle against the communist Soviet expansion. In the official security view, the Korean War was a small and necessary price paid for freedom and containing communism when it is "compared to reconstruct Western Europe, co-opt German and Japanese power, and establish apposition of preponderant strength for the free world" (Leffler 448). Indeed, Korea itself is a shadowy presence in Michener's Korean War stories, as rarely can we see any faces of Korean enemies. Yet, between the heroic American figures and the obscured Korean faces there remains the most enigmatic presence of Japan represented by Kimiko and Teruko.

Compared to the Brubakers that drew much critical attention, Kimiko is a less discussed figure and only briefly appears three times in *Toko-ri*. However, her characterization and presence represent a feminized Japan closely related to America's war in Korea, thus further translating America's security interest in the Far East and characterizing the theme of

“dependency” in America’s imagination of the national security state. Kimiko is the lover of Mike Forney, a navy helicopter, but she deserts him for another GI. Her appearances cause all the commotions in the novelette. On her first appearance on the deck waiting for her GI boyfriend, she is described as an

especially handsome girl of twenty dressed in plaid skirt from Los Angeles, trim coat from Sears Roebuck, and Jaunty cap from San Francisco. She wore her jet hair in braids and kept a laugh ready in the corners of her wide, black eyes. Her complexion was of soft gold and seemed to blush as some of the other girls caught a glimpse of the *Savo* and pretended they had seen their sailor (45).

Clearly, she is fashionable and popular, wearing all the latest styles from America bought by her American GI boyfriends. But after Mike leaves to the Korean War Kimiko quickly loses her heart to another GI and breaks up with Mike, and her later appearances cause all the male competitions and riots. The first riot erupts in a dance hall when Mike hears about Kimiko’s betrayal. Brubaker bails him out and is asked to talk to Kimiko, leading to Kimiko’s second appearance. From the eyes of Brubaker we see a magically feminine and enchanting Kimiko. Upon seeing Kimiko, Brubaker feels

unprepared for her dazzling beauty. Her teeth were remarkably white and her smile was warm. He understood at once why Mike wanted her, and when she rose to extend her hand and he saw her slim perfect figure in a princess evening dress which Mike had ordered from New York, he concluded that she warranted a riot. (63)

The beautiful Kimiko is characterized as an object of desire, delicate and tempting, who seems to invite possession while warranting competition and conflict as if she herself is a worthwhile prize for the winner. Clearly, her living depends on her GI boyfriends, and the American merchandise, purchasing power, and economic support enables her to enjoy a luxurious and comfortable lifestyle in a recovering post-war Japan.

However, she is also a most volatile figure who can easily “lose her heart” and betray. Her unfaithfulness in Mike’s absence also portrays her as a malleable and coquettish lover who

would easily deviate and thus needs constant attention as well as instruction. Such a presentation of the young Japanese girl allegorically refers to a Japan during the crisis of the Korean War and legitimizes an American presence in Japan. Besides providing economic aid to Japan after World War II, America's "Special Procurement" in Japan during the Korean War that made orders for military supplies and services, plus spending of yen by the stationed forces, supported Japan's quick economic recovery and boom (Kanji 180). Meanwhile, the disarmed and occupied Japan relies on America militarily. As Dean Acheson explained in January 1950, "the defeat and the disarmament of Japan has placed upon the United States the necessity of assuming the military defense of Japan so long as that is required, both in the interest of our security and in the interest of the security of the entire Pacific area" ("Speech on the Far East"). The crisis in Korea alerted America to the communist expansion in Asia, and America's intervention in Korea was a "police action" and responsive act of containing communism and protecting core allies such as Japan. Michener also recognized the relations between Japan and the Korean War. In his view, Japan was an important element for Americans to understand the meaning of the Korean War and observed on the future of Japan in "Real Story." Japan, as he described, was not only dependent on America economically and militarily but also politically because of its volatile and precarious political character. He predicted that if America withdraws from Japan and stops economic aid, there would be in Japan a strong swing to the left immediately, a complete collapse of economy and food crisis, and next strong conservative forces would resurge and re-establish a fascist military government ("Swing Left (and Right) Due").<sup>11</sup> His conclusion that "Japan will turn either Communist or conquest-hungry Fascist" without American presence ("Swing Left") thus necessitates trusteeship on Japan and the American occupation, protection and instruction.

Looking from this perspective, Michener's later informed fictional creation of Kimiko as a flirt recasts Japan's future in a romance, dramatizing the war in Korea that instead marginalizes Korea. Yet, Kimiko as a feminized representation of Japan also operates to characterize the US-

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<sup>11</sup> chapter six of "Real Story."

Asia relation, racializing and gendering the idea of dependency in the discourse of national security. In the context of post-war American ascendancy, the national security officials often described American security in the language of responsibility and leadership. NSC 68, for example, claimed that the Soviet threat of slavery and atomic warfare “imposes on us, in our own interests, the responsibility of world leadership” (9). Underlying the words is embedded an unequal relationship between America and other nations, extoling a powerful America while devaluing other non-Soviet nations that are dependent on American protection. As a major theme in America’s national security discourse, “dependency” symbolizes powerlessness and insecurity, and Kimiko in *Toko-ri* illustrates the weakness of the dependent Asian ally. Such a familiar stereotypical image of a feminine oriental figure also genders the idea of “dependency,” coupling the national security discourse with a deep-rooted appreciation as well as anxiety over American masculinity. Indeed, contrasting with Kimiko, her American lover Mike is portrayed as a heroic and masculine model, ready to fight and riot against competitors to get back his former lover. Even seeing Mike breaking military orders in commotion, his superior Admiral Tarrant comments that “I’d hate to see the day when men were afraid to mix it up for pretty girls” (*Toko-ri* 70-71). Compared to damages and commotions, the fighting spirit and quality of “man” is much more concerned and valued. The commotions caused by Kimiko thus become valuable spectacles of American masculinity, and the unequal relationship of the US-Japan couple transforms the language of national security into a familiar cultural language that makes the theme of “dependency” both gendered and racialized.

Yet, the characterization and portrayal of Kimiko also remind us of another enigmatic Japanese figure, Teruko, in “Real Story,” the “loveliest six-year-old girl” (“Future Dim”)<sup>12</sup> that Michener claimed to have ever seen in a Japanese orphanage; and reading Teruko together with Kimiko, we can see how the exchange between the political discourse and the cultural language also parallels with an ambiguous coalescing of the romantic love and the maternal love in

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<sup>12</sup> “Future Dim for Babies Left in Japan by GIs,” chapter five of “Real Story.”

racializing the Asian people. Teruko is the protagonist in Michener's piece on GI babies in "Real Story" that tells his story of visiting an orphanage in Tokyo and meeting the mixed-race GI orphans. At first appearance, Teruko seems to be a prototypical Kimiko. She was a beautiful child,

unmistakably Japanese yet at the same time clearly American. She had perfect teeth which she showed constantly in a sweet smile. Her limbs were straight. She wore black pigtails and moved with extraordinary grace...She had a quizzical attitude, shy and yet not frightened. She would run away and then almost against her will come back to stand with me ("Future Dim").

With the same jet black hair, perfect teeth and warm smile, the two Japanese girls share a similar beauty and aura, sweet yet somewhat quizzical; and they have the same fondness and attachment to the American man.

More important, Teruko was an equally enigmatic Japanese girl that stimulated enthusiastic responses from readers. In Michener's words, an Amerasian child was a valuable family asset for America, as "the naturally attractive Japanese child has been added the best blood of America" ("Future Dim"). And Japan had given up her parental right on these orphans, as she "has so many millions of people to care for, its food is so inadequate, its land so cramped that orphans without someone to 'stand for' them are doomed" ("Future Dim"). In other words, it seems that children like Teruko are not only an entitlement for America but also of moral importance as her future relies on America. The story of orphans easily reached the heart of American readers and two women were especially inspired by Michener's Teruko—Roberta Macauley, a young woman from New Heaven, Connecticut, and Louis Armstrong, a middle aged lady from Kansas City, Missouri. The women embarked on their own journeys to locate and adopt Teruko. Trying to locate Teruko, Macauley kept writing to the Japanese Consul and Mrs. Sawada who was in charge of the Elizabeth Sanders Home for GI babies in Japan. She excitedly got up at 4 a.m. just to take the train to meet Sawada when Sawada was visiting America.

Although Macauley failed to find the Teruko Michener wrote about, she was glad to have met some wonderful people and had glorious experiences because of her “weakness for little ‘Terukos’ of one kind or another” (Macauley Letter 1953). When hearing from Michener that another woman Mrs. Armstrong finally located Teruko, instead of starting a competition she felt bonded with Armstrong and happy that “there is another soft-hearted fool like myself who wants to go all out” (Macauley Letter 1953). Louis Armstrong was even more determined to get Teruko. Early in 1952 she wrote to Michener that when she read his article, she knew Teruko was “the little girl we needed” and even before locating her in “our minds Teruko is already ours” (Armstrong Letter 1952). She described in detail her imagined bedroom, playground, toys and even the rug for Teruko and already selected a new name—Marsha Teruko Armstrong. At the same time, she was planning Teruko’s language learning and schooling, and avowed that “we will not spoil her, and will bring her up to take her place in her fighting father’s wonderful free country OUR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA” (Armstrong Letter 1952). While she finally located the right Teruko, Teruko was claimed by her father because of the popularity and publicity of Michener’s piece. However, she continued her course until 1955 when she finally cut through all the red tape and adopted a GI boy from Japan and prepared to take another Japanese girl (Armstrong Letter 1955).

Both Macauley and Armstrong seemed to have been obsessed with the little “Teruko,” and demonstrated another form of intense love—parental/maternal love; but if Macauley expressed with enthusiasm the selfishness, benevolence and tenderness of maternal love, Armstrong also demonstrated the authority and discipline of maternal love. As Armstrong claimed, “we love children and they love and obey us” (Armstrong Letter 1955). The maternal love thus also represents parental power and authority, taking Teruko under the care of familial love while at the same time placing the little girl in a parental hierarchy in which Teruko is the subject not only to be cared for but also to be instructed and educated. In effect, the familial metaphor was often used during the 1950s to describe America’s political obligation to Asia. As

Christina Klein has pointed out, the imagination of a hybrid, multiracial and multinational adoptive family “offered a way to imagine U.S.-Asia integration in terms of voluntary affiliation” (146). Such imagination, however, does not necessarily bestow the Asian ally an equal place in that the America regards itself as the parental power that the juniors should obey.

The maternal love that Michener’s storytelling of Teruko stimulated was situated in the Cold War politics and America’s concern of losing Asia, and the effort to locate and adopt Teruko were intertwined with the official discourse of national security. Thinking of adopting Teruko, Macauley wondered if McCarran-Walter Immigration Naturalization Bill of 1952 would help her get Teruko (Macauley Letter 1952). Armstrong even wrote to Congressman Francis Walter, co-sponsor of the McCarran-Walter act, in the belief that these GI babies “should be given the heritage due to them in America, the home of their fighting Fathers” (Armstrong Letter 1955). The McCarran-Walter act came out from the concern of communist infiltration into America and linked immigration with national security, stipulating that people of moral turpitude and communist affiliation are inadmissible and deportable aliens. While the act repealed exclusion of Asian immigrants, it categorized one with one or more Asian parents, no matter his or her birthplace and nationality under the national quota of the Asian nation. The act’s restrictive policy of allotting Asian quotas based on race only reinforced racial stereotypes and thus simply made symbolic opportunities for GI babies in Japan entering America. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of “adoptive family,” as reflected in Armstrong’s claim of Teruko’s fatherly heritage in a free United States, does not argue exclusively for biological heritage; instead, it emphasized the moral heritage that America could offer Teruko, that is, the ideal of freedom. As an innocent child without affiliations, Teruko, as Michener characterized, seems to provide an alternative legitimate way for American homes to imagine getting connected and bonded with Asia and selecting Asian aliens into the national family, not racially but morally. Indeed, Armstrong’s view of moral heritage in nature speaks to Michener’s belief of the moral importance of America taking care of the GI babies in Japan. Meanwhile, the engagement

between the law and the public discourse, also ironically reveals that the two meet with each other on the shared ground of moral concerns relating to national security. In such circuitous interflows of political, legal, public as well as story languages, a coherent narrative of American moral leadership finally is construed. Obscured by the narrative, however, is a form of collusion in racializing the Asian people, since all contribute to a discriminatory racial construction and selection of the admissible Asian people. Even the apparently benevolent maternal love from America constructs a familial hierarchy that regards the Asian people as powerless and immature dependents to be disciplined and educated.

Comparing Teruko with Kimiko, the two Japanese girls are ultimately the same kind of characterization of Japan as a dependent who relies on America economically, militarily, politically and morally as well. And in the romance of *Toko-ri*, a peculiar scene of model “adoptive family” is represented through a private encounter between the Brubaker family and a Japanese family, further turning America’s presence in Asia as a form of reciprocity intertwined in the romantic as well as parental love. During the shore leave, the Brubaker family stays in Fuji-san Hotel. At the time they are enjoying a reserved private bath, a Japanese couple with their two daughters intrude into the room. The Brubakers are astonished and the encounter is awkward at first. However, it quickly turns into a harmonious scene after the Japanese father insists on talking to the Brubakers warmly with his limited English, and the girls exchange greetings in English and Japanese respectively. It is a scene of mutual goodwill, and the two families “intermingled and the soft waters of the bath unite them” (*Toko-ri* 68). At this moment, the encounter becomes a scene of a family union, in which the two racially/nationally different families blend together in a most private moment and space with goodwill. Yet, at this moment Brubaker also recalls his experience in the 1940s:

In 1944 Harry had hated the Japanese and had fought valiantly against them, destroying their ships and bombing their troops, but the years had passed, and the hatreds had dissolved and on this wintry morning he caught some sense in the twisted and conflicting things men are required to do. (*Toko-ri* 68)

This is a family by choice after Japan was defeated in the Second World War, and the reformed Japanese is welcome to join the American family. The place of Fuji-san Hotel further explains the process of reforming, compromising and integrating. As Michener tells us, the hotel

had been Japan's leading hotel but for the first six years after the war it served Americans only. Now, in the transition period between occupation and sovereignty, it had become a symbol of the strange and satisfying relationship between Japan and America: the choice rooms were still reserved for Americans but Japanese were welcome to use the hotel as before; so its spacious gardens, bent with pine and cherry, held both Japanese families who were enjoying luxury after long years of austerity and American military men savoring the same luxury after long months in Korea (*Toko-ri* 50).

Apparently, through the symbolic encounter in the Fuji-san Hotel we see that the family union is structured in the unbalanced relationship between America and Japan. On one hand, America is in charge and holds the power of authority in shaping and helping to recover a post-war Japan; on the other hand, Japan could comfort an exhausted American returning from the battlefields in Korea, both psychologically and physically. The scene of adoptive family in Fuji-san Hotel presents to us a complicated and ambiguous love story between America and Japan that characterizes a dependent Japan as both a child and mistress. Contextualizing the scene in the Korean War, the scene also envisions a future union with Koreans, turning the war in Korea another "required" process to transcend racial and national differences as well as hatred to form an integrated yet essentially hierarchical family.

In the end, the shadowy Koreans finally appear in the last scene when Brubaker is about to die in the Korean land to complete the scene of a universal "adoptive family." After Brubaker's jet is shot down and he is running away from his communist enemies, he encounters a Korean family who stands impassively watching him:

They were the family from the nearest farm, a mother, father and two children, dressed in discarded uniforms and brandishing rakes. He stopped to see if they intended attacking him, but they remained still and he saw them not as Koreans but as the Japanese family that had intruded upon his Sulphur bath that morning in

the Fuji-san and an unbearable longing for his own wife and children possessed him and it was then—there in bright sunlight in the rice field—that he knew he would not see his family again. (*Toko-ri* 116)

The Korean family becomes interchangeable with the Japanese family in Brubaker's eye, alluding to a future expansion of the "adoptive family" in Asia in America's perspective. However, as Brubaker is desperately reminded of his own wife and children when thinking of the adopted Asian members, we see that the binding of the adoptive family seems to rely on the binding, transcendence and extension of America's romantic love and parental love towards the Asian dependents. For America, that "dependency" means sacrifice.

Looking at America's picturing of a future family union, we could see that both Kimiko and Teruko can easily find their place in the adoptive family, dependent on America's love for protection, discipline and instruction. The two Japanese girls' enigmatic presence in Michener's storytelling of the Korean War, compared with the gliding and faceless appearance of the Korean family in Brubaker's dying moment, already makes the Korean War symbolic and forgettable. However, the storytelling accurately mirrors and translates America's official view of national security and security interest in Asia, and the characterization of the Japanese figures and the trope of adoptive family operate together with gendered and racialized cultural language to popularize the political discourse of national security officials. The engagement between the official space and the public space that characterizes a dependent Asian ally in the end solidifies an unequal relationship between America and the Asian people and serves the expansion of the American power abroad. In this sense, the moment of the Korean crisis indeed fulfills Michener's warning that the Korean war signals more Asian troubles for America. More national security programs and military interventions were launched abroad in the name of protection, assistance and modernization only to bring up continued violence and enormous casualties, as we can see in America's struggle in Vietnam in the ensuing 1960s. Moreover, with the gendered and racialized characterization of "dependency" and its popular education, the national security state is also expanding, turning to shape aspects of national life in the name of national security. Not

surprisingly, we would see in America's national security discourse the concerns of energy dependence, economic dependence as well as welfare dependence in the 1970s and afterwards. In this sense, Michener's storytelling of the Korean War exemplifies the way the Korean War introduced the "garrison state" into America, and the popular education is more about the idea and theme of national security discourse than about the war in Korea itself. As we can see in the enthusiastic reader responses, the stories sold well and the popular education was effective in facilitating communication and engagement between the official space and the public space, which, unfortunately, also parallels with the expansion and solidification of the national security state.

## **2.2 Biopolitics of Anti-Communism: Germ Warfare, Epidemics, and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)**

On February 23, 1953, the Chinese government made a broadcast charging the U.S. army in Korea launching a germ war. It radioed a 4-hour deposition made by two captured Marine Corps air officers, Col. Frank H. Schwable and his co-pilot Maj. Roy H. Bley, disclosing details of America's Joint Chiefs order in November 1952 for bacteriological operations in Korea. According to Col. Schwable, America's objective is to "test under field conditions various elements of bacteriological warfare and possibly to expand field tests at a later date into an element of regular combat operations, depending on the results obtained and the situation in Korea" ("Red Germ Charges" 3). The broadcast renewed the controversy of germ warfare and accusations from both sides were publicized and circulated widely in media worldwide. As a response, the American officials accused the Communist China of "brainwashing" and torturing U.S. war prisoners, denouncing that "too familiar are the mind-annihilating methods of these Communists in extorting whatever words they want for there to be any mystery as to how they were fabricated" ("Gen. Clark Rips Renewal" 3). The international drama quickly renewed public concern and fear of both bacteriological warfare and communist brainwashing, and not surprisingly inspired the fantastic imagination in many science fiction stories and movies.

Indeed, the 1950s was the heyday of science fiction movies and many featured alien invasion such as *Invaders from Mars* (1953), *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), and *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958). As Megan Kelley claimed in her study of alien science fiction films in America, it was “standard fare” that people become imposters in movies of the late 1940s and the 1950s and representing Communists passing for Americans inspired many films telling stories about aliens passing for human beings (114). Indeed, the popular alien science fiction films in the 1950s reflected a deep cultural paranoia against communism in America and tapped into the increasingly escalation of Cold War politics at the time. At the same time, the fantastic storytelling and the intimacy with sociopolitical currents of science fictions also render these texts highly unstable, inviting myriads of interpretation and producing layers of meaning. Among them, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) directed by Don Siegel remains a classic and one of the most multifaceted film, of which the message could go across America’s political spectrum from anti-communism to anti-McCarthyism. Situated in the 1950s, the trope of the imposter and aliens passing as human beings also mirrors fear of brainwashing and the highly publicized tale of Communist indoctrination during the Korean War. In particular, the trope of alien invasion in the film is represented through an “epidemic contagion” in which alien seed pods get contact with human beings and gradually replace human beings cell by cell. The discourse of “epidemic” plays a key role in the narrative, and the imposter symptom is first diagnosed by a psychiatrist Dr. Kauffman as resulting from an “epidemic mass hysteria.” Looking into the medical discourse in science fictions and its conceptual exchange with the political discourse during the Cold War, Priscilla Wald even claimed that *The Body Snatchers* arguably produced a subgenre of “epidemiological horror” that “depicted the transformative power of disease and groups” (160).

Nevertheless, epidemics and fear of epidemiologic outbreaks were not just fantastic science fictions; they were also reality in the 1950s. In the early 1950s, polio outbreaks became a heightened public concern and caused more than 15,000 paralytic cases each year until an

effective vaccine was introduced in 1955 (“Polio Elimination”). In 1952 the polio epidemic reached a peak in the nation with 57,628 cases reported <sup>13</sup> that the *Los Angeles Sentinel* named the year “An Epidemic Year” (“Polio—The Unpredictable”). Meanwhile, diseases such as cholera swept North Korea and parts of China. Citing testimonies from captured American pilots, the Chinese government and North Korean government accused U.S. forces of using bacteriological bombs and causing these epidemics. The controversy was brought into the United Nations and garnered much public attention in U.S. when U.S. government blamed China for brainwashing and torturing American captives, making the “germ warfare” and the “epidemics” one of the most contentious issue in the Korean War memory.

Contextualizing *Body Snatchers* in the interlaced Cold War politics, the Korean War, and the history of epidemics in the 1950s, I analyze the conceptual exchange between the film’s discourse of “epidemic” and the theme of anticommunism in America’s political discourse of national security. The national health was a typical subject in discussions of national security, and in particular government officials compared bacteriological weapons with nuclear weapons in face of the germ warfare controversy during the Korean War. In an interview over ABC in 1953, then Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Oveta Culp Hobby explicitly observed that threat of germ warfare was “‘a major concern’ to government defense planners” and when used with atomic and hydrogen bombs could cause 11,000,000 casualties (“Germ War Threat” 78). Anticommunism in the security discourse, when intertwined with the scientific discourse of health and medicine, essentially constitutes a form of biopolitics that decides the way people should be categorized, grouped or separated, and regulated. Looking at the film’s construct of the “epidemic” in the context of the Korean War and the controversy of germ warfare and brainwashing—the symptoms, the source and routes of transmission, the targeted set of people and location in the outbreak, as well as the determined way to respond and control, I analyze the way the film represents communism as a disease and materializes the routes and ways that

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<sup>13</sup> Data from [https://www.historyofvaccines.org/timeline#EVT\\_100321](https://www.historyofvaccines.org/timeline#EVT_100321)

communism could be contagious. Further studying the construct of “epidemic” in the science fiction film in relation to the narrative of polio epidemic and vaccination in American mainstream newspapers, and in comparison with the narrative of epidemics in China at the time, I argue that the film’s deployment of “epidemics” not only effectively translates the security state’s anticommunist policy in a fantastic framework but also reinforces the biopower of the security state. In particular, through medical and scientific discourse, the construct of communism as a disease obscures the huge gap in standard of living between privileged countries and underprivileged countries, and transforms America’s anticommunist programs abroad into a modern medical intervention of poverty, hunger and sanitation problems of the world.

*Body Snatchers* starts with a disheveled and fanatic Dr. Miles Bennell who is recounting his nightmare experience in the small town of Santa Mira, California, in an emergency room to two psychiatrists. According to him, a week before after he returned home from a medical convention, he found that something strange had happened—many people reported to him cases of imposture, that their beloved ones were fake ones that have identical appearances and memories. Miles talked to a psychiatrist Dr. Dan Kauffman who told him it was a contagious “epidemic mass hysteria” spreading all over the town in just two weeks. However, Miles quickly discovered that alien pods really had taken possession of people in town, and that he himself barely escaped out of the town to get help and alert the outside world.

While the film’s representation of “epidemic mass hysteria” invokes different political associations, one could be easily reminded of the spread of communism by the symptoms of the ailment, which mirrors the characterization of communism in the political discourse of national security. Earlier in the film Miles was asked by Becky, his former girlfriend, to visit and check on her cousin Wilma who believes that her Uncle Ira is not Uncle Ira any more. They had a conversation, and Wilma described the symptoms of Uncle Ira:

Miles: "How is he different?"

Wilma: "That's just it, there is no difference you can actually see. He looks, sounds, acts and remembers like Uncle Ira."

Miles: "And he is your Uncle Ira. Can't you see that? No matter how you feel, he is."

Wilma: "But he isn't. There is something missing. He has been a father to me since I was a baby. Always when he talked to me there was a special look in his eye. That look's gone."

Miles: "What about memories? There must be certain things that only you and he would know about?"

Wilma: "Oh, there are. I talked to him about them. He even remembers them all down to the last small detail. Just like Uncle Ira would. But Miles, there is no emotion. None! Just the pretense of it. The words, the gesture, the tone of the voice, everything else is the same but not the feeling. Memories or not, he isn't my Uncle Ira." (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*)

Lacking in feeling and emotion is identified as the most characteristic symptom of the ailment; yet, the reason why it is pathological, abnormal and monstrous is later revealed by Miles as it deprives the individuals of their personal uniqueness and freedom. When Miles and Becky become the only two uninfected in town and are confronted with the pod Dr. Kauffman, Dr. Kauffman tries to convince them that there is no pain when the pods absorb the minds and memories and without emotions they would be "reborn into an untroubled world" (*Body Snatchers*). Miles dismisses such untroubled world where "everyone is the same," and "you can't love or be loved" (*Body Snatchers*). For him, the enforced transformation that rids people of feelings reduces humanity into numbness and thus sameness and conformity. The dehumanizing pod transformation dovetails with the characterization of communism in the political discourse of national security, in which communism is characterized as subversive of freedom and destructive of the individual identity. At the same time, memory and the human mind play a key role in the representation of the ailment. Wilma's claim that "Memory or not, He isn't my Uncle

Ira” suggests the unreliability of the human mind, and the pod absorption of the human mind to reproduce the “imposter” further represents human memory as deceptive. Placed in the Korean War controversy of germ warfare and communist brainwashing, the screen representation of the pod transformation effectively translates the manipulative and vehement communist image in the political discourse.

Yet more importantly, the film’s representation of the routes and methods of the epidemic’s transmission in town materializes on screen that communism as an idea could be contagious. The pods absorb the memories of human beings when they are asleep, but to accomplish the process a pod must be placed near a human subject. Physical proximity becomes a key condition in the contagion and infection, and as Miles later discovers, the spreading of the epidemic is realized through various social organizations and institutions. Family is first identified as the most convenient instrument of distributing the seed pods and spreading the ailment. Many townspeople get contacted with the pods unknowingly through their pod families, and Becky’s father grows a pod in the basement that nearly replaces Becky. Another key institution is the local police. One of the most lasting scenes of the film is when numerous residents gather at the central square of the town, and follow the directions of the police sheriff to take seed pods home. Loads of seeds are carried into town by trucks and the police chief with a loudspeaker and a name-list order people to get seeds from designated trucks. Everyone is given specialized seeds that are specifically produced for families and contacts. The distribution scene is quiet, smooth, and effective, lasting less than two minutes while the spreading task targeted at the whole town is done.

The local police network also turns into the major artery of the epidemic expansion. When Miles and Becky are running away, the policemen are called by the radio network and the crew respond effectively, encircling Miles and Becky quickly. Local businesses that constitute everyday social contacts also facilitate the contagious process. When Miles and Becky stop at a local gas station for refueling, the two staff workers sneakily place two pod seeds at the back of

Miles's car, trying to let the pods take over them unnoticedly. Ultimately, the film's representation of various local organizations and institutions that facilitate the "mass epidemic" vividly tells that social contacts are risky and that social institutions and organizations that constitute everyday social contacts could be the major routes of transmission. In this way, it also animates the way that communism as a social idea could be contagious and pernicious, since social contacts become as dangerous as physical contacts in the "mass epidemic."

Situated in the 1950s, the film's representation of the epidemic mirrored popular understandings and fears of epidemics in the 1950s, and the commingling of the medical discourse and the political discourse in the film magnifies the danger of communism in the Cold War politics. The word epidemic was among common and familiar language in the public space during the 1950s as the polio outbreaks swept the U.S. and reached a peak in 1952. Entering the 1950s, the nation's most well-known campaign against the polio epidemic, the March of Dimes, was the annual fundraising event of National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (NFIP). It became a nationwide grassroots movement with 3,100 chapters established under NFIP in the 1950s and were operated by volunteers to help fighting against the parents' nightmare—the paralytic polio ("History of the March of Dimes"). The *Body Snatcher*'s deployment of the "epidemic" discourse entangled with an anticommunist sentiment thus easily invokes the threat and severity of the polio epidemic as well as the effort of the national community in containing the evil crippling disease that often targeted at the vulnerable and innocent children.

At the same time, the representation of seed pods on screen, to a large degree, follows popular education of the polio virus on mainstream media coverage that was closely following medical research on viruses and the development of vaccines. The parallel further strengthens conceptual exchanges between the medical discourse and the political discourse. In the film, not only that loads of seed pods are carried into Santa Mira on trucks; farms of pod seeds are also operated near the town in order to produce the seeds on large scale and facilitate the pods taking over of the whole town. After escaping from the town into a mountain, Miles discovers a pod

farm hiding there: lines of greenhouses spread over acres of farmland, and farmers are organized to pick and upload pod seeds into the truck. In many ways, the scene reflects mainstream news stories of the polio virus and vaccine research. In 1955, *The New York Times* published a feature pictorial report on the “Polio Vaccine Farm.” The report told the audience that vaccine manufacturing is farming of an extraordinary kind, and to make the vaccine the farm had to first grow virus: it grows the “crop”—polio virus—on the “soil” of monkey kidney for 90 days (“Visit to a Polio Vaccine ‘Farm’”). The trope of farming combines popular view of viruses and the film’s anticommunist message, animating the “life” of communism. Meanwhile, the report emphasized that and the process “cannot be hurried, any more than the maturing of any other crop or the growth of a baby in the womb can be hurried” (“Visit”). The comparison between the virus, the crop and the baby characterizes the virus as a form of unstable and transformative life crossing the boundary between the vegetarian life and human life. The pod reproduction process in *Body Snatchers*, much in line with the virus manufacturing process, easily reminds the audience of the image of the polio virus at the time. Such association eventually is political, as the anticommunist sentiment in the film also becomes attached to the virus image. As Priscilla Wald pointed out, external agents such as Communists became increasingly viral at the time when scientists revealed the power of viruses in sneaking into and controlling cells, “threatening to corrupt the dissemination of information as they infiltrated the nerve center of the state” (159). The association between the pod and the polio virus reflects such a parallel, and it evokes a national community against communist infiltration by associating it with the national effort and grassroots movements of fighting against the polio virus.

Nevertheless, such an imagined national community also operates on a biopolitical mechanism, and comparing the film’s representation of the “epidemic” with the anticommunist “epidemic narratives” of “germ warfare” controversy in the Korean War reveals that anticommunism functioned as a form of biopower while the medical discourse of “epidemics” reinforces such biopower of the security state. Representation of the people infected, the location

of the outbreak, and the corresponding official response constitute other important aspects in *Body Snatchers*' construct of the epidemic. Santa Mira, the place where the alien seed pods originally strike, is a quintessential white American town. The population is homogeneous and mostly consists of middle-class families that lead a peaceful and apparently quality life. As a result, the epidemic targets a set of people that uniquely represent a privileged American way of life. Such a construct particularly characterizes the evil and volatile nature of the disease as a form of alien invasion and external threat against the healthy organism of the American state. Yet, it also projects similar view on the "baffling" and "frightening" polio virus which "struck hardest in countries with the highest standards of sanitation" although it was present on every part of the world ("Climax of a Stirring Medical Drama"). In essence, the medical discourse in both the film and mainstream stories of polio research assumes the normalcy and healthiness of the national body of the American state which was confronted with the evil and irrationality of an alien threat. Not surprisingly, in *Body Snatchers*, the first reaction of Miles when discovering the town is being taken possession by the pod epidemic is to call the FBI, the institution that is supposed to protect the national body and the symbol of the state power. And the end of the film also offers the audience hope and relief when Miles's story is believed, and staff sheriffs set out to block highways and all traffics while again the FBI is called for emergency.

On the contrary, America's "epidemic narratives" in the Korean War germ warfare controversy took on a different approach when portraying epidemics in Korea and China, transforming the external threat in the American context into an intrinsic internal problem in Communist China and North Korea. The film of *Body Snatchers* was intrinsically intertwined with the history of the Korean War, and the discourse of epidemics is the formal manifestation of such intertwinement. On February 24, 1952, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued an official diplomatic statement accusing America of using bacteriological weapons in North Korea and later in March charged that germ warfare was expanded into the northeastern China, causing severe epidemics in the regions and leading to civilian deaths. Since then China and North Korea

launched a large-scale anti-germ warfare movement. The U.S. government denied the charges and claimed the accusations were “wild tales” and political propaganda. Not only blaming the Communist authorities of brainwashing American POWs to fabricate false testimonies, America also claimed that epidemics in Communist China and North Korea were caused by incompetence and corruption of the Communist regimes. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway’s public information office quickly issued a bulletin, claiming the wild tales of germ warfare were used to conceal the incompetence of Communist medical services. It explained that the Communist government was so lacking in even insecticide supplies that it had to depend on the free market, buying up DDT in Hongkong that “the price of DDT in Hongkong was driven up 120 per cent in a matter of days” (qtd. from “U.N. Ties Epidemic in China to Policy”). The rampage of diseases and massive victims, concluded by the Allied headquarters, were resulted from the failures of Communist regimes to provide proper food supplies, efficient medical services, and the incapability of communist economies to eliminate privation and starvation which lowers civilian resistance to diseases (“U.N. Ties Epidemic in China to Policy”). The construct of diseases that attributes the outbreaks to the Communist regimes’ incompetence thus also constructs an image of the Communist national body and a way of Communist life that is characterized by hunger, poverty, weakness and backwardness. Therefore, the difference between epidemics as internal incompetence in epidemic narratives of germ warfare and epidemics as the alien threat in the *Body Snatchers* ultimately contrasts a malnourished national body and a disadvantaged way of life under Communist regimes against a healthy national body and a privileged way of life of America. Behind the contrast, however, is the same anticommunist perspective and mentality that maneuver to define what is the proper way to administer citizenry and lead the national way of life.

The scientific and medical discourse is deployed to strengthen the anticommunist vision and perspective, but a comparative examination of “epidemic narratives” and the health movement in China in the same period provides an alternative perspective and reveals the way

that America's medicalization of anticommunist policies obscures the huge gap in the standard of living and the distribution of resources between industrialized countries in the West and post-colonial countries in the East. On March 14, 1952, the Central Committee for Epidemic Commission was established in China to lead an anti-germ warfare movement, and later in December the Second National Health Conference put forward the slogan "Be mobilized, pay attention to hygiene, reduce diseases, improve health level, so as to fight against the enemy's germ warfare" (Mao 614).<sup>14</sup> Propelled by the Korean War, it quickly evolved into a nationwide health movement—the "National Patriotic Health Campaign," and the committee changed name to Central Committee of the National Patriotic Health Campaign. Similarly, the health campaign in China at the time was also intertwined with national security, but different from America's state effort and grassroots movement in supporting national inoculation programs and invasive vaccination researches, controlling diseases was largely carried out through low-tech disease prevention measures and elementary personal hygiene education in China at the time. In effect, China's major measures in the health movement were cleaning up garbage, dredging ditches, filling up swales, improving drinking water supplies, and eliminating vermin such as rats, flies, mosquitoes, fleas, lice and bedbugs (Zhou 155-156). Instead of treating the diseases directly, these measures by and large were focused on improving standard of living environment for the general population, and relied principally on existent local wisdom and resources to strengthen indigenous awareness and ability of prevention. The focus on living standard and the limitation of available resources contrast with America's health movement and epidemic controlling response at the time. During the polio epidemics in the 1950s, millions of dollars were invested to research virus typing, developing and cultivating new vaccines and conducting field tests nationwide. Take NIPF as an example, the cost of its polio program in 1954 alone was calculated to amount to \$26, 500, 000. The contrast confirms the underdeveloped medical science and the

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<sup>14</sup> Translated from "动员起来，讲究卫生，减少疾病，提高健康水平，粉碎敌人的细菌战争". From *Jianguoyilai Maozedong wengao* [Manuscripts of Mao Zedong since the Establishment of People's Republic of China]

lack of financial support as well as medical resources in China, but more clearly it reveals a huge gap in health levels and living standards between the industrialized America and a post-colonial new China. Blaming the political system for creating the huge gap certainly overlooks the social, economic and colonial origins of the epidemics. Since the late 19th century, violence and disturbances in anti-colonial movements, civil wars and the Second World War had left a war-torn China that largely lost homeostatic control and health caring of the population, and during the time the average life expectancy of the Chinese population was merely thirty-five years (Watts 273).

Surprisingly, plague, cholera, smallpox and syphilis were abolished successfully in the 1950s and by 1957 life expectancy in China turned to fifty-seven years with the health campaign (Watts 273). The fact confounded the myth of modern invasive medical science. It problematizes the medicalization of anticommunism in the security discourse. Indeed, American intervention and anticommunist programs in Asia were largely carried out in the name of development, targeting poverty and backwardness as the source of the Communist disease. In later anticommunist operations in Vietnam, quarantining villagers from Viet Cong was a major strategy in containing communist influence, and it was focused on the rural areas and provided economic support and government aid to peasants. Dismissing local peasants' resentment and discontent in forced relocation and separation, these programs aimed to strengthen the rural population's ability to resist communist influence through intervention and development. These military strategies reflect the construct of the communist contagion in the Korean War epidemic narratives and its association with the medical discourse seems to legitimize American interventions in Asia. Unfortunately, just like a look into the contrast in health movements reveals, what is repressed by the legitimization of military interventions and development programs is the huge inequalities between industrialized nations and underprivileged post-colonial nations as well as the economic, social and colonial origins of the "communist disease." In the end, seeing the contrast leads us to see the biopolitics behind America's anticommunist

operations and development programs abroad, and exposes the limit and the failed future of America's effort in modernizing and curing Asia of communism in places such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

### **2.3 Gendering Security: The Female Villain in the Atomic Spy Narrative and The Manchurian Candidate (1962)**

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped at Hiroshima and three days later the second exploded at Nagasaki. The immediate killing and elimination shocked the world, and permanently changed perceptions of power and security in the international system. The intimidating power of nuclear weapons gave America a unique sense of power in the world as well as a haunting sense of vulnerability and nuclear anxiety. Especially in the earlier Cold War years, the atomic bomb not only destabilized conventional sense of security which was largely defined by geopolitical boundaries and distance; it also urged a tendency to nationalize nuclear knowledge, guarding the atomic bomb as a national secret in the name of international interest. As reflected in national security documents, the conflation of the international affairs with the domestic increasingly extended the reach of security, highlighting the importance of the home front in the national security state. The famous 1959 "kitchen debate" between Nixon and Khrushchev in particular reveals the relevance of home and family in national security politics. In a direct confrontation between the two nuclear powers, Nixon instead focused on the newest American model of dishwasher that makes "life more easy for our housewives ("Kitchen Debate"). In Nixon's vision, the superiority and security of the American home, as pointed out by Elaine May, "rested on the ideal of the suburban home, complete with modern appliances and distinct gender roles for family members" (19). With increasing anxiety over the atomic bomb, the home and the role of women became increasingly involved in the national security politics, further shaping perceptions of "security" and broadening the reach of security concerns in the private sphere and daily life. In the cultural battleground, the Korean War provided a convenient occasion to foreground the image of the female villain and weave together anxiety over nuclear

weapons and gender roles as well as the national security discourse, as the war helped to establish two quintessential and lasting female villain images in the early Cold War years, Ethel Rosenberg—the atomic spy in the Rosenberg case, and Mrs. Iselin—the communist spy in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962).

Apparently, the Korean War brings together Ethel Rosenberg and Mrs. Iselin. The Rosenbergs were sentenced to death because their crime worse than murder resulted in the loss of American lives in the Korean War. In Judge Kauffman’s words in convicting the Rosenbergs,

Plain deliberate contemplated murder is dwarfed in magnitude by comparison with the crime you have committed. In committing the crime of murder, the criminal kills only his victim. The immediate family is brought to grief and when justice is meted out the chapter is closed. But in your case, I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused the Communist aggression in Korea with the resultant casualties exceeding 50,000 Americans and who knows but that millions more of innocent people may pay the price of your treason. (“Judge Kaufman’s Statement”)

*Manchurian Candidate* was set during the time of the Korean War and the film was released at the height of Cuban Missile Crisis. The storyline also involved a conspiratory twist. The biggest villain Mrs. Iselin is shot to death by her own son for her collusion with the Communist enemies during the Korean War and the communist conspiracy to assassinate the President of the United States. However, compare the image of Ethel Rosenberg constructed in the atomic spy narrative on media with that infamous silver screen Mrs. Iselin a decade later, we can see that the two share many characteristics as the unnatural mother, the politically active female, and the strongminded wife.

This section examines representation of the female villains in the atomic spy narrative and *Manchurian Candidate* (1962) during the 1950s and early 1960s, analyzing the way that gender roles are employed in the national security discourse. In particular, reading the image of Mrs. Iselin in comparison with media representations of Mrs. Rosenberg in the national security

concern of nationalizing the atomic secret exemplifies the way that perceptions of security were increasingly shaped by nuclear anxiety. More importantly, through dramatizing the viciousness of Mrs. Iselin and feminizing the external threats, *Manchurian Candidate* further obscures boundaries and differences between the foreign and the domestic and broadens the understanding and reach of “security” in the private sphere and daily life.

In the 1950s, the trial of the Rosenbergs and the charge of “atomic spying” galvanized America and garnered intense public attention and debates. Yet, Ethel Rosenberg, the wife and female communist spy became the focus in media attention. The *New York Times* even featured an article titled “Plot to Have G.I. Give Bomb Data to Soviet is Laid to His Sister,” although evidence of espionage confirmed the major roles played by her husband Julius Rosenberg and her brother David Greenglass. More importantly, media representation of her crime always paralleled with representation of her female role in the family. She was frequently referred to as the “35-year-old mother of two small children” (“Plot to Have G.I. Give Bomb Data”), and was reported to have “the unusual experience of hearing her brother David testify against her while her husband sat at her side as a co-defendant” (“2 Spy Defendants”). While describing her trial in the court, the narrative stresses her familial identity and suggests her failure in managing a successful home and familial relationship. On the contrary, Julius, the husband, is never mentioned with his role as a father and the fact he was testified against by his brother-in-law.

Physical representation of Ethel further emphasizes her unnaturalness in femininity. In court, the five feet tall and 100 pounds Ethel was the smallest person in the room and she “wore little makeup, almost no jewelry and simple blouse-and-skirt costumes” (“2 Spy Defendants”). As Virginia Carmichael commented, the fifties in America was an era of “virtually unchallenged masculine representational authority—blond mothers dressed in aprons or church clothes, or according to the fashion plates of a burgeoning new postwar industry” (86-87). Her austerity and simpleness in dressing seemed alien to the mainstream female dress code. What’s worse, when questioned in court Ethel “was well prepared to assert her constitutional rights at the first

opportunity” to shy away from questions regarding her communist activities and “frequently knotted her fingers and wrinkles her forehead as she testified” (“Rosenberg’s Wife Shies at Red Query”). The narrative characterizes Ethel as showing determination and calmness, and her refusal to answer questions also represents her as a strongminded woman who ignored the authority of the court. Contrasting with her feminine and delicate body figure, her emotional stability instead highlights her powerful control of the willpower and strengthens a sense of unnaturalness. Also being a member of the Young Communist League and active in the workers’ union at the National New York Packing and Shipping Company, Ethel’s political involvement and activities make her not only by appearance but also by nature an alien to the mainstream gender role assigned to women in the fifties. In the end, the media representation of Ethel Rosenberg as an unnatural and failed female parallels report on her investigation and conviction, as if her crime in endangering the national security was exacerbated by her violation of the female gender role recognized in the American family and society.

In many ways, characterization of the vicious Mrs. Iselin in *Manchurian Candidate* dramatizes the unnaturalness of Ethel Rosenberg in the atomic spy narrative. Also setting in the Korean War period, *Manchurian Candidate* is a classic brainwashing story in which the protagonist, Raymond Shaw, is brainwashed to assassinate the President of the United States. However, the film also presents to us an arch female villain—the controlling mother of Raymond Shaw and the communist spy Mrs. Iselin. Just like Ethel Rosenberg, the film’s characterization of Mrs. Iselin also focuses on her identity as a mother and wife, and her viciousness is represented through her unusual relationship with the male characters in the family, her husband and son. If Ethel has a younger and presumably less mature husband, Julius, who is 33-years old, Mrs. Iselin has a henpecked and ignorant husband who has to follow her opinions and orders. Mrs. Iselin plans for her husband, Senator Iselin, the way he appears before media and is the mastermind behind Senator Iselin’s political career and election campaign. When Senator Iselin

is begging her to fix on the number of communists in the Defense Department he can claim before media, Mrs. Iselin impatiently interrupted him and firmly lectures:

“Well you are going to look like an even bigger idiot if you don’t get in there and do exactly what you are told... Who were they writing about all over this country and what they say? Are they saying are there any communists in the Defense Department? Of course not, they are saying how many communists are there in the Defense Department. So just stop talking like an expert all of a sudden and say what you are supposed to say!” (*Manchuria Candidate*)

The determined look, the impatient body language and the sophisticated rationality behind the words contrast with the meek and begging Senator Iselin. What’s worse, while Ethel Rosenberg was portrayed as an irresponsible and selfish mother who prioritized her political and spying activities over her responsibility to take care of her two young sons, Mrs. Iselin’s is worse than an unnatural mother. She is manipulative and cold blooded who even takes advantages of her son to assassinate her political opponent and at last the President. After she fails to negotiate with Senator Jordan, the beloved father-in-law of Raymond and a steadfast opponent of the Iselins, to support her husband in the nomination campaign, she triggers the brainwashed Raymond to murder Senator Jordan, which also leads to the death of Raymond Shaw’s beloved wife Josie as a collateral damage. Instead of caring and nurturing her son, Mrs. Iselin makes her son an instrument of killing to serve her own interest and leads to a permanently traumatized Raymond Shaw.

A central theme in representing the political identity of Mrs. Iselin involves her duplicity, which obscures differences and complexities in Ethel Rosenberg’s political identity while foregrounding the gender meanings to create a coherent narrative of national security danger. Similarly being identified as a communist spy, Mrs. Iselin’s political identity, however, is characterized with duplicity and shrewdness. Although working secretly for the Communist enemies, Iselin on surface is a fanatic anti-Communist figure who uses her husband to carry out her McCarthyite campaign. Embodying the two extreme political ends and weaving together the

opposing political identities, Iselin herself becomes a volatile and discredited figure. The meaning of her political identity and her identification with ideologies thus become less relevant. Instead, the form and performance of her political involvement becomes highlighted—manipulating her husband to engage in red-baiting while using her son as a Communist brainwashed instrument to kill the President and satisfy her own desire for power. As a consequence, the duplicity of her political identity ironically neutralizes the meaning of her political identity but stresses the female menace to the male characters as well as the state power and security.

Reading Mrs. Iselin with Ethel Rosenberg together, we can see that the characterization of political duplicity essentially dramatizes the gender aspect of the female villain to obscure incoherencies in the national security narrative in the case of Ethel Rosenberg. Differently, the atomic spy narrative represents Ethel Rosenberg as apparently a Communist agent and there “is ample evidence that Mrs. Rosenberg and her husband have been affiliated with Communist activities for a long period of time” (qtd. in “Plot to have G.I. Give Bomb Data to Soviet”). The political identity claimed and constructed in the conviction of the Rosenbergs as well as in the media portraits stress its singularity and determinacy, characterizing Ethel Rosenberg as a leftist activist and steadfast Communist agent. However, underlying the atomic spy narrative there are still textual disruptions pointing to the complexity of Ethel Rosenberg’s identity and her political activism in reality. As explained in the news stories, Ethel Rosenberg was born

at 64 Sheriff Street on the East Side...was the daughter of Barnet and Tessie Greenglass. Her father was born in Russia and her mother came here from Austria. After going to neighborhood schools she completed the course of study at Seward Park High School. She then took six months of instruction in stenography and typing, later studying voice and modern dancing. After her first child was born she took a course in child psychology at the New School for Social Research. (“2 Spy Defendants”)

The brief introduction of Ethel Rosenberg’s life experience, however, implies Ethel’s various identities. We could see that Ethel was growing up on Manhattan’s Lower East Side and

from a poor immigrant family, was an ambitious working-class woman, and was educated and intelligent. More specifically, Ethel Rosenberg in reality came from a Jewish immigrant family. Although she came from a poor family and struggled in workers' unions and strikes, Ethel strived to continue her education. Meanwhile, she aspired to seek an artistic career in theatre and singing, so that she took classes and attended lectures given by members of experimental theater companies. She also found comrades who shared her love for art and music in the union. In effect, she met Julius Rosenberg when she was singing an operatic solo at a benefit for the International Seaman's Union (Antler 203). Her Jewish immigrant experience, her ambition in education and her aspiration for upward mobility, thus were all involved in her identification with the union workers and leftist politics. The complexity of her experience makes her political activism not only the clash between opposing political ideologies but also the divisions of class, ethnicity and race inherent in American society.

However, the multifarious aspects of her identity and meanings of a female political activist are ultimately undermined in the vicious female figure of Mrs. Iselin. From a prominent political family and being the wife of Senator Iselin, Mrs. Iselin is a typical upper-class white woman. Her characterization retains the gender meaning of Ethel Rosenberg but simplifies Ethel's various identities. Together with the deployment of political duplicity to highlight the female manipulation of male characters, a coherent image of female menace is constructed, which largely represses the incoherence and disruptions of Ethel Rosenberg in the atomic spy narrative.

Besides villainizing the female character, *Manchurian Candidate* further maneuvers "gender" and dramatizes the gender meaning in the national security narrative through feminizing the Communist enemies. One of the most infamous scenes in the film is the brainwashing scene where Raymond Shaw and other members in his platoon are hypnotized by Dr. Yen Lo, a Chinese psychiatrist who is demonstrating his brainwashing techniques before an assembly of military leaders from the Communist nations. However, when the film switches

from a God's eye view to the perspective of the brainwashed captives, the scene of brainwashing transforms into a scene in which an assembly of old ladies are listening to a lecture in the women's gardening club, and the vicious Yen Lo lecturing on brainwashing becomes interchangeable with a seemingly amiable lady lecturing on gardening. The scene of brainwashing in the far-away Manchuria thus is displaced onto a domestic scene of the gardening club, dramatically drawing the crisis of Korean war into the physical space within the home land of America. At the same time, the transformation of the Communist enemies into an assembly of white women juxtaposes the Communist conspiracy with the theme of domesticity represented by the ladies' gardening club. The juxtaposition not only metaphorically dramatizes the imminence of external threats; together with the continuous switches between external viciousness and amiable and peaceful domestic atmosphere, it also intensifies and broadens the concern of security into the private sphere, alerting the audience of the vulnerability of domestic life and the disillusionment of peace.

Another feminized enemy figure is the treacherous Chunjin, a Communist agent and North Korean interpreter who led Raymond Shaw's patrol into the Communist trap during the war. After the war, Chunjin is sent to America to keep watch on Raymond Shaw and make sure Raymond functions properly as a Communist sleep agent. Chunjin comes to Raymond and asks Raymond to offer a job. As he eagerly tells Raymond: "I am tailor and mender. I am cook. I drive car. I am cleaner and scrubber. I fix everything. I take message. I sleep at a house of my cousin. I ask for a job with you, because you are a great man who saved my life" (*Manchurian Candidate*). Chunjin's working capacity in largely domestic chores genders his role on screen, and elevates Raymond as a savior of his life further makes himself a feminized character to serve as a foil to the heroic figure of Raymond. At last, Raymond offers Chunjin a job at home, serving as his servant and cook. Introducing the Communist agent into his home to fulfill a feminized role for the bachelor Raymond, the film thus brings the external enemy into the private life of the ordinary American, expanding the reach of security concern into daily life.

From the atomic spy narrative to the brainwashing story of *Manchurian Candidate*, the female villain remains the more prominent national security threat and the gender meaning in the security narrative is increasingly dramatized, reflecting the way that security was perceived in Cold War politics while also demonstrating the expansion of the power of the national security state. Ethel Rosenberg was executed for stealing the national secret, but her conviction and execution seemed ironic in the fact that the “first public disclosure of the composition and functioning of the super-secret Nagasaki-type atomic bomb came yesterday from the smiling lips of a witness in the spy trial before Federal Judge Irving R. Kauffman and a jury in United States District Court” (“Atom Bomb Secret Described in Court”). Judge Kauffman at first excluded spectators and reporters from the testimony for “national security,” but later permitted the testimony to proceed after asking the press to use the information with discretion. Ironically, the national secret of the atomic bomb was publicized widely when Ethel was punished for exposing the national secret. The irony, besides pointing to the ill logic of Ethel’s crime, also reveals the confusion and conflation of boundaries between the public and the private, and the foreign and the domestic, in the growing anxiety over the atomic bomb that shapes the nation’s perception of security. When Judge Kauffman sentenced the the Rosenbergs to death, he contextualized the espionage activities of the Rosenbergs during the 1940s when the United States and the Soviet allied in the Second World War into the Korean War that was regarded as a proxy war between the two former allies. The historicization of the crime during the Korean War indicates the fact that America’s perception of security was dramatically shaken and changed when the Soviet detonated its first atomic bomb in 1949. The claimed responsibility of the Rosenbergs’ in the loss of lives in the Korean War merely followed and strengthened the logic reflected in the political discourse that America’s nationalizing the atomic bomb keeps the international arena safe.

Although in *Manchurian Candidate* the female villain and communist spy’s crime changes, turning from stealing the atomic secret into introducing the communist enemies homeward and conspiring to assassinate the President, nuclear anxiety still loomed behind the

film. Indeed, the film was released in 1962 at the height of U.S.-Soviet hostility during the Cuban Missile crisis. The dramatization of the female viciousness and the gender meanings of the national security narrative was contextualized in the intensified geographical imminence of nuclear weapons and communist influence, thus reflecting a dramatized sense of security violated in the immediate domestic sphere and destabilizing the norm of daily life. In the moment when Mrs. Iselin explains to Raymond his final assassination assignment and her true color is fully disclosed, the real disturbance we see and feel is a heinous communist conspirator but an angry and demonized female image. As Iselin told Raymond that she did not know that her own son would be chosen as the assassin, she vehemently vowed, “One last step and then when I take power, they will be pulled down and ground into dirt for what they did to you, and what they did in contemptuously underestimating me” (*Manchurian Candidate*). More alarmingly, Mrs. Iselin kisses her son on the lips after her vow to revenge. The incestuous scene, together with the vehement look and language of Iselin, dramatically displaces the nuclear anxiety and hostility over a most private scene of the family and an intimate mother-son relationship. Looking from this perspective, the use of the gender and demonization of the female essentially binds closer the national security state and individual families, allowing the boundary crossing and expansion of the security state into the most private sphere.

The gendering of security and the characterization of the female villain thus ultimately function as a rhetorical device for the national security state, constructing a narrative that reflects the changed perception of security in the Cold War politics and dovetails to the expansion of the security state. However, the legacy and impact of the security narrative on women should be reexamined, and the viciousness of Mrs. Iselin would be rediscovered when we recover the Ethel Rosenberg in reality. In her letter to her defense attorney Emanuel H. Bloch after hearing Judge Kauffman’s denial of clemency in 1953, Ethel Rosenberg vented her anger, desperation and pain powerfully against the hypocrisy of justice and the accusation of the national security state:

Striking a pose worthy of Thomashefsky and Barrymore combined, and donning a revoltingly respectable solemnity, calculated to represent himself to the gullible as

a saddened but sternly dutiful guardian of the [NWI] nation's "security," he is actually at great pains to conceal the inherent moral bankruptcy of his position. Hence the shrill and officious trumpeting of a pigmy, whose cowardly violation of the true worthiness of the human spirit, must be expiated by the "slaughter of the innocents"!

...

"...when you see the thing you have done; when it's blinding your eyes, stifling your nostrils, tearing your heart—then then—Oh, God, take this fire that is consuming me—She cried to thee in the midst of it:—Jesus, Jesus. Jesus! She is in thy bosom; and I am in hell for evermore!" And there shall ["shall" CO, NWI] you be, Judge Kauffman, for a crime "worse than murder"! (Ethel Rosenberg Letter 9 Jan. 1953)

Being passionate and emotional, Ethel in her own voice speaks back to the security state and denies the cold-blooded Ethel Rosenberg characterized in the atomic spy narrative in the media; and with enormous fury and resentment, Ethel overlaps with the vehement female villain Mrs. Iselin, overturning the accusation of betraying the state and powerfully chargeing against the betrayal of the state against these "unnatural" females.

In the end, in the first decade following the Korean War, stories in this period typically demonstrate the mechanism of state-private networking in cultural production. Popular stories and films both translated and reinforced the logic of national security through familiar cultural imagery and tropes, cooperating with the state program of institutionalizing national security through garnering recognition and support in the public. This mechanism of cooperation, to a large degree, was perpetuated by the Cold War politics during which nuclear anxiety, ideological struggles, the U.S.-Soviet competition became the dominant theme of the time. It effectively transported into the everyday life of ordinary people the state's key themes of national security ideology that continued to shape later years through the Cold War.

Nevertheless, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of postcolonial movements, the narrative coherence sustained in a bipolar Cold War world began to disintegrate while the drive to revise increasingly challenged the official memory of the Korean War that was

authorized by the national security state. In particular, Korean immigrants moving to the American homeland after the war brought to light the other side of the Korean War from a Korean perspective. The maturation of second generation Korean Americans in the 1990s further stimulated a dramatic increase of literary activities that effectively speak back to the national security state that initiated a “benevolent” and “pre-emptive” war abroad. The next chapter thus focuses on the revision of Korean War stories by second generation Korean Americans in the 1990s, examining ways that storytelling of the Korean War could function as a form of resistance with the changing political and demographic landscape of the American homeland in a post-Cold War time.

### **CHAPTER 3. KOREAN AMERICAN STORYTELLING OF THE KOREAN WAR IN THE 1990S AND THE CHALLENGE AGAINST THE NATIONAL SECURITY STATE**

Although the Korean War faded into the memory of America after the 1950s and was quickly overshadowed by the Vietnam War, the Korean War remains central to Koreans and becomes a repeated theme in Korean American writings. Since the 1990s, a dramatic increase in literary and cultural activities of Korean Americans has appeared in America. In Elaine Kim's words, such phenomenon could be expected in that a sizable generation of Korean Americans fluent in English has come of age in the 1990s, and the demographic shifts in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also created more receptive audience and readers. More importantly, the dramatic event of the Los Angeles riots<sup>15</sup> led to a crisis of representation and identity within the Korean American community (12). After the LA riots of 1992, there came a keenly felt need of visibility and articulating an identity in the Korean American community. Many Korean Americans felt stigmatized and wronged being represented widely in media as greedy merchants who were unsympathetic to the underprivileged African Americans and indifferent to the racial problems of the nation. As a result, different forms and venues have been explored to understand Korean American identity and history and to make their voices heard. Under these circumstances, storytelling of the Korean War again gained momentum since the 1990s, but this time it provides an alternative perspective on the Korean War from Korean American writers.

As Jodi Kim cogently points out, writing the Korean War from the perspective of Korean Americans offers a link between "America's imperial presence over 'there' in Korea and the gendered and racial 'return' of the Korean subject over 'here' to the imperial center" (281). The Korean War, in particular, offers a site for Korean Americans to understand the past and the

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<sup>15</sup> Although the 1992 LA riots started with the Rodney King case, a widespread destruction was targeted at Korean-owned property in the city's south central. The incident became a turning point for Korean and Asian Americans to rethink the racial and ethnic tensions in America, and the identity and citizenship of Asian Americans

present in relation to America, historicizing the racialization of Korean Americans and the continued violence that has been sustained on Korean Americans since America's military involvement in Korea. Indeed, the war half a century ago has largely defined the nature of Korea's uneven relationship with America today. And the war's legacy continues with America's military presence in South Korea and the migration of war refugees, military brides, war orphans, and other types of Koreans in the diaspora. In essence, the reimagining of the Korean War by a new generation of Korean Americans rewrites and revises the cultural memory of the Korean War that was framed in America in the 1950s. At that time in the discourse of national security, the framework adopted a bi-polar Cold War perspective and defined the Korean War as merely a proxy war. In addition, drawing on their experiences in the homeland of America in their reimagining, the Korean American writers also survey the gendered and racial violence embedded in the Korean War and its continuing legacies for both Korea and America, which challenges the ideology of national security that justifies violence and sanctions pre-emptive wars abroad in the name of defending America's homeland security.

In this chapter, three texts by Korean American writers published in the 1990s are focused on, including Helie Lee's *Still Life with Rice* (1996), Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998), and Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996). These texts represent the diversity and differences of positions and perspectives on the Korean War among Korean Americans. Helie Lee comes from a refugee family that escaped North Korea; Susan Choi's story is based on her father's experience under the oppressive South Korea government, while Heinz Insu Fenkl looks back into his camptown life in Korea after he grew up in America as a mixed-race child of a Korean mother and an American GI father. However, in spite of their differences and even contradictions, they all provide alternative perspectives in understanding the history of the Korean War and problematize key ideas in the ideology of the national security state, exemplifying the way that storytelling can revise the cultural memory as framed in national narratives and challenges the ideology of national security. As James Phelan argues, narrative is

a rhetorical act in which “the narrator tells her story to her narratee for her purpose, while the author communicates to her audience for her own purposes both that story and the narrator’s telling of it” (18). Therefore, the stories of the Korean War investigated here are regarded as narrative resistance with political meanings. The stories themselves reveal a different version of the history of the Korean War from the perspectives of war refugees, war prisoners, military prostitutes and war orphans in Korea. Their narration challenges the national security discourse that defines the war as a proxy war from a bipolar Cold War view and claims America’s benevolent presence in Korea.

Indeed, a Korean perspective of the Korean War reveals America’s military involvement in aggravating the tragedies of ordinary Koreans and America’s complicity in creating an oppressive South Korean regime. After Korea’s liberation in 1945, South Korea was governed by the American Military Government (AMG) in Korea and supported an authoritarian Syngman Rhee against popular objections in Korea, and later created and guided the army of the Republic of Korea (ROK). America also reestablished and reinforced the National Police in South Korea, which was originally assembled by the colonial Japan and was notorious for its collaboration with imperial Japan and the repression of the Korean people. As early as in the winter of 1945, discontent among the people was already boiling up and led to the what became known in Korea as the Autumn Harvest Uprising in 1946, during which a general strike and widespread peasant uprising erupted in South Korea against the unpopular Rhee regime and venting dissatisfaction against food shortages, corruption, landlordism, and police oppression. The uprising was denounced by the AMG as a communist insurgency and was ruthlessly suppressed by American troops and the National Police, which reinforced the authoritarian Rhee regime and led to the right-wing authority’s abusive use of power against its own people and any political dissidents (Pratt 244-246). Yet, the suppression failed to contain the spreading communism and further intensified resentment among the people in the South. The popular resentment finally burst into

the commotion in Cheju<sup>16</sup> in 1948, one of the darkest moments in modern Korean history during which more than 160 villages and one third of the island's population were destroyed by the ROK army following American directions to suppress (Pratt 246). It is estimated that over 30,000 Koreans were killed during the incident and the majority were civilians massacred by the ROK army.<sup>17</sup> Such killing and violence all happened in a "preemptive" and "overseas" war beyond the border of America, and was justified under the name of anticommunism and the national security of America.

Meanwhile, these authors' telling of the war experiences are also entangled with their own experiences and desires in a racialized and gendered present in the American homeland, which makes storytelling of the Korean War a way to review the violence in the present in close relation to America's national security programs in Korea in the past. In this chapter, I examine the historical lessons these stories uncover about the colonial and class origins of the Korean War as well as the racial and gender violence perpetuated by America's military presence in Korea. Moreover, my analysis further interprets particular forms of storytelling that are employed by the authors that counter against the key themes of anticommunism, security and dependency in the ideology of national security of America.

The first section focuses on Helie Lee's *Still Life with Rice* (1996), a novel consisting in two levels of storytelling that are based on the author's own experience of discovering the family history and her grandmother's life experiences in Korea. The major part documenting Baek's life in her own voice could be understood as an anticommunist story which reveals the deprived life

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<sup>16</sup> "Cheju" is the former name of today's Jeju island in South Korea. Before the year 2000 when the Seoul government changed the official Romanization of *han-geul*, "Jeju" was spelled "Cheju". However, I use the spelling "Cheju" here in order to be consistent with Susan Choi's novel that uses "Cheju."

<sup>17</sup> The estimation of civilian casualties varies widely depending on the sources as well as different definition of the incident's time of duration. According to historian Seong-nae Kim, the number may vary from 14,000 to 80,000, but taking into account of unreported deaths and people missing, it is generally agreed that over 30,000 died in the incident. Yet, according to The Jeju 4.3 Incident Investigation Report, the official report of the first 3-year nationwide investigation released in 2003, identified that the Incident was originated in a shooting incident in March 1, 1947 and officially ended in September 21, 1954. It estimated that 25,000-30,000 died on the first stage from 1948 to the end of 1949, not to mention the loss of life in the following years.

under the communist administration in Northern Korea. Through historicizing Baek's experience in the colonial history of Korea through the 20th century, I argue that Baek's anticommunist perspective is insufficient and political in that an anticommunist perspective creates an order of seeing that makes a hyper-visible repressive North Korea while at the same time obscures the colonial violence and class division that forebode the Korean War. Yet, focusing on the narrative voice and authorial perspective of the author Helie Lee that are also employed in the storytelling and drawing on extratextual evidence of Lee, I further argue that a subversive subtext embedded in the storytelling offers an alternative way of seeing that reveals the racial violence of the Korean War and problematizes the credibility and sufficiency of Baek's way of seeing and narration. Such an alternative way of seeing challenges the narrative coherence of the anticommunist storytelling, and destabilizes an anticommunist framework that is unable to understand the racial significance of the Korean War and thus inadequate to provide a meaningful reference to the present Korean Americans in the American homeland.

The second section examines Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998), a novel that fictionalizes her father's experience during the Korean War and his migration to America as a foreign student. Choi's depiction of the Korean War could be understood as a revisionist history of the war, which focuses on the life in South Korea and reveals the oppression of the South Korean regime and America's military involvement and complicity. Focusing on her spatial writing of the war experience, in particular the bombed landscape of Korea and the space of the prisoner camp, I argue that her spatial imagination of the Korean War reveals the logic of the security state in abstracting differences and distorting perceptions of security. In addition, analyzing Choi's peculiar spatial juxtaposition of South Korea and the American South as well as the bombed landscape of Korea and Chang's tortured body, I argue that Choi's spatial writing counters against the security logic of the national security state by revealing the Korean War's legacy on the political culture and character of the American state. Further, her spatial re-

imagination attempts to offer an alternative material ground to perceive security and understand the violence of America's security programs abroad.

The third section reads Heinz Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996), a biographical novel which recounts Insu's childhood in the American camptown in South Korea in the 1960s and his vision and dreams of specters in the camptown. As a mixed-race child of a Korean camptown mother and a German American GI father stationed in South Korea, Fenkl's novel exemplifies the way the marginalized mixed-race camptown children speak back to America. I argue Fenkl's memories of his camptown life in South Korea illustrates the way the Korean War does not end for Koreans through the violence sustained by America's military presence in Korea. More importantly, America's military presence in Korea brought up and reinforced the racial and gender violence in Korea, creating the camptown hierarchy of life and death. It reveals that Korea's dependency on America is ultimately a manifestation of the necropower of the national security state of America, and the fantasy of America's good life is ultimately the source of the tragedy and dearly cost of many camptown women and mixed-race children. Yet, through the ghosts and spectral encounters in the novel, I further argue that Fenkl's writing of the camptown ghosts and his ghostly experiences represent a formal resistance against the necropower of America. The return of the deceased and the spectral hauntings at last destabilize a linear temporality that sanctions the amnesia of past violence and the sacrifice of lives, revealing the violence perpetuated by South Korea's attachment to America and the American good life. In addition, the ghost experiences as represented in Fenkl's novel in essence offer an alternative epistemological mode to the dichotomous demarcation between life and death that is defined by the camptown necropolitics. This alternative epistemological mode also allows the possibility of freedom from the attachment to the fantasy of the good life in that through crossing the line between life and death, Fenkl's writing of the ghostly experiences enables us to re-know the living world in its immediacy and materiality while at the same time

forces us to affectively experience and comprehend the suffering and pain of the sacrificed and repressed in its intensity.

### **3.1 The Ordering of Seeing and the Betrayal of Narrative Voice in Helie Lee's *Still Life with Rice* (1996)**

Borrowing memories of the previous generation and speaking for the past with hindsight, the second-generation Korean Americans narrate the Korean War through an filtered perspective and involve their storytelling in layers of narration. The employment of narrative voices and perspectives, therefore, become an important element in their writing of the Korean War. In particular, Helie Lee's *Still Life with Rice* involves the author's own storytelling with the protagonist's storytelling and the major part is Lee's writing of her grandmother's story in the first person retrospective perspective. The novel consists of two stories-the author Lee's own story of discovering her Korean Grandmother Baek's legends in the past, and Baek's remembering of her own experience in Korea while she is interviewed by her granddaughter Lee in her immigrant home in downtown Los Angeles. The opening chapter is a brief account of Helie Lee's own story of searching for identity in Korea and China and her discovery of her Grandmother Baek's legendary stories through the Korean War. Then it quickly shifts into Baek's voice, in a form close to oral history, recounting her life under the Japanese colonial control and the turbulence and loss during the Korean War. She recounts her birth and marriage into the yangban<sup>18</sup> families and her comfortable life in the early 20th century. Then intensified Japanese oppression during the Second World War forces the family to move to China. In 1945 the family came back to the northern Korea to settle on a great piece of land which was bought from the great fortune made from her opium business in China. But from then on, we begin to see the unfolding of Baek's tumultuous life: first the land was nationalized and redistributed in North Korea, and the family suddenly lost their prestige; then the war broke out, and as a

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<sup>18</sup> Yangban refers to the ruling class in dynastic Korea, literally meaning "the two orders." It mainly consists of two government groupings, the civil servants and the military officials, which represents Koreans' ideal of the "scholarly official" in Confucianism.

Christian, Baek depicts the increasing religious persecution and the pressure of military drafting in the North, which forced the family to flee to South Korea. Baek's memory of the journey of war refugees is the most heartbreaking. Separated from her husband and her oldest son, Baek alone took her four young children on the road in Korea's storming winter. Walking day and night without food in the severe cold and constantly alerted to bombing and gunfire, the refugees also had to stamp desperately on each other to cross the bridge or get on the train for a life chance. It was sheer luck and faith, that in the end Baek successfully reached Pusan and reunited with her other family members.

Baek's life writing gives a rare look into the life in North Korea and the vicissitude of Korean society through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but her depiction of the despotic government in the North and the outcries against its religious oppression also mark her story as an anticommunist story which creates a hierarchy of seeing that defines what is visible and invisible. Focalized through Baek in the past and in her first-person perspective, the narrative makes us vividly experience her grievance of family upheaval after Korea's liberation in 1945 and her arduous journey running away from the North. The family grievance is seen through the contrasted life before Liberation and after Liberation in North Korea: while restricted by the patriarchal Korean tradition, Baek's memory of her childhood and womanhood through the 1910s to the 1930s is largely a prestigious and abundant life, almost innocent of war, hunger and poverty. As a girl, she was safely insulated from fears, worries and hunger in her father's great fortune and love, and "[t]houghts of rice cakes and mischievous games filled my days" (Lee 30). Luckily, she was married into another rich yangban household with an overstuffed dowry-quilts and bundles of fine silk imported from China, and various gold and jade jewels, a generosity which would secure the kindness of her in-laws and the happiness in a new household. We also experience in detail her luxurious family life in China from the late 1930s to the early 1940s when they moved to China to escape the Japanese control and started their oil business and then the opium business and the restaurant business. They collected great wealth: "Money bulged from every crack, hole,

and panel. It was under our feet, above our heads, and in our bedding” (Lee 122). Their life was safe and their businesses prospered through bribery and cultivating friendship with the Japanese police, and so their restaurant could hold Baek’s 5-year-old daughter’s birthday party—“the liveliest and grandest party the town had ever seen. The room was strewn with wildflowers and colorful paper lanterns, and food and drink flowed freely for all” (Lee 130). And the scenes of hustle and binging, the splattering of grease and fat, the displays of various exotic dishes and sauces, all let us see and feel the way that the restaurant was fully stocked and prosperous.

But a watershed moment quickly came after Korea’s liberation, and Baek returned to her home country from China. Baek’s later account of a degraded life, and more importantly, the degraded humanity, forms a clear-cut contrast to her previous life and thus exposes directly the cruelty and tyranny of the communist regime in the North. While at first Baek’s family was living a fairy-tale life through taxing farmers, the communist government began to nationalize the farmland, and their life was toppled down from nobility and comfort: they lost their castle and land and moved to live in a crowded chamber without enough heat. Once prestigious, Baek’s family were now beaten by policeman and lived in lowliness. More pitiful was the deformed humanity and virtue that were held invaluable. Baek’s husband, once a nobleman of aspiration, became a drunkard helplessly lamenting his loss. On the street, there were more beggars who were landowners and honorable men, falling into disgrace and cloaked in rags now. Even Baek, who was once a woman of virtue and the model of wife and mother, lost her patience in poverty and misfortune in mistreating the aged grandparents who were supposed to be cared for and respected.

The life-altering losses and changes make us see the tyranny of the communist regime, but only reading Baek’s story in Korea’s colonial history can we understand what is made unseen. Baek’s insulated and abundant life through the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century was also the period that Korea was quickly colonized by the imperial Japan. In 1905 Japan had already taken effective control of Korea when the Protectorate Treaty was forced upon Korea. Then in 1910,

the imperial Japan annexed Korea as a fully-fledged colony with the Treaty of Annexation. Since then, Korea was ruled under imperial oppression and the terror of the Japanese military police, and entered its turbulent modern history in violence and struggle for national independence. Particularly, in 1919 one of the earliest Korean mass movements against Japanese colonization, the March First Movement, broke out nationwide. Tragically, the Japanese administration undertook a yearlong bloody suppression, during which about 7,000 people were killed by the Japanese police and soldiers, and 16,000 were wounded and approximately 46,000 people were arrested, of whom some 10,000 were tried and convicted (“March First Movement”). However, to Baek, who was born in 1912, the time was only pitiful for the passing of her childhood freedom and thus what we see in her account is only a passing comment that “[b]efore I knew it, my seventh, eighth, and ninth birthdays came and went” (Lee 33).

Similarly, colonial violence is at most a fuzzy background in the scenery of abundance and prestige in Baek’s womanhood in the 1930s, and Baek’s rosy account belies the concrete suffering of ordinary Korean people since its annexation and makes the social cleavage and division of the colonial Korean less visible. Since the March First movement, Japan revised its colonial policy. The colonial administration strengthened the yangban landholding system and solidified the interest of the old elites to secure their cooperation in disciplining the ordinary peasants in Korea (Cumings 151). Under Japanese control, the amount of rice crop exported to Japan rose from 4.7 percent, to 22 percent in 1919, and 51.9 percent in 1928 (Pratt 213), worsening food shortage in Korea and life of ordinary Koreans under the dual exploitation of the yangban landlords and the imperial Japan. Baek remembers that period when she had to scavenge for chicken bones and wilted vegetables in the kitchen, but that was due to the exotic and paranoid Grandmother who controlled

our daily consumption. Once a day she took a stick into the storage room to measure the rice supply. She vigilantly kept count on the number of chickens and pigs slaughtered, paranoid that one would land in my stomach. We ate like peasants, although the storage room brimmed with rice, millet, barley, corn, and beans. (Lee 80)

Apparently, the marked difference that class decides the way of living in the colonized Korean society was overshadowed by the exotic Grandmother in Baek's eye, and the generalized hunger and suffering of many ordinary people was missing. And Later in the most turbulent years of late 1930s and early 1940s when imperial Japan was expanding and war was raging in East Asia, Baek's memory of her diasporic life in China was glittering. In that period of Baek's life, we see details of prosperity, abundance and wealth, missing the reality of destitute life in China during the anti-Japanese war movement.

In the end, Baek's storytelling reflects the visual politics of anticommunism that makes hyper visible an authoritarian communist North Korea that forced family separation and national division but obscures the colonial history and similar violence in South Korea and America's anticommunist operations in dividing the nation. However, the way of seeing defined by anticommunism is questioned by an authorial voice providing alternative seeing in Baek's narration. Moreover, comparing the two narrative voices in different layers of storytelling, which are Lee's own storytelling and Baek's storytelling, a subtext of tension and conflict remains under the surface narrative of complete compromise between generations and between the past and the present. Such tension and conflict ultimately problematizes the narrative credibility of *Still Life*, and points to the essential inadequacy of an anticommunist way of seeing.

A most revealing scene is the novel's depiction of bombing civilians and refugees, which is also one of the most violent and controversial incidents for America and the U.N. forces in Korea. In retrospect, Baek recounts her encounters with the B-29 bombings:

Each mile we passed rubble and ashes. Why the bombers wasted their destruction on us fleeing refugees, I did not understand. What threat could we possibly be? I learned later why the UN air forces bombed us. The Reds, disguised as refugees, were hauling artillery and food supplies on horse-drawn carts and chiges. It seemed impossible the planes miles above could detect a Red when I could not see them walking among us. (Lee 220)

Baek's anticommunist perspective sided her with the view of America and the U.N. forces, excusing their undifferentiated bombing on civilians. Not only dehumanizing communists, her retrospective voice also misses the racial significance embedded in the U.N. bombing which took Korean life as disposable in their anticommunist cause. Nevertheless, a bird's eye view of the bombing scene also reveals "a museum of slaughter" in which "[c]orpses twisted in a multitude of poses like the armless, headless Greek statues. Blood squirted from ripped limbs and punctured wounds, signing their final bloody signatures on the snow. Crying babies lay pinned underneath their wasted mothers. No one stopped to rescue them" (221). The view of horror is unveiled by a bird-eye view of the bombing scene and is presented by an omniscient authorial voice that dramatizes the violence and cruelty of the undifferentiated military bombing. It presents an alternative viewing and contrasts with Baek's voice, characterizing Baek as uncritical and insensitive to the devaluation of the lives of ordinary Korean people in the anticommunist war.

The problem of race also betrays the surface narrative of complete compromise between Lee and Baek as well as the reconciliation within an immigrant family, disclosing a repressed racial consciousness in Lee's narrative voice and the volatile nature of a narrative coherence that is framed in anticommunism. Baek's storytelling continues to tell her family's immigration to America after the war where the children "will never have to fear war" (Lee 299) and Baek's monologue ends the novel when describing her contented life in downtown Los Angeles in 1991. The narrative reflects the familiar theme of the "American Dream," coupling her tale of the Korean War with a familiar cultural narrative of successful immigration into America. The narrative is confirmed by the narrative voice of Lee, who claims in her own storytelling that after her trip of discovery the "emptiness and chaos I once felt is now filled with the past I rejected and the future I will passionately embrace" (Lee 10), which suggests a complete reconciliation within the immigrant Korean family and between the past and the present. At the same time, such total reconciliation is also supported by the narrative voice of Baek in her monologue

revealing the major part of *Still Life* is Lee's presenting of her interview with Baek. The form of interview establishes a dialogical relationship between Lee the narratee and Baek the narrator in which Baek the witness is conferred with complete subjectivity and authority while Lee remains subjugated and the listener. Therefore, on the surface the narrative voice of Lee and the narrative voice of Baek respond to each other and form a narrative coherence between Lee's story of discovering her identity as a Korean American granddaughter, Baek's anticommunist story of the Korean War, and their story of successful immigration and familial reconciliation.

Nevertheless, the racial insensitivity revealed in Baek's narrative voice ultimately marks the unbridgeable difference between Baek and Lee whose storytelling reveals her experience as a Korean American and her concrete experience of racialization and racial encounters in America. While claiming her final reconciliation with her Korean family and legacy, we can hardly miss the racial significance of Lee's own storytelling. Before her reconciliation she has always hated being "Oriental/Asian." When she was young, she thought she could be white:

My light-eyed friends were my role models, people I emulated. I copied their dress, manners, and Valley girl speech in order to lose myself and fit in. Like all the other "normal" teenage girls, I cheered in thigh-high miniskirts, ditched classes, and bleached my black hair and tanned my yellow skin to conceal the last traces of my Koreanness. In college, I lived in a rowdy coed dormitory and pledged little sister to a fraternity. And I had even bigger nontraditional dreams for the future that included none of my past, my mother's past, my grandmother's past, and hundreds of other generations of purebred Koreans before them. The bright lights of Hollywood—its psychedelic energy and rebel men—were more enticing. (Lee 12)

Lee's experience of emulating the white girls to fit in suggests her difficulties and conflicts growing up as a Korean American girl who constantly desire inclusion and recognition by the mainstream America. Her rejection of her Korean family results from a racial stigmatization of Asians that is also directly reflected in Lee's first encounter with Korea when she landed in Seoul to discover her Korean legacy: "Through the window, the city of Seoul whizzes by. Although I envisioned thatched rooftops, rice paddies, and war refugees eating dogs

like on the TV show *M\*A\*S\*H*, to my surprise this place is like any congested metropolis in America: subways, skyscrapers, rush-hour traffic, McDonald” (15). Lee acquired her misconception of Koreans through mainstream popular culture in America, which implies that the bias against Koreans is not a personal issue but also a social reality and her conflict with her Korean families is not only a family matter but also a result of the structural problem of American society in overall. Reading Lee’s own storytelling thus unmask the significance of race and the racial experience in America in constituting her identity, which contrasts with the racial insensitivity which is reflected in Baek’s narrative voice and framed in Baek’s anticommunist perspective. Consequently, the claim of complete compromise and reconciliation becomes an uneasy one that suggests a repressed racial consciousness. It tells the differences in the narrative voices of Baek and Lee, making the narrative coherence of *Still Life* questionable and an anticommunist framework unreliable and inadequate.

In the end, the successful reconciliation of the immigrant family is a volatile one, and the racial consciousness repressed in the surface story betrays a subtext of tension and failure. The tension ultimately emerged and Lee confessed her failure to embrace fully the “identity” which she first claimed in *Still Life*. As she acknowledged later, “it was naïve of me to think I could just unilaterally wipe out my ancestral heritage and then reinstate it at a whim...I failed to see that somewhere in between being Korean and being American, there was a place of identity for me” (“Disassembling Helie” 137). The place between is a place of cultural as well as racial encounters, and Lee’s revelation speaks to the inadequacy of a full reconciliation that repressed her racial experiences as a Korean American and marks the essential difference between Baek and herself. The narrative coherence of *Still Life*, thus, becomes questionable, and the framework of anticommunism is challenged and discredited for its inadequacy to see critically the racialization of the Korean life in relation to America.

### 3.2 The Logic of the Security State and the Spatial Imagination of Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998)

Space and mobility constitute another key aspect of narrating and understanding the Korean War for Korean Americans. The Korean War experience from a Korean perspective inevitably evokes memories of escape and exodus from north to south as well as from Korea to foreign lands. Frequently, the Korean American writing of the Korean War represents the transformation of the landscape in Korea during the war through their refugee trajectories and documents the changing social relationships with their transnational migrations in search of security and reestablishing a life. Such spatial imagination reveals the lived experience of Koreans shaped by America's national security programs. One of the most renowned Korean War novels is Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998), a novel based on her father's past in Korea and tells the story of a young Korean man, Chang, who goes through the horror of the Korean War in South Korea and migrates to America to study in the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee. Moving back and forth between Chang's war experience in South Korea and his encounter with the American South in the present, the narrative gradually unfolds a Korea destroyed by the war and the anticommunist persecution, and exposes in the end Chang's terrifying experience in the prisoner camp during the war which leaves him permanently traumatized and incapable of starting a new life. Yet, the undifferentiated destruction of Korea represented in the novel in essence reveals a logic of abstraction and erasing differences. It speaks to the novel's detailed depiction of the prisoner camp, and exemplifies Giorgio Agamben's rumination on the prisoner camp as the spatial arrangement of the security state under the name of crisis. Looking into the juridico-political structure through the history of camps, Agamben points out that the camps are born out of a state of exception and the martial law, which can be clearly seen in the Nazi internment that was classified by jurors as "a preventive police measure insofar as it allowed individuals to 'be taken into custody' independently of any criminal behavior, solely to avoid danger to the security of the state" (167). According to Agamben, the nexus between the state of exception and the camp is constitutive of

the camp as a space of exception in which exclusion and exception of “lawfulness” is paradoxically included, and the norm, or legality, becomes indistinguishable from the exception (168-170). Hence Choi’s storytelling also makes visible the logic of national security state in abstracting differences and distorting perception of security through her spatial imagination. Nevertheless, through a narrative structure that juxtaposes South Korea and the American South as well as Chang’s bodily experience in the prisoner camp and the war-torn Korea, Choi ultimately re-spatializes the Korean War. In her writing, she reformulates a new material ground for us to see and perceive the violence and pain imposed by the national security state.

In *The Foreign Student*, Choi, in a critical and authoritative tone, portrays the transformation of the landscape of Korea under America’s scorched-earth policy: “Anything that could be located, within a generous margin of error, was intensively bombed... Towns and factories were bombed flat, burnt out, plowed under, removed from the map” (186). At the same time, the South Korean National Police embarked on the anti-guerilla course under the auspice of American forces, denuding the countryside, setting up internment camps and relocating villagers from the interior to the outside. The undifferentiated bombing and the total destruction of villages were justified in the name of protection and national security. In particular, on the island of Cheju<sup>19</sup> the protagonist Chang witnessed in detail the way that the spatial logic of national security not only transformed the landscape of Cheju but also changed the way of living of Cheju residents.

When Chang arrived on Cheju at the time the Korean War was raging on the peninsular, and the small island fifty miles off the coast of South Korea was a lifeless landscape. There were only girls, women and cripples left behind. Young, healthy and strong men had

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<sup>19</sup> Cheju is an island 50 miles off the mainland South Korea. It bears the one of the darkest page in modern Korean history, the Cheju Incident. The incident is also known as the 4.3 Incident, which started on April 3, 1948 when an armed uprising led by South Korean Labor Party (SKLP) broke out and the local police stations were targeted and attacked. The uprising triggered a series of government counter-riot operations and continued rebellions on the island, resulting in a massive death toll and destruction of properties. Shockingly, the majority of the victims were civilians massacred in the government operations. The incident forms an important part in Choi’s novel.

vanished from the island, as they had been either drafted, executed by the South Korean National Police, or hiding themselves in the darkness of caves and tunnels in the mountains. In order to starve guerrillas hiding in the mountain, villages in the interior were deserted, trees were cut down, and villagers were relocated to the coastline “where they perched between the choppy tide in front and the uncultivable hills that rose steeply behind” (82). When the war was intensified, the situation on Cheju dramatically deteriorated that death was even normalized as a spectacle of the living world in which people became the living dead and performed their own funerals:

Cheju’s villages were emptied of all their remaining boys, young men, older men who had no trouble walking, all of them rounded up by the American MPs and the National Police and gathered into blinking, silent crowds, straw sleeping mats or wool army-issue blankets rolled up and tied to their backs. Small children and women and the very old gathered in a crowd opposite and also stood wordlessly, a strange reflection, to watch them walk away in motley columns, without looking back. No one expected them to return. Their departure was a funeral, every man wearing or carrying his most cherished item of clothing, the thing he was willing to enter the next world attired in. (304)

Under such circumstances, the boundary between life and death becomes indistinguishable and a man like Chang who is not taken or executed is either a ghost or a beast. Indeed, to escape police hunting for communists Chang learned to give up his existence as a human being and lived as a beast: being forced out from caves and shrubs by hunger, Chang looped “coyote-style through the streets of the coastal villages, emerging only after dusk. The torn hem of his coat trailed. His ears were always pricked for the sounds of a patrol, his nose high in the air, leading him” (303). Chang’s transformation into a beast exemplifies that everyday existence on Cheju shrank into a condition of “bare life.”<sup>20</sup> Living is practically minimized to the extent that humanity and dignity are beyond reach and human life becomes indistinguishable from the bestial life with all his rights stripped away. Either living as the dead or living as the

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<sup>20</sup> The use of the term is based on Giorgio Agamben’s theory, referring to a status of life that all rights are striped off from the subject that “anyone can kill him without committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual flight or a foreign land.” See, Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, p. 183.

beast, the way of living for ordinary Korean people on Cheju was reduced by the war and the national security state in hunting for communist suspects, and their living was turned into an abstracted form of existence indistinguishable from death and non-existence. The scenery manifests the power and violence of the national security state as well as its logic of abstraction and undifferentiation in bringing out destruction and pain.

Such logic finally expresses itself in the extreme form of torture in the prisoner camp and marks of unbridled violence the national security state can release on its own citizens. Finally, the delirious and starving Chang on Cheju was caught by the National Police as a communist spy and sent to a detention center. The place was converted from a school building into a prisoner camp where “[t]ruck loads of captured guerillas and other prisoners of war from all across the peninsula were arriving at the school, naked from the waist up, roped at the ankles” (310). A classroom became a torture room where Chang was hung and cuffed, and for days the soldiers kicked him and played tricks on him in order to force he to admit he was a spy—“He rose again, stood saluted , fell, was questioned, kicked idly, made to stand” (306). Then he was forced to eat putrefying meat and cattle feed. Pain was deliberately and viciously doubled, and on the ninth day “his jaws were held open, and the officer took a straight razor and made small cuts all over his tongue; then he was given a bowl of salt” (309). The versatility of torture finally left a broken Chang who totally lost control of his body, with tongue, fingers, wrists, and all limbs damaged and fractured. To survive, he had to forget his body, mimicking his torturers “making himself deaf to his body’s cries for help” (309). At last, the collapsed Chang was made to confess the crime of espionage and sign his name. The extent of inhumanity and police violence is astonishing in the camp, and it seems absurd that Chang’s torturers made great effort in inflicting pain on Chang, without any consideration of lawfulness and justice, just to elicit a signed legal conviction of a crime that Chang never made. But as Giorgio Agamben contemplates, since its foundation the “camp”—a political space that gives a permanent spatial arrangement to the station of exception—is a space of paradox that “bare life and juridical rule enter into a

threshold of indistinction” (169). Chang’s camp came into being in what Su-Kyoung Hwang calls the prolonged state of emergency of South Korea between 1948 and 1953, during which successive martial laws were announced under the name of national security against communism since the Cheju Incident (2). The extent of torture demonstrates the severity of violence and violation of civil rights imposed by the security state of South Korea, reflecting the logic of national security that abstracts differences of inclusion and exclusion as well as legality and illegality. Under such circumstance, the irony in Chang’s “signed conviction of crime” becomes plausible in that the police power becomes indistinguishable from the juridical power, and police violence is legitimized and normalized as a process of lawfulness.

Nevertheless, by juxtaposing jarring spaces between South Korea and the American South, and the tortured body of Chang and the bombed Korean landscape, the storytelling by Choi also formally resists the logic of the security state. The narrative validates a subversive spatial framework to lineate the discursive racialization of Korean Americans and materializes the pain and violence inflicted by America’s national security programs in Korea. The story of Chang is structured in a montage narrative of the past and the present, intertwining Chang’s history in South Korea during the war with his interracial romance with a Southern white woman named Katherine as well as the social landscape of the American South in the 1950s. The juxtaposition of the “Two Souths,” as argued by Christal Parikh, provides an alternative vantage through which the Korean War is adumbrated in terms of the burgeoning civil rights movements in America in the 1950s, creating a racial triangulation in which the Asian/American relationality becomes a symptom of the domestic binary racial relations between the blackness and the white (48). Indeed, Chang’s arrival in Tennessee is an unfamiliar scene both for Chang and Americans. Chang finds the social protocol in Sewanee is confounding: in his first formal dinner when he greeted and shook hands with the black table servant stationed near him, he was told his gesture of politeness and casualness with the colored servants was inappropriate (Choi 15). For the Southerners, Chang is an unusual presence in the landscape when restriction on

Asian immigration was yet to be lifted in 1965 and Asian immigrants were less to be seen in the Southern countryside. People would welcome and smile at him, but uneasiness would always rise up whenever Katherine and he show up together: constant and unshy gaze fall upon Chang as if “watching a ship come in” (37) when he accompanied Katherine to a gas station for gas and a drink; When they are dining together in the restaurant, attention and tension gather around Chang tacitly—“[t]here was the tension of careful indifference from the tables nearest them, and steady observation from those farther away” (146). Chang’s awkwardness and inappropriateness thus defamiliarizes the conventions of racial binary and social codes in the South, highlighting the racial logic and social hierarchy in the landscape.

Yet, by juxtaposing South Korea and the American South in the context of the Korean War, the novel also provides an alternative view on the racialization of Asian Americans by the logic of the security state and the legacy of the Korean War on the character of the American state. As a sponsored foreign student and war refugee, Chang himself understands the hospitality of his American host and his corresponding responsibility as a guest:

They thought of him as a romantic castaway whose presence among them confirmed everything that was best about themselves... Chuck understood this line of thinking very well, and he understood what was required of him. At Sewanee he embarrassed no one with excessive gratitude, and so each act of charity toward him became an isolated instance of good manners. (145)

The expectation and responsibility of gratitude suggest that Chang’s presence in America functions as a spectacle of America’s charity and renders him always indebted and inferior to his American hosts, although his arrival in America is imbricated with America’s military actions in Korea. The uneven relationship makes Chang only find solace and freedom with the black kitchen staff through a self-imposed segregation after he admits an uncommitted theft and breaks the contract of sponsorship. Stigmatized and being free from obligation, Chang was finally able to join and be accepted by the kitchen crew: “They ate sitting there, gripping sweaty bottles of beer that the president set aside for them. They put off cleaning up for quite a while, lingering to

smoke, gaze, exchange well-worn comments on the beauty of the day. The kind of talk that carried nothing but their feeling for each other” (324). The irony that freedom and true immersion are realized through segregation reveals that Chang’s invitation into the American home land is in essence a form of exclusion.

Such exclusion also explains the irony that the Japanese American community is turned into Chang’s adopted community. In his childhood Chang used to be beaten by the Japanese in colonial South Korea, and the novel’s revisiting of his war experience reveals the war’s origin in the colonial violence. But in America he began to speak Japanese again, the official language imposed in schooling by the imperial Japan, and he was respected among Japanese immigrants as a scholar, the traditionally elevated social role in East Asia but can hardly be dreamt of by those Japanese Americans. Many of these Japanese Americans had been interned during the Second World War and now “struggled mightily and viciously and independently each day” (247). Similarly, “[a]rriving Filipinos were eagerly courted by Japanese massage-house proprietors, and Japanese teenagers rode the EL to Chinatown to work in the restaurants” (244). The discursive history of war, colonialism and American national security is drawn together and coheres in the life of Asian American community. Differences between previous colonizers and the colonized are abstracted under the same name of Asian Americans and in the shared experience of exclusion in the American home land; conflicts of colonialism and imperialism are assimilated in a narrative of the racial melting pot. But by looking at Chang’s experience in America in comparison with his life in South Korea, the novel situates Chang’s racialization as an Asian American in the context of the Korean War. The re-contextualization makes visible that Chang’s racial identity and encounters in America is intimately shaped by the logic of security state that invites Chang into a home land where he is eventually segregated and regarded inferior. The ironies tells the security state’s abstraction between inclusion and exclusion, and the construction of a integrated “Asian American community” speaks to colonial violence repressed and obscured by the security state.

Meanwhile, Choi's intermingling Chang's war experience with his interracial romance with Katherine also creates a literary scaffolding that counters the racialization. Writing on the Southern landscape and its taboo against racial miscegenation is familiar in the literary traditions of the region; at the same time, "foreignness" and representing the Asian American community are also typical in Asian American literature. Juxtaposing and intermingling the two thus defamiliarizes the Asian American writers who are expected to write in a "marked way" and about their "special territory" (Tang "Chatting with Choi"), destabilizing the racial identity embodied on the novelist Choi and forms a formal resistance to the racialization.

Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of the two Souths reveals more than the racial significance of America's security logic. It also implicates the way that the violence initiated in Korea could be brought into the American homeland and leaves implication on the political character and culture in the domestic sphere of America. The depiction of America's undifferentiated bombing and the scorched-earth policy in Korea already explains the extent of casualness of America in taking into consideration of Korean civilian lives. However, the representation of the civilian spy used by the American army further exposes the tragedy of Korean refugees and the intentionality of America in imposing civilian casualties. To gather information on North Korean communists and their positions, American army intelligence officers recruited refugees for the formidable task:

Northern refugees who were recruited, starving, sick, and often partially gangrenous, were flown back over enemy lines into the countryside they had just emerged from and air-dropped in the middle of the night, to walk back again. If the spy wasn't shot by the KPA while dangling in his parachute from a tree, or while making his way south, or by ROKA troops at the front, or by National Police patrols behind it; and if he didn't starve, or freeze, or become lost, or perish in some other way, but actually returned to Eighth Army Headquarters in Seoul and provided a coherent account of what he had seen, he was given a small payment and asked if he wanted to go again... Ten or twenty were dropped every night, and of these, an average of one made it back. He was often injured and addled, acutely sleep-deprived. (186-187)

The figure of the civilian spy not only suggests the disposable life of Koreans in the eye of America. It demonstrates a suspension of civil rights and humanity in the justification of anticommunism. Consequently, the Korean refugee becomes a most cost-efficient answer in the dangerous war intelligence task and in securing the national interest and security of America.

Such intentionality and willingness on civilian casualty intensified violence of the Korean War and aggravated the tragedy of war refugees and ordinary civilians. Indeed, Chang's traumatic experiences on Cheju and in the prisoner camp are interlaced with America's military involvement in Korea. The prisoner camp and the South Korean National Police and soldiers who tortured him were all American products as South Korea was under the guidance of the American Military Government in Korea politically and militarily. America not only supported an authoritarian Syngman Rhee but also carved out the South Korean army from "the American idea of expedient slaughter, the American idea of order" (Choi 66) and reestablished the notorious National Police. Yet, the violence in Korea is finally invoked and takes form in the home land of America when Chang encounters homeland security.

When Chang is traveling in the South on the Greyhound bus and feels secure as "a fearless, invisible citizen of these places now" (274), he was suddenly arrested by the Port Security for suspicion of communism. The FBI agents claim that Chinese Communist agents are infiltrating American borders and instigating Communist mutinies. Although Chang isn't Chinese but Korean, the agents insist that "[w]e'd rather question all of them and make a mistake than miss one of them. Err towards caution" (278-279). To bail out Chang, Katherine has to sign a guarantee for Chang's citizenship in a democratic nation and his anticommunist identity. Civil rights and citizenship become volatile and fragile here in face of anticommunism and national security, and in any time could be justifiably suspended. The small room for questioning and the situation instantly invoke in Chang the memory of Cheju when he was starving in the cave to hide from anticommunist hunt and his horrible memories in the cell of the prisoner camp. So intuitively at the moment, he suddenly feels enormous hunger now. Then when the FBI agent

holds Katherine's injured hand to sign the guarantee, the memory of the South Korean officer in the prisoner camp holding his mangled hand to sign on the conviction comes alive, so he suddenly felt "the blood in his temples rising like the plume of a fountain, suspended in the air for a moment before crashing and spreading to his body's far reaches" (279). The bodily responses are stirred by the memory of violence and fear. Yet, the linkage and invocation of violence and torture in South Korea in America also unveil an authoritarian character in the national security state of America now. Such a character is intimately related to America's intentionality and willingness to justify exclusion of civil rights and lawfulness in Korea, and thus reveals a corrosive nature of the logic and programs of national security, no matter these military security operations are carried out in American or abroad. Thinking and understanding violence in the framework of the interlinked two Souths, we would not find the recent discovery surprising that government "interrogative techniques" on prisoners and detainees in the War on Terror were developed from the Korean War. This is only a living demonstration of the legacies of the Korean War and the logic of security on the political culture of America.

Besides uncovering the violence and re-presenting the discursive movement of violence from abroad to home, Choi in her spatial imagination of the Korean War also sets out to reformulate a material ground to see and feel the pain and destruction imposed by the national security state. Her narrative formulation restores a perception of security which is distorted by the logic of the national security state. Another key juxtaposition of spaces is the novel's representation of Chang's torture and pain on the body in comparison with the bombed and scorched landscape of Korea. In a meticulous way, Choi details the transformation and pain of Chang's body under torture through a language that invokes the bombing of Korea:

After this there was very little left of him. He mimicked his torturers, making himself deaf to his body's cries for help. His knowledge of his body propagated in chains, telephone lines, bridges between a limb and his love for it, coursing braids of communication wire. He sliced through lines and wires, exploded bridges, exercised his mouth and his groin, amputated his limbs. He no longer knew when he urinated. Cast outside the boundary of itself, his body had ceased to obey any

boundary between itself and the world. he was always damp and acrid with urine, trickling out of him the way blood trickled out of his various wounds. His terror at the mangling of his fingers had evaporated, and the memory of that terror was unrecognizable as any of his other possessions. He watched his hand being mangled from a great distance. He had already sawed it off. He had thrown away of his body as if it were ballast, not to speed his death, but to survive. (310)

The images of “telephone lines,” “wires,” “exploded bridges” and “ballasts” vividly invoke the Korean landscape bombed by American airplanes. Yet, describing Chang’s broken limbs and mangled hands through the images of the bombed Korean landscape turns bombing Korea into a bodily experience to the readers. The malfunctioned body of Chang under torture thus speaks to the malfunctioned Korea under bombing. Chang’s imagination of slicing through, sawing off, throwing away his body parts to anesthetize himself from pain and thus survive, highlights the extent of unbearable pain imposed by torture and destruction. At the same time, such pain, in juxtaposition with the broken and smashed landscape of Korea, makes Korea under bombing an acutely painful experience that the readers can easily locate on the body.

Through this way of spatializing Chang’s war experience in parallel with Korea’s landscape under war bombing, the narrative materializes both Chang’s pain and the destruction of Korea. In essence, it provides for us a material ground to perceive the pain and violence that are created, imposed but abstracted by the national security state of America. When our perception of security is largely distorted by the logic of national security and we easily forget the extent of violence in the distant Korea, the juxtaposition of Chang’s body and the bombed Korea forces us to re-perceive the pain in a concrete and physical way

Ultimately, Choi’s spatial imagination of the Korean War is a meaningful representation of the logic of the security state. Yet, her way of spatializing and juxtaposing also actively breaks away from the logic of the security state by resisting its racialization and abstraction. In particular, it restores a material ground to feel the violence and pain when people gradually

become casual with killing and violence of preemptive wars and overseas wars that are initiated and normalized in the name of national security.

### **3.3 The Necropolitics of American Camptown and the Writing of Ghosts in Heinze Insu Fenkl's *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996)**

While an armistice agreement was finally signed on July 27, 1953, the Korean War is still an ongoing reality for Koreans as the country remains divided between the North and the South, and military confrontation has become normalized on the Korean peninsula. In particular, the existence of American military camptowns in South Korea is a constant reminder of the Korean War and its consequences. Since the first American camptown appeared in Bupyong in 1945 following American soldiers' stationing in the nearby Inchon, 18 camptowns quickly came into being in the 1950s and until 1962 there were already 32 military camptowns throughout South Korea.<sup>21</sup> These camptowns catered to the needs of the stationed American soldiers who offer military protection for the South Korean regime. During its heyday of the 1960s, more than thirty thousand women served some sixty-two thousand U.S. soldiers (Yuh 21). Yet, the camptown not only symbolizes South Korea's subordination to America politically and militarily but also its dependence on America economically. The camptowns mark a glaring contrast between a war-torn and impoverished Korea, and an affluent and squandering America, and thus were "one of the few, if not the only, sources of income in the poverty-stricken years of the 1940s and through the 1970s" (Yuh 22). Indeed, the camptowns play an important role in Korea's recent history and in understanding the Korea-America relationship. Since the 1990s, a group of works that are focused on the camptown life in Korea gradually emerged and gained attention. They reveal the detrimental nature of America's continued military presence in Korea and question the uneven Korea-American relationship symbolized in the camptown. These works feature the life and fate

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<sup>21</sup> Statistics quoted from Na-Young Lee, "Un/forgettable Histories of US Camptown Prostitution in South Korea: Women's Experiences of Sexual Labor and Government Policies," *Sexualities*, 2018, Vol. 21(5–6), pp.751–775. Statistics originally from Korean sources: *We can Talk about it Now: Sex Alliance and Camptowns Cleansing Campaign* by Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (2003) (Ijenu'n Malhalsu Itda: Sex Tongmaeng Kijich'on Cho'ngghwaundong); Chosun Ilbo, 29 March, 1962; Pak JS. *Prostitution in Korea* (Han'guku'i Maech'un) (1992)

of the stigmatized military prostitutes and mixed-race children in the camptown who endured the legacy of the Korean War and prejudices and abuses from both Korean society and America. One of the best known works is *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996) by Heinz Insu Fenkl who himself is the mixed-blood son of a Korean mother and a German American GI father and lived in the Pupyong camptown until he was twelve years old and immigrated to America.

In this autobiographical novel, Fenkl describes the tragic camptown life during the 1960s, recalling the death and violence he witnessed as a boy in the life of those Korean women and mix-blood children before he left Korea. Now speaking back in English, Fenkl reverses the conventional narrative of American benevolence towards the impoverished Korean women and Korean orphans, making visible the American presence and its control of the camptown as a form of necropower in Korea. As Achille Mbembe theorized, necropolitics manifests itself in “the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations” (14). Through Fenkl’s storytelling, we see the ubiquity of death and violence in the Korean camptown and the utilization of bodies of the Korean women and children. Especially for Korean women and mixed-blood children in the camptown, their existence was appendant and traded in exchange for a good life in America, which creates a peculiar hierarchy of life and death that some lives are the most useless and are thus sacrificed in exchange for others’ survival. Such a system in essence reflects the racial and gender violence brought and intensified by the American military presence in Korea. More importantly, Fenkl’s storytelling of the camptown is also a storytelling of the ghosts and the spectral, telling us his experience seeing those specters emerging back into his vision and dreams. As I will show later, Fenkl’s writing of the ghosts and the specter who haunt him in the camptown and through the years demonstrates a formal resistance against the necropower imposed by the national security state of America. For Fenkl, encountering and writing the spectral not only cast a melancholy look into the past and his traumatic loss; it also presents a different epistemological mode that destabilizes a linear temporality and transcends the dichotomy between life and death as defined

by the camptown necropolitics. Such an alternative way of seeing resists the disposal and historical amnesia of the sacrificed camptown women and mixed-race children.

Women constitute the key figures in the camptown life, who sell their own bodies for survival and in exchange of the promise of a better life in America. However, they are also the most tragic figures who suffer and perish under intensified gender violence coming from both ways of Korea and America. A typical tragic figure of the military prostitute is Fenkl's beloved cousin Gannan who committed suicide. Gannan was a kind-hearted country girl who was forced to come to the camptown after the Korean War left little farmland intact and many farmers were displaced. Without choice she worked in the club to support her family in the countryside and became a yang saekshi. However, when she got pregnant, the American GI she dated abandoned her, so she hang herself out of shame and hopelessness. Gannan's suicide directly resulted from her painful devaluation and abandonment, but it was also facilitated by the Korean patriarchal tradition that stigmatizes women and their association with Americans. In the eyes of nationalist Korean males such as Insu's uncle Hyongbu, Korean women socializing with American GIs should be despised, because they contaminate the pure family blood and their Koreanness, and they symbolize the emasculation of the Korean men. Hyongbu even attempted to drown his own daughter as "[a] woman can ruin an entire bloodline. A woman can suck you dry of your strength. And she's going to grow up into a bitch, just like the rest of them. She's already got that devious fox look in her eye" (Fenkl 46). Indeed, Hyongbu's daughter later did grow up to become another military prostitute, only to support her family and Hyongbu who was paralyzed from a fatal stroke.

In addition, the reproductive ability of women was also utilized to secure and please their American husbands and the promise of a good life. Changmi's mother, another camptown military prostitute, finally found a black GI husband but also learned that he was infertile. To keep her husband who wanted his own children very much, she "scouted the army clubs until she found a man who looked just like him" (209). Similarly, to please her husband who wanted a son

that he could call him as “war helmet,” Insu’s mother tried hard to bear another son when she was barely recovered from giving birth to a daughter and thus was hospitalized because of a miscarriage. Tragically, these camptown women offered their bodies for pleasure and child bearing at the whim of the American GIs, but their dependency on the GIs makes their life and survival fragile and always volatile.

Besides the gender violence, racial violence was also brought up and reinforced through America’s military presence, further generalizing death and violence among camptown women and the mixed-race children. The camptown epitomizes the racial segregation in the America home land and the military presence of America creates a caste system among the military prostitutes and the mixed-race children. While all camptown women rely on marrying American GIs to locate financial security and a better future in America, they have to decide to choose a black husband or a white husband:

Black men are nicer to women. And you have to decide, before you start, whether you’re going to date the Black or white GIs. They won’t let you date both... The white bastards won’t touch you once they see you with a black man. They think the color comes off on you or something. And the women who go with Black men won’t associate with you if you go with a white man. (210)

While the logic of color and racial segregation does not make sense to these women, racism coming with the American GIs constitutes the social protocol in the camptown and disciplines these women in everyday life.

Yet, the cruelty of racial violence was also unabashedly released on the mixed-race children in the camptown. They were forced to bear upon hatred and prejudice from both the Korean society and Americans and often were sacrificed in the necropolitics of the camptown. With his Korean blood, Insu was even despised by his own American father, who considers Korean culture as barbaric and heathen. When Insu was first presented to his father, his GI father turned “bright red from the shame of having a mixed-blood child” and later he erupted at Insu’s mother “for daring to let him be seen in public with a child presented to him by a Korean” (63).

In the American school, Insu and his mixed-race friends were forbidden to speak Korean. As Insu recalls, some teachers would “slap our lips, sometimes breaking our skin so we tasted the metallic tang of the blood in our forbidden words” (120). To punish them for speaking their first language is to sever them from their Koreanness and force them to Americanize. Such discipline represents racial prejudice against the Koreans and a degradation of the Korean culture. Still Americans’ racism against Koreans took a boomerang effect on the mixed-blood children and aggravated their situation in the Korean society as these children were equally despised by Koreans for their miscegenation and non-purity. With the American blood, Insu was bullied and hit by other Korean children in his church class. The Korean children called him “saeki” (son of animal), chanting “Hello, give me gum. Hello, give me cho-co-late” (77). American GIs distributing chocolate and gum to Korean children is the commonplace image and narrative of American benevolence during the Korean War. These image and narrative portray the GIs as benevolent and the Korean children as backward, poor and hungry who desire and marvel at the American goodies. The Korean children mocking Insu reverses the narrative of American benevolence; it also explains how racial violence in camptown life originated in American racism and was diverted towards those innocent mix-blood children.

Perhaps the most violent manifestation of racial violence and its key role in creating the camptown necropolitics can be seen in the fate of Insu’s childhood best friend James, a black Korean American child whose father died in the Vietnam War and who became the most disposable in the hierarchy of life and death. James also died later as a child. It was said that James fell in a sewer creek and was drowned mysteriously. With him dead, James’s mother managed to marry another white GI and migrate to America with her new husband. Wondering about the myth of James’s unfortunate death in a shallow creek, Insu asked his uncle Hyongbu, who remarked:

“Think about it...You’re a dungwhore and you catch yourself a GI by getting pregnant with his brat, but then he goes off to Vietnam and gets himself killed. That leaves you with benefits from the great Emperor of America, but now you

have a black brat to feed, and it's not enough money. So now you want another GI husband to start things over—maybe a white guy with a higher rank, ungh?—but who would marry a whore with a Black kid?...Maybe she was trying to scrub the color off and she held his face down in the washbasin too long.” (229)

Hyongbu's story, whether true or not, reveals the cruel reality and violent racial logic behind James's death. With his father dead, James became even less than useless. He became a burden for his prostitute mother. So James's life had to be given up and sacrificed, in exchange for her mother's marriage with a white GI and her survival.

This is a perverse but pragmatic strategy in surviving the camptown life. When he learns the myth of James's death, Insu can hardly blame James's mother. There is only “a profound sadness, a fatalism, a knowledge that the world is the way it is, and the path of blame is not an arrow's flight, but the mad scatter of raindrops in a storm” (232). In a world that survival is a daily struggle and living is always dependent and contingent, everyone is both victim and participant in the violence. With hindsight, the adult Insu mourns for the loss of his best friend, realizing the way even under racism he was different and luckier than James:

For the longest time, I had not realized what it meant that James was Black. I had seen it, of course. I had chanted the chocolate rhyme at him, compared the tones of our flesh, called him a kkomdunggi. And he had chanted the chocolate rhyme himself, singing about the Negro men from Africa and their kindness. He did not seem to notice, any more than I, that his difference went further than simply being of mixed blood. To both of us, I think his Blackness was lost under the labels we heard—ainoko, chapjong, t'wigi—and that commonness obscured the fact that when people looked at us oddly, they looked at him more oddly than at me. (232)

Ironically, James's sacrifice still failed to guarantee a life of happiness for James's mother. James's mother later had a daughter, Suzie, with her new white GI husband. However, Suzie also grew up to become a teenage prostitute until she was disfigured by a Japanese banker, and later killed herself with rat poison.

Sadly, the same fates and deaths met mixed-race children again and again. Years later when the adult Insu looks back, all his mixed-race friends from childhood did not survive into happiness: they either became pimps or prostitutes, committed suicide, or died in illness and poverty. Only he escaped. But Insu's escape is revealed in the end a result of another tragedy. As later he found out, his survival was traded with his half-brother Kuristo. Since young Insu had been dreaming and seeing the face of Kuristo, a boy who had a similar face to himself. He dreamt of Kuristo saving all the families from an old crone with a knife who was going to murder all the families. Talking to his cousin, he learnt that indeed he had "ghost brother" named Kuristo. Kuristo was Insu's half-blood brother and was sent away for adoption in America, because Insu's father did not want someone else's son and wouldn't marry Insu's mother unless she gave up Kuristo. Insu's mother cried and cried, but finally gave up and sent Kuristo away. In this way, Kuristo did save the family by sacrificing himself, and thus Insu was able to survive the harsh reality of the camptown and migrate to America with his father. However, ironically Kuristo's story also counters the American narrative of adopting Korean orphans as a humanitarian act; instead, more often than not, America itself created orphans in Korea in the first place.

Such cost of life could be easily forgotten in the myth of the good life in America, and the sacrificed women and children and the deaths are always obscured with the passage of time and in an ever moving forward history. Many camptown people such as Insu's mother are deeply attached to the idea of America and the American dream, because America is "where all the wonderful things come from...every American was a millionaire and everyone owned his own house and had a car and drank Coca-Cola" (267). These optimism and fantasy are built upon the repression and forgetfulness of the sacrificed life such as Gannan. After her sacrifice and death, Gannan was expelled from the ancestral grave because it is believed that an unhappy ghost would destroy the fortune of the family, and no one would make the annual memorial journey for her. At last, her grave "had eroded to nothing. It had become part of the landscape, and no one

remembered where it was” (56). As can be seen, failing to remember is consequential of the erasure of the abusive necropower’s impact on vulnerable and marginalized lives such as Gannan. Moreover, the historical amnesia, shadowed under the fantasy of the “good life” in America, obscures the abusive and oppressive nature of the necropower and the fact that the camptown people’s attachment to America ultimately becomes the source of their tragedies, fragility and dear cost.

As Frederic Jameson claims, ghosts are moments in which the repressed returns and the gleaming present betrays us (“The Purloined Letter of Marx” 86). In this sense, Fenkl’s writing of the ghosts reveals the betrayal of the fantasy of America and its good life. Fenkl recalls the return of Gannan—a ghost “in white with long, black hair and an ethereally beautiful face would often come to me in the garden at night and smile at me with sorrowful expression. She spoke only when it rained, and then her voice was always lost amidst the noise of the raindrops” (35). He also remembers the ghost of the Japanese colonel who committed suicide when the imperial Japan was defeated by America and who haunted Insu’s house and always quietly gazed upon Insu with his “sad and lonely eyes” (7). Another spectral image that visited him in dream frequently is his ghost brother, strange yet familiar, each time making Insu “terrified and unspeakably sad” (203). All these ghostly figures are sad and silent, repressed in colonial violence, in secrets, and in shame and scandal. However, their coming back makes the camptown an impasse that is entangled with violence from the past and the present. If haunting, as Avery Gordon points out, “alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future” (xvi). Fenkle’s ghosts change a camptown narrative that is framed in a linear temporality that assigns violence and deaths in pastness and the fantasy of America and a good life in the future. The return of the ghosts unlocks the repressed violence and reveals the continuous violence haunting the camptown life, which also renders the future melancholy and already a loss.

Destabilizing a linear temporality in essence is a betrayal of the fantasy of America and its good life that manifests a hegemonic American power. Yet, Fenkl's depiction of his ghostly experience further challenges the dichotomous system of death and life defined by the necropower. It revokes the degradation and disposal of those sacrificed lives and makes the ghosts and specters an alternative and new way to understand our world and the living experience. In the novel, Insu not only saw ghosts; in some instances, his encounter with ghosts could be read as experiences of possession. The day Insu had to move out from the house of the Japanese Colonel, the ghost of the Japanese Colonel appeared when Insu had expected to see Gannan's ghost:

He had gazed upon me, especially forlorn, anticipating a loneliness greater than what he already endured. I had expected to see Gannan as I waited there cross-legged on the cool, abrasive stone with the tiny demon post in my hand, but it was the Japanese Colonel who came. He looked at me, his eyes shimmering, the leaves behind him quivering with anticipation of something dire, and he had leaned forward, reaching out his left hand to touch me—I realize now—for the first time. Suddenly, I could no longer see him, but I felt my back straighten, and then I had the oddest sensation—more like a knowledge than a sensation—that he had thrust his fingertip into my skull and run it all the way around the crown of my head. My eyes were closed—I knew. But somehow the top of my head had vanished, as if my skull were the cylinder of an open can, and I could see the blue sky receding to infinity directly above me. My body was hollow. It was empty, although it held my shape, and into the contoured vessel the sky came pouring in like a bright blue liquid, and I felt that I had no outside and no inside, and the sky within me and the air outside me were the same substance and myself but a thin veneer that floated between them like some filmy membrane in water. I was breathing in the liquid sky through the top of my open head, and the air was cold with freshness that lingers after a hard rain. I sat there for the longest time until, degree by degree, I realize that I was seeing again through my eyes. The afternoon light had dimmed into a reddish gold and the air was cool against my too-sensitive flesh. (90-91)

The appearance of the Japanese Colonel with his forlorn look already characterizes Insu's leaving as a loss, anticipating a future loneliness. Nevertheless, the touch of the ghost also makes this encounter an experience of possession, through which Insu sees, not from his eyes, the world

in a different way. In other words, this is a ghostly vision from the dead that “transforms parameters of cognition and ways of knowing by destabilizing the coordinates of space, time, and identity” (Lorek-Jezińska & Więckowska 21). The vision gives a new way for Insu to experience a ghostly existence and *know* the world and reality with much more sensitivity, intensity and the sense of immediacy; in other words, to feel the substance of his body and being in relation to the physical surrounding, and to defamiliarize the familiar reality into a sensory experience to reaffirm the liquid sky, the bright color, and cool and freshness of the air. In this sense, the ghostly possession is a transformed epistemological mode that gives an alternative way of knowing and understanding the living world.

Such a ghostly encounter across the boundary between the dead and the living, when employed in the context of the camptown necropolitics, also represents what Gordon describes as “a method of knowledge production and a way of writing that could represent the damage and the haunting of the historical alternatives and thus richly conjure, describe, narrate, and explain the liens, the costs, the forfeits, and the losses of modern systems of abusive power in their immediacy and worldly significance” (20). Insu also experienced death and the ghostly existence in his dreams of Kuristo. Repeatedly, Insu dreamt of the scene of crime where an old crone tried to murder him and his family while Kuristo appeared to divert her attention and rescued all of them. The dream had many convolutions and different versions. In one version, he is killed in the end by the old crone:

Once I dreamt that I had died with my eyes open. I could see the whole room—the silk blankets, the papered walls, the sliding doors, the quiet face of my mother as she looked down at me. I wanted to tell her that I had died in my sleep, but nothing, no sound, would come from my closed throat. The sadness welled up inside me until it overflowed through my eyes and the world turned into blurred colors, shimmered, and cleared again into a brighter, cooler world. My mother was gone. I saw a flickering shadow on the far wall; and only then, in my death, did I hear the quiet flutter of swallows’ wings and the *distant sounds of morning*. *It was morning and I was awake.* (203)

In his spectral dream of Kuristo and the exchange between life and death, Insu turned into a ghost that he was affectively pulled into the experience of death: feeling intensively the sadness, the vulnerability and the helplessness in their immediacy. At the same time, it was in his death, his ghost experience, that the familiar things in the living world became clearer and reaffirmed. In this sense, his spectral dream and the ghostly experience counter the disposal and repression imposed on the sacrificed lives, unleashing the pain and desperation of dying and silence. More importantly, it is the ghost that resuscitates the living world in its materiality and immediacy, through which the living subject is able to learn his everyday existence and thus be freed from a fantastic attachment to the good life.

Indeed, the ghost and the spectral are rendered as a powerful source of consolation as well as knowledge, with which Insu was able to comprehend the life of women and children in the camptown reality and empathize with them in solidarity. While Insu's father had Insu go to churches and kept Insu away from what he thought was Korean barbarism and pagan ceremonies, Insu could hardly believe in the western religion and Christ:

My father's priest could not lead the souls of the restless dead into the other world or heal the man whose arm was paralyzed by his ancestors because he had beaten his wife once too often. He could not bring luck to a family whose house was full of tragedies or bring sons to a woman who could only bear daughters. My father's religion wallowed in stories and pictures of tragedy and suffering, but it could not heal what happened every day outside the gates of the U.S. Army post. And so I could not worship his God or the murdered son—I believe in ghosts and ancestors and portentous dreams of serpents and dragons because those were the things I could touch in my world. (241)

The miracles of the Jesus Christ were old and distant, unable to comprehend the misfortunes and needs of the Korean people in the camptown world and comfort those people in suffering. On the contrary, the ghosts and the spectral, whether they actually exist or not in the world, always refer to the everyday existence, longings and misfortunes in the immediate life of

the camptown people. Therefore, Insu claims to believe in the ghost and the spectral, with which he could empathize and learn the world he lives in.

Consequently, invoking the dead and the spectral not only destabilizes a linear temporality but also offers an alternative way of knowing that challenges the dichotomous and fixed demarcation between life and death which always leaves the dead in pastness and amnesia. As demonstrated in Fenkl's writing of the ghosts and spectral dreams, seeing the ghost is to see the present in its immediacy and to comprehend the struggles of the living world intensely and affectively. Thus storytelling of the ghosts and the spectral in the camptown is also a narrative resistance against the necropower and its amnesia of the sacrificed lives and the ongoing violence in the life of ordinary Koreans under the fantasy of the American good life.

In the end, Fenkl remembers the day he had to leave Korea for America. He claimed that "I went trying to name the dead to give them peace: Gannan, Cholsu, James; and if I could not name them with a word, I could name them with their stories" (269). Naming is remembering, and Fenkl's novel, in this sense, is a resuscitation of the dead, so their stigma would be revoked and the violence they bore would be recognized and remembered. Yet, such remembering also makes his novel a ghost itself, haunting us readers with the memories of camptown life and a history of violence in Korea which is continued with America's military presence. And with a ghostly vision provided by Fenkl's storytelling, the sacrifice and loss of the ordinary Koreans, especially the marginalized women and mixed-race children, can be remembered and re-thought in the stigmatized narrative of dependency that characterizes the relationship between Korea and America.

Through the Cold War, the dominant national security discourse of America defined that the Korean War started with a communist invasion and America fought in Korea to "fulfill our responsibilities toward the preservation of international peace and security against possible further aggression" (Truman "Special Message to the Congress"). From an American perspective, the war's importance, if there was any, lay in its symbolic meaning for American

security and power, because the breakout of the Korean War “was an open, undisguised challenge to our internationally accepted position as the protector of South Korea, an area of great importance to the security of American-occupied Japan” (Acheson 405). However, a Korean perspective reveals a different story of the Korean War. With the reimagining of the Korean War by the Korean American writers who spoke up for a previous generation, we see the traumatic experience of not only war, but also of national division that is intimately entangled in violence of colonialism, class, racism and gender. In addition, while the Korean War quickly became a “forgotten war” in America, the Korean American writing reveals that it is a lived experience for the Korean people with America’s continuous military presence in Korea and the memory of the war remains for Koreans both in Korea and in the diaspora a national trauma in which the horrible human death toll and the shame of colonial memory have defined their Koreanness.

In a word, the Korean American stories of the Korean War in the 1990s, as exemplified in the analyzed texts above, give an alternative history of the Korean War which was framed by the national security discourse and revise the cultural memory of Korean War which was framed by a bipolar Cold War vision. At the same time, these texts also demonstrate the way that storytelling could function as formal resistance and rhetorical act against the ideology of national security, revealing the racial and gender violence obscured in the national security state’s logic of anticommunism, security and dependency. Such rhetorical act and resistance reflect the attempt of a new generation of Korean Americans coming of age in America to speak back to the mainstream America. They contemplate the war’s legacy for the present generation in America and the nation of America today. Their storytelling represents a drive of revision and a trend of change in the pattern of Korean War stories in America that first appeared in the 1950s and the early 1960s. This change, situated in the 1990s, essentially speaks to a shifting political landscape of the world when the bipolar Cold War system collapsed with the fall of the Soviet, and the old national security discourse began to stumble with a vacuum left by the communist

villain. Looking from this perspective, tracing the transformation of Korean War stories is also a meaningful way to look into the national security of America in relation to the world's changing political landscape. Indeed, since the 2000s more and diverse American writers have revisited the Korean War in the aftermath of the 911 attacks when concerns of national security have resurged with the rise of terrorism and a homeland security America quickly formed. In the next chapter, the stories of Korean War after the 911 attacks are focused on, to examine the ways post-911 Korean War stories respond to the development of America's homeland security in a shifted post-Cold War and Post-911 context.

## CHAPTER 4. LOOKING BACK IN THE PRESENT: POST-9/11 KOREAN WAR STORIES AND THE HOMELAND SECURITY

In 2004, the movie *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) was remade and released. The remake has several major changes in the plot and casting. The original Korean War context is changed to the Persian Gulf War. The original communist villain is replaced by the vicious Manchurian Global, a multinational corporation with powerful political connections. Key characters such as Major Marco and Eugenie Rose who were originally white American roles, are now played by African American actor and actress. Besides, the brainwashing technology also evolves in the remake—brainwashing is realized through hypnosis in the 1962 version but now it is through the much fancier nanotechnological implants in the human body. These changes speak to the shifts in the political landscape of the post-Cold War world and the new concerns and anxieties of national security surging in America particularly after the 9/11 attacks. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world witnessed the fall of the Soviet Union and the 9/11 terrorist attacks signaled that terrorism took the place of the communist villain threatening American security, and shortly after 9/11 America announced the War on Terror globally. At the same time, today is also a more globalized and interconnected world with the expansion and development of a global market and the advancement of science and technology in all aspects of our life. These not only stimulated boons and convenience but also brought up more crimes and violence across borders.

Looking at these changes and new trends in the global landscape and the changing situation of America's national security, the Korean War seems irrelevant today and the complete oblivion of the Korean War in the 2004 remake of *The Manchurian Candidate* seems to testify to the irrelevancy and the historical amnesia of the war. However, in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks and the subsequent controversial War on Terror, a number of American writers turned to revisit the “forgotten war” in the 1950s. These writers include canonical American

writers such as Toni Morrison and Philip Roth as well as well-known ethnic writers such as Ha Jin and Chang-rae Lee. They approached the Korean War from different angles, further revealing the marginalized life and obscured stories of the Korean War. In particular, Toni Morrison writes about the black experience during and after the war; Ha Jin focuses on the Chinese prisoners of war; while Chang-rae Lee looks into the entangled life of American missionaries, American veterans and the Korean war orphans and military brides. The heterogeneity of writers as well as their multifaceted treatment and representation of the Korean War illuminate on the multiplicity of the meanings and implications of the Korean War, and their excavation of an obscured past in the present context of the War on Terror demonstrates the relevancy of the Korean War in the present America. As pointed out by Daniel Kim and Viet Thanh Nguyê, the recent Korean War stories came as an apt historical analogy to the contemporary War on Terror because of the fact that “much of the fiction of the Korean War was being written as the United States was waging wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and amid troubling revelations of what was taking place at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib” (64).

Indeed, the Korean War remembered in recent stories either directly or indirectly alludes to the current American homeland security, pointing to its institutionalization with increasing technological and scientific hazards, policing force, border control and the perpetuation of wars. In this chapter, three recognized post-9/11 novels of the Korean War are focused, including Toni Morrison’s *Home* (2012), Ha Jin’s *War Trash* (2005), and Chang-rae Lee’s *The Surrendered* (2010), to examine the ways that the Korean War serves as a historical analogy to understand the consequences of the War on Terror and contemplate the American homeland in a traumatized post-9/11 era. I argue that these recent novels represent the continual interaction between storytelling and the national security state of America in a post-Cold War political landscape, as their re-visiting of the Korean War in the post-9/11 moment projects a both familiar and evolved American security state. Moreover, through looking into the past these stories also offer alternative ways of thinking healing for America, re-shaping the idea and narrative of homeland,

and questioning America's position and role in an increasingly transnational and interconnected world. As these novels show, a true healing and moving forward for the American society may only occur through a critical historicization of the nation's trauma in relation to its own history of violence and an excavation of the obscured histories with a transnational perspective.

Section one focuses on Toni Morrison's *Home* which tells the story of a returned African American veteran from Korea, Frank Money, who is struggling with PTSD while also embarking on a journey back to home and save his sister whom he left behind in hometown in the South. Through constant flashbacks and a conversational interaction between the novel's protagonist Frank and the novel's author, Frank's homeward journey also turns out to be a healing process during which his memory in the Korean War is gradually restored in parallel with the revelation of his encounter with a history of racial violence in America. I argue that Morrison's representation of Frank's PTSD is allegorical to the traumatized post-9/11 America that risks historical amnesia and historical exceptionalism in its melancholia and mourning. Yet, the novel's way of narrative structuring that includes the marginalized voices and histories also offers a meaningful way of healing.

Section two examines Ha Jin's novelistic representation of the Chinese war prisoners during the Korean War in *War Trash*. Translating, appropriating and reorganizing historical details in *Meijun Jizhongying Qinli Ji* (Personal Records in the American Prisoner Camps), a Chinese document of oral history assembled by previous Chinese Korean War POWs, Ha Jin recreates a personal story of Yu Yuan who struggles in the Repatriation/Non-repatriation contention in the UN/U.S. controlled camps and half a century later encounters America's homeland security when visiting his immigrant families in America and writing his memoir of the Korean War. I argue that Ha Jin's linguistic and literary migrations that foreground foreignness and translationess, and the ambiguity between history and fiction make his storytelling of the Korean War also an exploration and recreation of "homeland." His narrative

re-creation challenges the increasing border control and anti-immigrant national identity in the post-9/11 homeland security America.

Section three reads Chang-Rae Lee's novel which tells a complicated and expansive story of the intersected lives of a Korean War orphan June, an American GI Hector, and an American missionary Sylvie during and after the Korean War in a love triangle and the consequential tragedies are gradually revealed. I argue that Lee's storytelling revises and counteracts the narrative of American benevolence and futurity. In the end, his tale of the Korean War laments the collective sufferings of humanity in warfare, and reveals the limit of benevolence to see the vast disparity of the world as well as the inequality inherent in America's vision of futurity in its preemptive wars.

The cultural landscape of America after the 9/11 attacks is both a strange and familiar one. The crush of the airplanes and the collapse of the World Trade Center, although televised and witnessed by Americans on screen across the country, were rendered unimaginable, unthinkable and incomprehensible, and seemed to change the way we think and act in reality. Ironically, on-site spectators in New York could hardly think it in reality, and one witnessing the smoking, crumpling and melting down of the buildings remarked that "[i]t looks like television, doesn't it? It looks like Disneyland" (Kandel 189). Words seemed to fail and thus images proliferated on media immediately after the attacks, turning the event into a "spectacularly immediate yet simultaneously unreal" (Tanner 59) media event. In the field of cultural production, the enormity of the event posed a distinct challenge to artists who experiment in different venues trying to articulate and comprehend. As we can see, writers such as Don DeLillo turns one of the most lasting 9/11 images, "the Falling Man," into an experience of performance art in *Falling Man* (2007), and Jess Walter who employs "absurdity" to conjure up a post-traumatic American reality in *The Zero* (2006), or Jarett Kobek who looks into the 9/11 mastermind terrorist Mohammed Atta's architectural aesthetics and imagination represented in his master thesis to understand his terrorist imagination and impulse in *ATTA* (2011). Besides

nationalism and patriotism, intense emotions of anger and fear were generated by the attacks and its memorialization as well, making fantasy movies of superhero, zombies and vampires such as *War of Worlds*, *Spider-Man*, *I Am Legend* the market hits and favorites in the post-9/11 American society and garnered success at the box office.

However, there is also a trend of nostalgia, reproduction, and replication in the nation, making the cultural scene in America after the unthinkable 9/11 attacks too familiar at the same time. Noticing the return of John Wayne films in 2001, the staging of female victims and 9/11 widows vis a vis cowboy-style fireman heroes on media, and the heightened call for marriage as well as the denigration of capable and single women, critic Susan Faludi remarks that the post-9/11 age is “an era of neofifties nuclear family ‘togetherness,’ redomesticated femininity and reconstituted Cold Warrior manhood” (4). Indeed, the shaking of American security stimulated a rosy reminiscence of a secured and powerful America in the early Cold War, and was responded by storytelling of American emasculation and reinvention of masculinity in the popular culture. Under this light, we begin to see that even fantasy movies strange at first sight almost often have a familiar male protagonist who reestablishes his masculinity though battling with aliens or zombies. For example, we can see that in the estranged father Ray Ferrier who saves his daughter and thus regains his manhood in *War of Worlds*.

Under these circumstances, the institution as well as the culture of security in particular have also been recast in the post-9/11 era. Significant reorganization and adaptation occurred in America’s national security institutions and outlook as Homeland Security was institutionalized in post-9/11 America. In 2002, the Homeland Security Act was passed and the United States Department of Homeland Security was created as a response to the 9/11 attacks, which according to Peter Andreas represents the most significant reorganization of the federal government since the early years of the Cold War and consolidates the border control of the federal state (92). The Homeland Security Act of 2002 also put great emphasis on the role of law enforcement, and science and technology in supporting securing the state of America. The act points out the

importance of information gained from the law enforcement and the cooperation between federal, state and private entities to improve efficiency of detecting and preventing terrorism.<sup>22</sup> In addition, it emphasizes the scientific and technological support to facilitate border control while at the same time minimizing the impact on trade across borders in order to maintain the economic security of America.<sup>23</sup> These highlights confirm the interconnectedness in a globalized world and the importance of the economic aspect of national security today. More importantly, it suggests the increasing need of and reliance on policing and science and technology in strengthening the American homeland and its national security.

In addition to the institutional and organizational changes and the allegiance of the state to shore up the borders, scholars such as Amy Kaplan incisively point out that America's current effort in reconstructing the national boundaries goes hand in hand with the linguistic work in the public sphere ("Homeland Insecurities" 85). Following the 9/11 attacks, media broadcasting, news reports, as well as cultural and political discourses seemingly unfamiliar vocabularies such as "Ground Zero," "Homeland," and "Homeland Security," referring to the shocking attack and the collapse of the World Trade Center, the unbearable and unprecedented suffering of the American people, and a homogenous, familial and national community that was violated. Tracing the etymologies of "Ground Zero" and "Homeland" and investigating their cultural denotations, Kaplan reveals that "Ground Zero" was at first coined to describe the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She also relates the use of "Homeland" to the apartheid South African regime and its forced racial segregation through the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Bill in 1969; the term was also used by peoples such as the Palestinian whose homeland was severed and usurped by the foreign powers. Consequently, in the linguistic work in the public sphere there is ensconced a narrative of historical exceptionalism and historical amnesia which

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<sup>22</sup> The act discusses homeland security information sharing procedure and strategies of facilitating between government departments as well as legal and law enforcement sectors. See details in Title VIII—Coordination with Non-Federal Entities; Inspector General; United States Secret Service; Coast Guard; General Provisions," in The Homeland Security Act of 2002, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/hr\\_5005\\_enr.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/hr_5005_enr.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> See details in Title III—Science and Technology in Support of Homeland Security.

mourns that “Americans have lost their former innocence about their safety and invulnerability at home” (“Homeland Insecurities” 83)<sup>24</sup> and arouses a kind of “reliance on a shared mythic past engrained in the land itself” that changes the sense of spatial mobility and obscures the inherent heterogeneity in the nation’s history of immigration, frontier exploration and colonization (“Homeland Insecurities” 86).<sup>25</sup>

Besides, the linguistic work’s imagining of an American homeland is also structured in a fear of the foreign that not only includes terrorists but also immigrants, revealing an uneasy suspicion of immigrants and foreigners in the discourse of homeland security. Indeed, soliciting allegiance, affiliation, devotion and loyalty is an important part in the discourse of homeland security. Addressing the Congress and the American people, President Bush not only asked the American people to “uphold the values of America,” to cooperate with FBI agents, and to participate in the American economy, but also warned that “[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” (“Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People”). Following him, Tom Ridge, the newly selected Homeland Security Director, further specified what is expected of the people in the nation from Homeland Security— “It’s called Homeland Security. While the effort will begin here, it will require the involvement of America at every level. Everyone in the homeland must play a part. I ask the American people for their patience, their awareness and their resolve. This job calls for a national effort” (“Gov. Ridge Sworn-In to Lead Homeland Security”). Such soliciting of participation, loyalty and allegiance, which is also entangled within an imagination of an exceptional and homogeneous American homeland, essentially poses the immigrant questionable

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<sup>24</sup> Tracing the etymology of “Ground Zero” in dictionary, Kaplan pointed out the word strengthens the sense that the world after 9/11 is radically altered and represents a kind of historical exceptionalism. Historical exceptionalism centers on the nation’s uniqueness in time and space thus contributing to historical amnesia, which can be seen in the lack of discussion of disastrous events such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki in comparison to 9/11.

<sup>25</sup> According to Kaplan, the entry of “homeland” in dictionary and its historical variations in meaning evokes meanings of “native origins, of birth place and birthright,” which appeals “common bloodlines, ancient history, and notions of racial and ethnic homogeneity.” In consequence, “homeland” discourse implies spatial fixedness and rootedness which is totally different from traditional American myths such as “a nation of immigrants”, “a melting pot”, “western frontier”, “manifest destiny” and “a nation of futurity” (86).

and suspicious as being someone of a different origin and who may attach him/herself to another place outside America culturally and spiritually. As we can see later in the preventive detention program after 9/11, over 1,500 Arab and Muslim men, most of whom were immigrants, were under arrest without due process while in the end none of them was ever convicted of any crime associated with terrorism (Honigsberg 41).

At the same time, political discourse during the global War on Terror renews a sense of futurity and American benevolence in the public, accelerating aggressive and preemptive actions in the War on Terror in the name of both defending the American homeland and liberating and bringing hope to people on foreign lands. When declaring war on Afghanistan, President Bush claimed that “the oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and our allies. As we strike military targets, we'll also drop food, medicine, and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan” (“Address to the Nation”). Similarly, the war on Iraq is “to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger” and “helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment” (Bush “Operation Iraqi Freedom”). The dropping of bombs was synchronized with dropping food, medicine and supplies, confusing humanitarian assistance with military operations, and America’s military intervention and occupation in Iraq are not only benevolent but also indispensable and selfless in nature.

Yet, America in the age of Homeland Security is also characteristically future-oriented, promising an ever better, progressing and secured American homeland for all. The War in Afghanistan was coded Operation Enduring Freedom, giving a sense of temporal extension to the war’s promise of freedom. The War in Iraq in 2003, coded Operation Iraqi Freedom, was also launched on the promise of freedom, and the President declared that “[w]e will meet that threat now with our army, air force, navy, coastguard and marines so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of firefighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities” (“Operation Iraqi Freedom”). Here preemptive actions are justified for the purpose of securing a future,

regardless of the disparity of future between life in Iraq and life in America. As Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge triumphantly concluded on his observation on Post-9/11 Homeland Security America,

September 11th is a tragic moment, and has not held us back. Rather, it has steered us ever forward, more determined to deliver peace in a world so lacking without it. Because now we know adversity begets unity, unity yields resolve, resolve secures our freedom, and freedom, like hope, does not disappoint. And so when [with] unity, resolve, freedom and hope we will continue in the great work we've been engaged in for nearly two years. Let's forge ahead in the war on terror. (“Remarks of Secretary Tom Ridge”)

The narrative of a future-looking and ever forward America is certainly not unfamiliar, but in the new discourse of homeland security the War on Terror on a global scale becomes a War for the Future in which Americans grapple with terrorism. In this new narrative, the American homeland becomes ever expansive and forwarding both territorially and temporally, positing an unlimited American benevolence to meet the collective needs and well being of humanity but missing the fact that such approach to security “can only be pursued at the violent expense of the security of others” (Kaplan “In the Name of Security” 23).

#### **4.1 The Black Veteran from the Korean War: Trauma, Healing and Homeland in Toni Morrison’s *Home* (2012)**

As one of the most venerated contemporary writers in America, Toni Morrison has been telling and retelling stories of the black experience, steadfastly digging into the racial violence in America from the past to the present. In her tenth novel, *Home* (2012), Morrison continued to focus on black life and this time tells the story of Frank Money, an African American veteran of the Korean War who was discharged from an integrated army and returned to a segregated homeland in America. Suffering from PTSD and haunted by the memories of atrocities and loss during the war, Frank is mentally unstable and unable to start a new life. At the same time, Frank’s story evolves with his rescue of his fragile little sister Cee who is dying from an eugenic

doctor's medical experiment. At last, the troubled brother and sister have to return to the home at Lotus, a small and impoverished Georgia town they both dreaded and later escaped, for the purpose of healing and recovery.

Apparently, *Home* is a story of trauma and healing, but it is not only of Frank and Cee but also for America in the current time. Situating *Home* in the context of War on Terror and the post-9/11 American homeland, I argue that the novel's portrayal of the 1950s America which was disturbed by racism, police violence, and hazardous technological and scientific experiments reveals a nation deeply troubled by the violence and drive of purifying the national community. This revelation also has implications for the current homeland security of America which strengthens the policing of the state and border control and announces a global War on Terror. Binding Frank's traumatic experience in the Korean War with Frank's experience of violence within the American homeland, the novel thus binds America's war abroad with America's violence at home in the entanglement of purifying the national community. Under this binding Frank's PTSD of the Korean War could also be understood as being pathologically interrelated with America's history of racism and ongoing violence at home, and his redemption and healing through going back home and confronting the past. Such healing is realized through Morrison's maneuver of a narrative structuring which forms a dialogical relationship between the author and the protagonist, and emphasizes an integrative and archaeological process that includes the voices of the marginalized as well as an excavation of the obscured but interconnected histories. Looking at the storytelling of trauma and healing in the post-9/11 America, Frank's healing is meaningful for a critical evaluation of a mournful and melancholy national community that risks historical amnesia and mythologization of its own violent past.

Set during the segregated America in the immediate aftermath of the Korean War in the 1950s, the novel embodies the vexed history of America's war abroad and violence at home, and the figure of the African American veteran Frank Money becomes the point of junction where the repressed memories of the Korean War and various kinds of violence in America become

entangled. The returned Frank was traumatized by memories of losing his two best friends and witnessing as well as committing brutal killings. However, the novel starts with Frank's time back in America when he was cuffed and confined in a "nuthouse" and was conspiring to escape. He remembered being sent to the hospital by the police, but could not remember why because he suffered lapses of memory since he returned from the battlefield in Korea. In Frank's contriving of an escape plan, we see that his lapses of memory are possibly self-imposed ones and resulted from his own practices to repress the traumatizing memories that would bring up violent emotions. To dodge the morphine shots that would immobilize him, Frank had to draw on skills he learned during the war when "playing dead face down in a muddy battlefield" (Morrison 7) to imitate semi-coma. The trick is to concentrate on "a single neutral object" that "stirred no feelings, encourage no memory—sweet or shameful" (7-8). It could not be ice, as "[t]oo much emotion attached to frozen hills" (7); or fire, as it is too active; or ocean seen from the deck of a troopship, because it reminds him of the bodies kept below, including his homeboys. The random images and objects could easily find their ways circling back to the Korean War, endangering Frank's mental stability and thus his escape plan from the confinement of the nuthouse. So he practiced hard to concentrate on inventing "neutral objects" that are meaningless and emotionally anesthetizing, hoping to hold back memories related to the Korean War to sooth himself.

Yet, Frank's repression of the Korean War memories and his lapses of memory then turn to entangle with the police violence and racial violence in the American homeland. When Frank manages to sneak off from the fire exit and hid himself in a tiny AME Zion church, the Reverend inquires why he ended up in a hospital instead of in jail, because "[t]hat's where most barefoot, half-dressed folks go" (13). Frank answers that he remembered nothing except the loud, real noise:

Other than that B-29 roar, exactly what he was doing to attract police attention, was long gone. He couldn't explain it to himself, let alone to a gentle couple offering help. If he wasn't in a fight was he peeing on the sidewalk? Hollering

curses at some passerby, some schoolchildren? Was he banging his head on a wall or hiding behind bushes in somebody's backyard. (17)

The B-29 roar alludes to the bombing of Korea and suggests a recent breakdown of Frank that he occasionally suffers as part of his PTSD syndrome, but Frank's understanding of his confinement as well as Reverend's question reveal the intensity of policing in everyday life. As we see in the novel, the fatal flaw of Frank's escape plan and his journey back to Georgia is his lack of a pair of shoes, because he would be sentenced for "vagrancy"— "being barefoot would contradict 'purposefulness' and standing still could prompt a complaint of 'loitering'" (9). Frank's journey to the South continues to show the prevalence and cruelty of police violence that are particularly targeted on the marginalized people. In Chicago, he met Billy, a kind-hearted steel worker who offered to accommodate him at home. At Billy's home Frank met Billy's eight-year-old son who lost one arm when he was pointing his cap pistol on the sidewalk and was shot by a drive-by cop. As Billy told Frank, "Cops shoot anything they want. This here's a mob city" (31). And the next day, the two were caught in a random police search who confiscated anything valuable without a reason. Apparently, the police violence is particularly targeted on the poor and underprivileged people, further marginalizing them in their own neighborhood and cities.

Meanwhile, Frank's PTSD symptom is also framed as a "color-blind" eye problem, further entangling his Korean War trauma with racial violence within the borders of America. Frank noticed that his break into "uncontrollable, suspicious, destructive, and illegal" (22) PTSD episode has a sign: the first time he had a breakdown, he thought he had an eye infection and was going to be color-blind. He began to see colors draining— "All color disappeared and the world became a black-and-white movie screen" (23). Then the shouting, smashing, or accosting strangers would come later when "his shame and its fury exploded" (24). Since then whenever the sign of color draining and color-blindness returned, he knew his break was coming, along with those haunting images. Some pictures and images would always come:

he saw a boy pushing his entrails back in, holding them in his palm like a fortune-teller's globe shattering with bad news; or he heard a boy with only the bottom

half of his face intact, the lips calling mama. And he was stepping over them, around them, to stay alive, to keep his own face from dissolving, his own colorful guts under that oh-so-thin sheet of flesh. (20)

It is only revealed later in the novel that these pictures of the boys are deformations of the dying scenes of Frank's best friends, Mike and Stuff, in the battlefield. Thus, Frank's color-blindness signaled PTSD symptom with his repressed and deformed memories in the Korean War symbolically points to the connection between the forgotten Korean War and America's racism at home.

Such violence in policing and racism develops with Frank's escape from his medical confinement and the story of rescuing his sister Cee who is dying from a eugenic doctor's medical and scientific experiments. Dreading to come back home without his homeboys, Frank wanders in the city of Seattle until he receives a mysterious message from an unknown stranger Sarah: "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (8). Cee is a vulnerable young girl and had been protected by Frank until he went to Korea. With the loss of protection, the death of the parents and the hatefulness of the grandparents, Cee ran off with a man but was quickly abandoned. To support herself, Cee works as an assistant in Dr. Beau's house. Cee trusts and admires Dr. Beau for his good, rich and safe home as well as his crowded bookshelves and his respected scientific inventions and medical treatment for people, including the poor. However, when Cee with awe examines the bookshelf, she finds books such as *Out of the Night*, *The Passing of the Great Race*, and *Heredity, Race and Society*. Seeing these books, Cee regrets for her small and useless schooling, and "promised herself she would find time to read about and understand 'Eugenics'" (65). These books, writing about Nazism, eugenics, race and science, eludes the entangled history of racism and science and technology; and their open exhibition in a doctor's bookshelves, together with Cee's indiscriminate awe for the science and knowledge represented by these books, only makes evident the way that science and technology may not necessarily eliminate ignorance and bring about progress to humanity. Instead, in the dark side of scientific and medical experiments, the poor, the colored and the other marginalized people were

sacrificed, just like Cee. Cee becomes the guinea pig of Dr. Beau who has become so interested in wombs and invented instruments to see farther and farther into them. When Frank finally comes to Cee, what is left is a feather-like, unconscious and bleeding Cee who is revealed to be sterilized in Dr. Beau's experiments. Cee's experience with Dr. Beau explains that the doctor's willingness to treat the poor people may not be innocent, and tentatively gestures to Frank's confinement in a mental illness institution, exemplifying the way the undesirable such as the poor and colored people became the most accessible targets and victims in their own community.

In this way, Frank's journey to go back to the South and rescue Cee gradually brings together different episodes and forms of the marginalized life. They all reveal the prevalence of violence in the 1950s America. More importantly, the unbridled police violence, the racial violence, and the hazardous medical experiments and practices all prove an underlying motive and logic of purifying the national community of America. In this perspective, binding the Korean War abroad with America's violence at home demonstrates a shared logic in that ultimately anticommunism in the name of national security is another morphed form of violent act to purify the national community ideologically. The logic in essence does not change much today, and Morrison's revelation of a 1950s America serves as a reference to look into America's homeland security today in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

For one thing, Morrison's depiction of the 1950s America ultimately resembles an America becoming increasingly driven by homeland security and the War on Terror. After the 9/11 attacks, concerns of national security have surged and actions are quickly taken to strengthen law enforcement, border control and scientific and technological support of homeland security. Besides the official announcement of War on Terror on a global scale, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 created a powerful Department of Homeland Security which strengthens domestic policing and stated that "the law enforcement partners at the state, local, tribal, territorial, and campus levels are essential to our Nation's domestic defense and our border, shared mission of protecting our communities from all threats" ("Law Enforcement

Partnerships”). Also being combined is greater support and organization on national, local, university and private level of scientific and technological research in facilitating border policing to separate “undesirables” from “desirables” (Andreas 107). Consequently, Morrison’s portrayal of a violence-plagued America in the entanglement of policing, racism, and science and technology heeds an America driven by homeland security and unmask a historical linearity of the drive and logic of purifying the national community here and there, and whether it is in wars against communism or the war against terrorism.

For another, Morrison’s revisiting of the 1950s also responds to an America that mourns for her trauma and loss and seeks for revenge as well as healing. As Morrison explained, she chose to look at the 1950s America because she was “generally interested in taking the fluff and the veil and the flowers away from the ‘50s’ when in reality the Korean War, called a ‘police action,’ was taking away lives of 53,000 soldiers, McCarthyism was ravaging, the black people were killed right and left, the LSD were experimented on soldiers, and the syphilis experimentations were carried on black men in Tuskegee” (“Interview Toni Morrison” Bollen).

Morrison’s drive to repudiate a glorified and mythologized 1950s America and to take its scab off needs to be contextualized in the surge and reinforcement of the language of loss, vulnerability, innocence and trauma in a mournful America after the 9/11 attacks. In President Bush’s speech immediately after the attacks, he explained to the American people and the world that terrorism targeted America because “we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world,” and mourned that “the huge structures collapsing have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger” (“9/11 Address to the Nation” Bush). At the same time, media broadcasting, news reports, as well as cultural and political discourses were enmeshed in vocabularies such as “Ground Zero,” “Homeland,” and “Homeland Security,” constituting a narrative of historical exceptionalism, historical amnesia and melancholy of a mythical and homogeneous past that Kaplan critically questioned and challenged. It is in this ambiance of mourning and melancholia that the decade of the 1950s and its revisiting becomes

particularly meaningful and reflective. Indeed, the decade of the 1950s has been loaded with mythological meanings and metaphoric overtones since the Reagan administration; and it was repeatedly painted by television shows and neoconservatives with quintessential images of “happy families and safe neighborhoods, the homespun quality of simple American virtues, the innocence and predictability of it all” (Caputi 6).

Reading from this perspective, Morrison’s *Home* and her writing of the Korean War offers a historical analogy to critically screen the homeland security of America today with its culture of mourning and call for revenge. The glorification of a 1950s America and the melancholia for a time of American safety, certainty and innocence largely obscure the history of violence and deprivation of marginalized people. Morrison’s focus on Frank and his trauma of the Korean War makes the point that anger and shame always go hand in hand and what is concealed and repressed in “big-time” mourning may be guilt and shame. After witnessing his homeboys’ miserable deaths and being unable to rescue them, Frank started his reckless killing of Korean civilians, as if it would make up for the deaths of his best friends. Yet, in Frank’s haunting images of the Korean War, before his best buddies and homeboys there remains a Korean little girl, the slightest invocation of whom could always startle Frank and trigger a breakdown. Earlier in the novel, Frank narrated that he met a young Korean girl scavenging in the GI camp’s garbage dump. In Frank’s eye, the starved child was even less choosy than raccoons, and he felt compassion for the girl as she reminded him of his little sister Cee and his childhood memory when Cee and he tried to “steal peaches off the ground under Miss Robinson’s tree, sneaking, crawling, being as quiet as we could so she wouldn’t see us and grab a belt” (Morrison 94). However, soon Frank witnessed the horror that his relief guard came over and blew her away when the girl touched the soldier’s crotch and aroused him, and since then the image of the Korean child lingers in Frank’s mind and troubles him.

Nevertheless, it is not exposed until the end when Frank came back to his hometown and decided to confront his past that he himself was the soldier who was touched, aroused and then murdered the little girl. In pain Frank at last in his own voice confessed:

I have to say something to you right now. I have to tell the whole truth. I lied to you and I lied to me. I hid it from you because I hid it from me. I felt so proud grieving over my dead friends. How I loved them. How much I cared about them, missed them. My mourning was so thick it completely covered my shame.

...

I shot the Korean girl in her face.

I am the one she touched.

I am the one who saw her smile.

I am the one she said “Yum-yum” to.

I am the one she aroused.

A Child. A wee little child.

I didn't think. I didn't have to.

Better she should die.

How could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn't know was in me?

How could I like myself, even be myself, if I surrendered to that place where I unzip my fly and let her taste me right then and there? (133-134)

With his confession of guilt, we realize Frank's own complicity in his PTSD syndrome and lapses of memories, as the trauma is fossilized in Frank through his repression of shame and his amnesia of killing and guilt. Consequently, Frank's story behind his Korean War trauma not only explains the intimate relationship between shame, anger and trauma. More importantly, it offers the possibility of healing through delineating an inward look into one's own trauma that goes against historical exceptionalism and amnesia which are inherently morbid and ultimately defer healing. Instead, an incisive backtracking of Frank's past in Korea releases all memories, including those that harbor shame and guilt, and finally casts some light on what is at the core of Frank's trauma.

As can be seen from Frank's painful confession, Frank's killing of the young child is prompted by his anger and self-loathing that the girl took him down to a shameful place—being

aroused by a child who reminded him of his fragile and cherished sister Cee. In essence, this is a painful degradation of manhood for Frank, and reveals the meaning of another symbolic figure of a zoot-suited man in a wide-brimmed hat that also haunts Frank. The zoot-suite man, however, points to his traumatic experience with “manhood” even before the Korean War. With the progression of the narrative that documents Frank’s journey back to his hometown and rescue Cee, the meaning of those images haunting Frank gradually became clear and emerged in Frank’s memory telling what really happened in Korea. However, a funny zoot-suited man remained confounding. At first, the zoot-suited figure appeared in tandem with his PTSD syndrome, which implicates it is somewhat related to his Korean War experience. However, it seems impossible to find a corresponding incident or figure in reality during Frank’s time in Korea. Indeed, the significance and meaning of the zoot-suited man can hardly be fully understood without a historicization of the “zoot suit” and unless Frank comprehends the essence of his Korean War trauma in relation to his degraded self in America’s raced past that goes beyond the Korean War. The zoot suits were particularly popular among minority communities in the 1940s America. On one hand it became one of the “certain pro forma ways in which you can prove you’re a man” (Bollen “Toni Morrison’s Haunting Resonance”); on the other hand, it garnered a racist reputation particularly in the zoot suits riots during World War Two when minority community members such as Mexican American and African American young men were attacked.<sup>26</sup> Thus the assertion of manhood versus a racist degradation of manhood is particularly symbolized on the figure of the zoot suited man in the novel, and forces us to look further into the problem of “manhood” that troubles Frank during the Korean War but also in the years before the Korean War in the 1940s when Frank was still a child. At that time, he once sneaked into a farmland with Cee and saw a herd of beautiful horses. It was awe-inspiring for Frank who relishes in his memory their dignity and strength—“They rose up like men. We saw them. Like men they stood” (1). However, following this scene which was full of beauty, dignity

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<sup>26</sup> In the summer of 1943 California, a series of conflicts in which American servicemen attacked minority youths where were zoot suited, because the zoot suit was considered unpatriotic for the wartime America as making such suit needs a lot of fabric while rationing of the fabric was required at the war time effort.

and awe is the scene of death and burial and the memory of fear and cruelty: on their way crawling back Frank and Cee witnessed in silence that a group of men violently whacked a body and dumped it into the mud. That body was revealed to be a murdered black man in the end of the novel.

These apparently random images of homeboys, the Korean little girl, the zoot-suited man, the man-like horses are pieced together to reveal the meaning, the interrelatedness and the truth about “manhood” through Morrison’s narrative structuring that forms a dialogical relationship between the author and the protagonist Frank. Such a structuring provides a scaffolding for what Maxine Montgomery refers to as the authorial effort “to excavate obscure moments in our national history, reconstructing them from the vantage point of the marginalized subjects who witnessed those events first hand (322). Yet, by incorporating the marginalized views and voices, the dialogical structuring also creates an archeological and integrative process of remembering and healing that does not substantiate the historical exceptionalism that Kaplan warns of for the homeland security America. Through the novel, between chapters of Morrison’s authorial telling of Frank’s story is inserted with Frank’s short recounting of his own story in his own voice. In his storytelling, Frank not only develops his memories for the past depending on the events and people described in Morrison’s authorial telling; he also directly speaks to the author, adds details and incidents, and later even revises the author’s storytelling.

While earlier in the novel, we see a Frank with fragmented memories, unaware of the meaning of the lingering and the deformed images, and even passive in remembering, he begins to change with the progression of the narration and through the dialogical interaction. In the opening chapter, while he wonders the beauty and strength of the horses in his memory, he asserts to the author: “*While you’re set on telling my story, whatever you think and whatever you write down, know this: I really forgot about the burial. I only remembered the horses. They were so beautiful. So brutal. And they stood like men*” (5). Yet, with the author’s depiction of the racial segregation and police violence along his journey back to Georgia, Frank came up in his

own memory of another journey in his childhood when his family, together with other black families, were forced to move out from their original hometown in Texas by white racists. Later Frank also turns to be a more active voice, revising the story told by the author. For example, on the train to Chicago, the author describes an incident that a black couple was beaten by a white mob when they went into a segregated convenience store for coffee. In the author's storytelling, Frank thought that the husband will beat the wife over and over again when they are home because "[w]hat was intolerable was the witness of a woman, a wife, who not only saw it, but had dared to try to rescue—rescue!—him" (26). After the author's writing of his romantic relationship with Lily, Frank began to reflect on his love and clinch to the woman: "Something about her floored me, made me want to be good enough for her" (69). Building on that reflection, he turns back to relate to the previous event on train and is able to revise the author's depiction of the beating incident:

Earlier you wrote about how sure I was that the beat-up man on the train to Chicago would turn around when they got home and whip the wife who tried to help him. Not true. I didn't think that any such thig. What I thought was that he was proud of her but didn't want to show how proud he was to the other men on the train. I don't think you know much about love. (69)

Through their continuous interaction, Frank's homeward journey becomes a mosaic process of excavating the past and revising and splicing together the meanings and histories behind those divergent images and incidents. In this process, Frank's PTSD syndrome gradually decreases with his memories restored and his own effort to unveil the interconnection between seemingly divergent images in memory. On his way back, Frank himself "suddenly realized that those memories, powerful as they were, did not crush him anymore or throw him into paralyzing despair. He could recall every detail, every sorrow, without needing alcohol to steady him" (101). And towards the end of the storytelling when Frank successfully takes Cee back to their home in Lotus, Frank himself even begins to try to reveal the interconnection between the past and the present and subsequently initiated his own release of the repressed true memory of the

Korean War. When Cee tells her sorrow of being sterilized and seeing a baby girl waiting to be born, Frank relates that unborn girl to the Korean girl: “*Maybe that little girl wasn’t waiting around to be born to her. Maybe it was already dead, waiting for me to set up and say how*” (133). It is at this point Frank was able to turn to the truth of the past and made his confession of the murder: “*I shot the Korean girl in her face*” (133).

The confession of the guilt allows a deeper understanding of mourning for Frank and reveals how mourning fossilizes trauma—“*I felt so proud grieving over my dead friends. How I loved them. My mourning was so thick it completely covered my shame*” (133). More importantly, it enables a further archaeological reconstruction of the past through which Frank actively tries to untie the entanglement of “manhood” and recover what he claimed to have forgotten about—“the burial”—in the opening. In the end, after confessing, Frank goes on to investigate the story of the “forbidden farmland.” Talking and interviewing the old men of the neighborhood, Frank finally learned the farmland was a “dogfight” battlefield in the 1940s where black people were brought there to run live-or-die fights. The body Frank saw was from a game that a father and a son were forced to fight against each other for survival. In the game the father ordered the son to kill himself to let his son to live, and at last the game ended with a dead father and a devastated son. With that revelation, Frank went back to the burial site with Cee and reburied the bones with a grave stone: “Here Stands A Man” (145). Until then, the deceased could rest in peace and the figure of the zoot-suited man was gone while Frank was truly able to heal without repressing, forgetting and deforming the past.

Therefore, it is with the reconstruction of the past through a dialogical narration that the past is de-mythologized and the history of violence is unveiled. The beauty and strength of the horses Frank remembered in the opening is revealed in the end a misleading illusion and an ironic antinomy of the brutal degradation of manhood for black people in their homeland. Such a narrative structuring allows the marginalized people such as Frank to tell history in their own voices, but also demonstrates a way of healing that resists amnesia, melancholia and

mythologizing the past. This process of healing is particularly meaningful for a mournful and melancholy America in the post-9/11 era, and the narrative's archaeological and integrative search for interconnectedness and meaning at last also gives an analogy to critically think about the 9/11 attacks and a global War on Terror in a globalizing world. Indeed, if we bind discursive histories and memories here and there, past and present, we would find the rise of terrorism is closely related to the Cold War rivalry between America and the Soviet Union, and Osama bin Laden's rise to power was facilitated by America's own covert activities in the Middle East and CIA's financial as well as weapon supplies to him. Following the excavation of histories, it would not be surprising that the revenge and anger for warfare may prove to harbor a displaced shame that fossilizes amnesia and repression of the wrong-doings in the nation's history.

In the end, Morrison's writing of the Korean War is not only to recover a forgotten war, and her story of trauma and healing is not only for Frank and Cee. *Home* at last provides a historical analogy to look at America in the age of Homeland Security and the War on Terror, and discusses trauma and healing for a national community that acts quickly in policing, preemptive operations and border control to differentiate and eliminate undesirables. The similarities of the violence in a segregated 1950s America and a homeland security America in the 2000s speak to a historical linearity of the nation's drive and logic of purifying the national community. It also warns against a mournful and revengeful America that announces warfare too quickly and mythologizes a homogeneous and innocent past. The true healing and moving forward, as the novel's dialogical narrative structuring shows, may only occur through a critical historicization of the nation's trauma in relation to its own history of violence and through an inclusive excavation of the obscured past.

#### **4.2 Build Your Home out of Garlands of Words: Imprisonment, Migration and Language in Ha Jin's *War Trash* (2004)**

While armistice talks started as early as 1951 during the Korean War, the two sides quickly came to a deadlock because of the disputes on repatriating war prisoners. The battle and

fighting lasted for two more years with more prisoners captured from both sides and much greater human toll and destruction ensuing. As a matter of fact, the issue of war prisoners became the most contentious subject since the summer of 1951, when both sides turned to political warfare in the truce talk and used war prisoners for political propaganda when any military victory became elusive for both sides. America invented a humanitarian “voluntary repatriation” and the anticommunist prisoners within the camp were encouraged to generate defections as well as terror. On the contrary, China and North Korea demanded an unconditional repatriation of all war prisoners and accused America of violating the Geneva Convention and using prisoners as “a transparent trick to kidnap soldiers and embarrass their governments with mass desertions” (Young 5). The bodies of POWs were highly politicized, and their allegiance and affiliation were solicited in the Cold War ideological contest as important political leverage. Especially among the Chinese war prisoners in the U.N./U.S. controlled camps, political utilization and solicitation of defection brought up tremendous violence and terror. The U.N./U.S. camps turned to be a micro-scale civil war and an ideological conflict for the Chinese prisoners when loyal communist soldiers and former Nationalist soldiers wrestled against each other. Such violence was further escalated with pro-Nationalist Americans who let intelligence operatives worked inside the camps to “build the community of defectors” (Young 6).

Focusing on the Chinese war prisoners during the Korean War, the Chinese American writer Ha Jin revisits the Korean War in his novel *War Trash* (2004) and tells the story of Yu Yuan who survived the ideological contention within the UN/ U.S. camps and migrated to America after the 9/11 attacks. In this section, I analyze the way that Ha Jin’s storytelling of the Korean War provides a historical lens to look at the War on Terror and a post-9/11 homeland security America. Indeed, the story of *War Trash* is as much about the Korean War as about “home,” as Yu Yuan’s story centers on his desire to go back to his home. His painful experience in the camp politics of allegiance and loyalty between Communists and Nationalists serves as an allegory to understand the current politics of homeland security of America which demands a

choice between America and Terrorism. Further, I analyze Ha Jin's peculiar migration between languages—his translation and appropriation of the Chinese document of the Korean War prisoners, *Meijun Jizhongying Qinli Ji* (Personal records in the American prisoner camps), in his fictional writing in English as well as his use of English that is characteristic of translationese. The novel of *War Trash* is largely based on details in *Meijun jizhongying qinliji* edited by Zhang Zeshi, which translates, reorders and transforms materials in the Chinese source to create Yu Yuan's story in English. As a matter of fact, the two texts were so closely tied together that Zhang charged Ha Jin of plagiarism. The controversy was widely debated on the Chinese media, but its legal and ethical complications are beyond the reach of my analysis here. Instead, from a literary perspective, I focus on Ha Jin's creation of an individual voice based on the Chinese historical materials and his purposeful playfulness of language that characterizes foreignness, translationese and the ambiguity between history and fiction in the novel. I argue that Ha Jin's storytelling represents a literary form of border crossing and destabilization that challenges the increasing border control and anti-immigrant national identity in the post-9/11 homeland security America. Specifically, through appropriating history in fictional writing, and mobilizing a fabricated and neutral voice of Yu Yuan that dismantles the collective identity of the Chinese document, Ha Jin uses a linguistic form of migration, transformation and betrayal to destabilize the political restrictions imposed by a collective narrative and identity that solicits allegiance and objectifies the individual for use and manipulation. Moreover, Ha Jin's use of language that characterizes border crossing between English and Chinese, and history and fiction, also creates a space of his own that refuses affiliation and allegiance, a space that defamiliarizes the linguistic and thus ethnic homogeneity imagined in the national identity of American homeland.

*War Trash* is fashioned as a realist historical novel that is based on Ha Jin's extensive historical research and is narrated in the form of a memoir. The novel opens with Yu Yuan's monologue in a present-day context of America. He came to America to write his memoir of the Korean War experience for fear of the harassment by state authorities in China, but he

remembered how his heart “fluttered like a trapped pigeon” (Ha 3) when he was clearing customs in Atlanta and encountered the border control security in a post-911 America. Yu Yuan was afraid that “the husky, cheerful-voiced officer might suspect something—that he might lead me into a room and order me to undress. The tattoo could have caused me to be refused entry to the States” (3). The tattoo, ingrained on Yu Yuan’s stomach that says “Fuck...U...S...,” remains a constant source of anxiety even after he passed the border security. When he walks along the streets in America, “a sudden consternation will overtake me, as though an invisible hand might grip the front of my shirt and pull it out of my belt to reveal my secret to passerby” (4) and no matter however hot the summer day is, Yu Yuan would not unbutton his shirt for fear of revealing the tattoo. The tattoo, as revealed later in Yu Yuan’s story, is a legacy from the Korean War when he was abducted by the Nationalist Chinese prisoners and was forced to be tattooed with “FUCK COMMUNISM” as a label of political allegiance to the Nationalist authority in Taiwan. The tattooing was also used as a method to coerce Yuan’s choice of non-repatriation. But when Yu Yuan managed to survive the coercion and violence in the prisoner camp and was repatriated to mainland China due to his intense love and attachment to his home, his mother, and his fiancée Julan, Yuan had to transform the original to “FUCK...U...S...” The transformed tattoo protected Yuan in China through the political turmoil, but now it turned to be a source of suspicion and anxiety again in America, constantly threatening Yuan’s status in America.

The tattoo on Yuan’s body thus symbolizes a sustained political violence from the Korean War to the War on Terror today, and as Joseph Darda argues, Ha Jin’s framing of the Korean War in the present day homeland security America foregrounds “the global systems of biopower that underwrote it and continue to regulate life in today’s militarized global community” (88). Indeed, Ha Jin’s representation of the war prisoner exemplifies again the condition of “bare life” theorized by Giorgio Agamben and his writing of the U.N./U.S. controlled prisoner camps also reveals violence normalized in “the state of exception.” Yet, the central role played by the tattoo in Yu Yuan’s story points to a form of political confinement and power

relations that is embodied in a language that solicits ideological and political allegiance and loyalty.

As we can see in the novel, the tattooed allegiance, whether it was “FUCK COMMUNISM” or “FUCK...U...S...,” manifests a kind of power relationship that leaves no choice and freedom for the marginalized, whether it is in the context of the U.N./U.S. controlled prisoner camp, in Communist China, or in homeland security America. While Americans did not execute or torture war prisoners publicly in the camps, the camp head and officers were pro-Nationalists who were handpicked, trained and appointed by American military authorities. These men further consolidated a hierarchy that resembled the Nationalist army and gained complete control of the camps through terror and violence. The pro-Nationalists left no room for a neutral ground and “believed that whoever intended to return to mainland China must be a Communist or a pro-Communist” (Ha 65) and those wanted repatriation were marginalized in small and shabby tents with worse and less food and equipment. The officers even publicly punished and executed staunch Chinese Communists to deter those who wanted repatriation. For people like Yu Yuan who only wanted to go back home for their families, the choice of returning home was delegitimized and equal to betrayal in the eye of the pro-Nationalist authority. And one night, Yuan was hit and abducted, and he was tattooed a political allegiance of anticommunism unconsciously. The forced tattoo terrified Yuan when he woke up— “With these words on me how could I return China? Tears gushed out of my eyes, though I squeezed my lids to force them back. As if stabbed in the heart, I blacked out again” (98). The tattoo operates as a kind of political confinement on Yu Yuan, repressing his longing for home and precluding his alternative choice against the Pro-Nationalist power. However, Yu Yuan’s enormous fear when seeing the tattoo and his frightened thought that he would never be able to go home again also demonstrate that this form of political confinement not only works for the Nationalist authority but also for the Communist authority. The authorities, whether in Taiwan or in mainland China, both shared an expansive authoritative power and Yuan was in the minority in both cases. As a

consequence, the words of allegiance became ultimately dissociated from meaning and turned into a technology of imprisonment by those in power to regulate, which further marginalizes and silences those in the minority. Even the fact that Yuan's transformed tattoo "FUCK...U...S..." protected Yuan in the communist China for almost five decades is another instance that meaning is irrelevant in the words of allegiance and it is only meaningful in embodying those in power.

Moreover, situated in a power hierarchy, the subject of "homeland," which naturally arouses feelings of belongingness for ordinary people, became the most controversial and elusive and was intertwined with a politicized narrative of severing, betrayal and loss. When the screening for (non)repatriation was to start, the frequency as well as intensity of violence and coercion skyrocketed in the pro-Nationalists controlled camps. Both sides, the Nationalists and the Communists, were engaged in making and contending on the meaning of homeland. Urging the prisoners to choose Taiwan, the compound head Han Shu, a Nationalist officer, delivered a speech:

"Brothers, we're all human beings, made of the same flesh and blood, so we dread pain, hunger, and death. We're often driven by the instinct for self-preservation. Like every one of you, I miss home a lot and often dream of my parents and siblings, soaking my pillow with tears at night. But I don't want to be tortured and butchered like a worthless animal, so I've decided to leave for the Free World, to wander as a homeless man for the rest of my life. Our tragedy is that our homeland is no longer a place where we can live decently like human beings. Then why should we return?" (103-104)

At the same time, Nationalist officers tortured and executed those communists who dared to claim returning to the mainland in public. Lin Wushen, a staunch Communist, unflinchingly claimed that "Taiwan is not our homeland" (104). To him, his home is on the mainland and he "was born in China. Where else should I go" (107). Other Communists, like Lin Wushen, were at last brutally executed for insisting on repatriation because China is where their home and thus the homeland where they should go back. Looking into their claims of homeland, it is clear that although the Nationalists and the Communists have opposing political allegiance and made

adverse choices, the meaning of homeland is ironically consistent—the homeland is where one was born and is attached to a piece of land where one’s home originally was. The binding of homeland with a physical place and the original home thus strengthens a sense of invariance in the meaning of “homeland” and makes it permanently threatened by loss, abandonment and betrayal. Enmeshed in the ideological contention in the camps, such narrative of homeland became highly politicized and confused with political allegiance to restrain the choices of prisoners who were sandwiched between the Nationalists and the Communists.

Similarly, looking at *War Trash*’s framing in the post-9/11 homeland security state, the discourse of allegiance embodies an expansive state power of America and the logic of homeland further poses the domestic against the foreign, thus making the immigrant a vulnerable target for political restrictions and in a permanent status of uncertainty with the swing of politics. With Yu Yuan’s arrival in America, his tattoo lost its charm and became a constant concern. Indeed, when President Bush called every nation to make a decision between America and terrorists, allegiance and affiliation became an either/or choice and thus an anti-American tattoo turned to Yu Yuan’s claim of allegiance to terrorism. Meanwhile, as a foreign national Yu Yuan’s presence in America became a questionable one in that the homeland imagined in the discourse of homeland security, as Kaplan points out, “underwrites a resurgent nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment and policy” (87). Looking from this perspective, Yu Yuan’s struggle in the prisoner camp between the Nationalists and the Communist during the Korean War could be understood as an allegory of “homeland” and ultimately points to the current homeland security America in the war against terrorism. It reveals the similar power relationship and political restrictions imposed on minorities and a tension between the collective and the marginalized individual.

Therefore, to critically think about homeland security America, we need to rethink the meaning of homeland, and in *War Trash* Ha Jin employs language, in particular through migration and border crossing in languages, to counter the political restrictions and anti-

immigrant sentiment in the homeland security discourse and policies. As Ha Jin commented, the English word "homeland" has two meanings:

One is a place of origin and the other refers to where your home is. Conventionally the two are very easy to reconcile because there is very little division between the two meanings. But now the dichotomy is more obvious, and more meaningful in a way. So now when we talk about home, it's an issue of return. It's also a matter of arrival. If a home can be created, can be made, then home is in the process of becoming, instead of [being] fixed in the past. ("Writing without Borders")

The increasing dichotomy Ha Jin points out is caused by transnational mobility, migration and diaspora that increasingly characterize the world today. As a diasporic Chinese American writer, Ha Jin admits the deeply hurt of the immigrant experience which "involves truncation of one's old life and the painful creation of a new life" (Shoup & Denman 176). However, his immigrant experience also leads to his rejection of the imagination of homeland that is fixed in the past; instead, homeland can be reached through the process of creating and "your homeland is where you build your home" (Ha *A Free Life* 635). Ha Jin's drive to redefine homeland is particularly akin to the storytelling of *War Trash* and is reflected in the way his intertextual alteration of Zhang's *Meijun Jizhongying Qinliji* (1995) (Personal records in the American prisoner camps) foregrounds the tension between the collective and the individual.

*War Trash* is narrated by the neutral voice of Yu Yuan, an intellectual/soldier who moved and navigated between the Nationalists, the Communists, and the Americans while working as a translator in the prisoner camp, and such voice of Yuan functions to critique a collective identity represented in "we" as well as in a national identity that often solicits allegiance and loyalty. Yu Yuan's experience and story is largely based on and sometimes translated from factual events and details accounted in Zhang's book, which is essentially a collective story of struggles recounted by different previous Chinese war prisoners and was documented and edited together by Zhang. Therefore, through assembling and reordering historical facts and figures in Zhang's book, Ha Jin instead dismantles a collective identity in his re-creation of Yu Yuan's individual

voice. The breakdown of the collective identity comes from Ha Jin's critique of the pressing drive for loyalty and allegiance from the pronoun "we" on the individual and the marginalized. Yet, this is further revealed by the novel's mobilization of Yu Yuan's voice in transforming and tailoring the account of Zhang's book.

As a fictional character, Yu Yuan often transforms the historical experience of the Chinese war prisoners through his fabricated voice and internal monologue. A major episode that appropriates the historical account of Zhang's book is the depiction of the abduction of General Bell, which is based on Zhang's writing of the real incident of General Dodd's abduction. In Zhang's account General Dodd, the U.S. commandant on Koje island, was kidnapped by North Korean prisoners with the help of the Chinese prisoners and was held captive in the North Korean prisoner compound for a conference that included prisoner representatives from all compounds on Koje island. The experience was remembered as a collective victory of prisoners and communist comrades against the American enemy. The act was also a demonstration of ideological and national loyalty of the pro-Communist prisoners. Before the conference, Zhang visited General Dodd with another Chinese comrade and talked shortly with him.

Ha Jin's novel re-presents the scene of Zhang's visit and conversation in Yu Yuan's voice and perspective. They briefly compared the treatment of the captured General with the treatment of the war prisoners by Americans:

"What do you think of the way we treat you here?"

The general looked puzzled, not having expected that the Korean prisoners represented us Chinese as well. I too was a little surprised by the collective pronoun "we." Then Bell realized the meaning of the question and muttered, "Yes, I can say the Communists have accommodated me well." (Ha *War Trash* 167)

Inserted in the conversation is a fabricated internal monologue of Yu Yuan questioning the pronoun "we." The internal monologue in essence is a metafictional comment on the collective

identity under the term communism and its legitimacy of representation, shifting the focus on ideological conflict between Americans and communists in the original conversation to a conflict between the collective and the individual in the fictional writing.

In fact, Yu Yuan, with his ability to mediate between English and Chinese, functions to traverse the line between “us” and the enemy, and his voice becomes a key element in transcending the political restrictions imposed by political allegiance. Instead, Yu Yuan’s voice is used to foreground the tension between the collective and the individual. After the kidnapping incident, Yu Yuan and his comrades were sent to “the top jail” on Koje island as “war criminals.” The novel depicts a conversation between Yu Yuan and an American Lieutenant East who defended General Bell: “General Bell is a good man. He played basketball with us. He’s a powerful pitcher. Many guys here miss him. He treated you Reds well, didn’t he?” (192). Thinking of Lieutenant East’s remarks, Yu Yuan comments that the conversation is upsetting for him:

What surprised me most was that he hadn’t thought of the incident in the way an officer should. He took it personally, thinking of General Bell as a specific individual. That made East different, though he still regarded me as no more than a Red. His words jolted me into a sudden realization. Before the conversation with him I had felt misgivings about the wisdom of confronting the vengeful enemy with force, but my thoughts had remained vague in the back of my mind. Now they had crystalized. To be able to function in a war, an officer was expected to view his men as abstract figures so that he could utilize and sacrifice them without any hesitation or qualms. The same abstraction was supposed to take place among the rank and file too—to us every American serviceman must be a devil, whereas to them, every one of us must be a Red. Without such obliteration of human particularities, how could one fight mercilessly? When a general evaluates the outcome of a battle, he thinks in numbers—how many casualties the enemy has suffered in comparison with the losses of his own army. The larger the victory is, the more people have been turned into numerals. (192-193)

Yu Yuan’s ability to speak English enables him to converse with Lieutenant East and thus makes possible the exchange of an alternative perspective on General Bell and his abduction that

transcends the linguistic, national and ideological boundaries. His subsequent private reflection on the “human particularities” directly questions the way that in the politics of allegiance between America and the Reds, individual human being is abstracted and humanity is diminished on both sides to become war machines and war waste.

The fabricated monologues, conversations, and occasions demonstrated here, yet, are also a narrative betrayal of Yu Yuan’s claim that “I’m going to tell my story in a documentary manner so as to preserve historical accuracy” (5) in the very beginning of the novel. The fabrications that transform the personal accounts in Zhang’s documentation obscure the boundary between history and fiction and renders allegiance impossible and even treacherous.

Such betrayal and border crossing in the narrative form are further played out through Yu Yuan’s voice that is characteristic of translationese, which is stylistically “scattered with linguistic glitches that compromises the reading experience. Too often, passages of dialogue read unidiomatically or like clumsy translations from the Chinese” (Lovell “Fighting for Mao”). In fact, in Yu Yuan’s monologue, redundancy, nominalization, and unidiomatic syntax are common in sentences such as “Before the conversation with him I had felt misgivings about the wisdom of confronting the vengeful enemy with force” (192); and idioms translated literally from Chinese scattered in Yu Yuan’s memoir, such as “if we’re alive, we’re Chinese men; if we’re dead, we’re Chinese ghosts” (179). The translationese characterizes both Yu Yuan and Ha Jin’s fictional writing in English as being foreign and awkward. It defamiliarizes storytelling in standard English while at the same time highlighting the identity of the narrator as an immigrant and foreigner. Commenting on Ha Jin’s writing of Un-American topic in English, Haoming Gong argues that “the disjunction between language and subject matter in Ha Jin’s writing renders problematic the idea of national myth-making, a concept which ordinarily assumes the unity of national language, culture, and customs” (154). In this sense, Yu Yuan’s memoir of the Korean War and the Chinese POWs in English problematizes the unity of a national identity imagined in a homogeneous national literature either of China or of America. Yet, the sense of

foreignness, variation, and instability achieved through Ha Jin's intentional linguistic crippling of English and appropriation from Chinese, is largely intended for the American audience and practically untranslatable for the Chinese audience in that the meaning and playfulness would be totally lost when translated back into Chinese. Therefore, in the end Ha Jin's literary choice and linguistic invention largely lead to Ha Jin's at-home-ness and arrival in a unique place in the American literature that at the same time insists on alienation and non-affiliation to the mainstream and the standard in American literature.

Such a linguistic place, in both its physical and symbolic senses, exemplifies Ha Jin's redefinition and creation of "Homeland" in the novel of *War Trash*. As Ha Jin has answered many times on different occasions, he writes in English out of necessity since he decided to live in America, because "[h]aving failed to find employment related to Chinese, I concluded that English was the only means of my survival since all my degrees were in English" (Shoup & Denman 175). In this sense, Ha Jin's literary career provides for him a home and a means of living, enabling him to set up a career and build his home in America as an immigrant. However, his literary choice is also an existence problem shaped by his immigrant experience, and his linguistic and narrative mobilization in translation and translationese give him a chance to define his own place in American literature. Symbolically, Ha Jin's literary creation also speaks to the process of becoming and creating that he refers to as "Homeland" in today's world.

As Yu Yuan claims in his memoir, the memoir is intended as a legacy for his grandchildren: "I hope that someday Candie and Bobby and their parents will read these pages so that they can feel the full weight of the tattoo on my belly. I regard this memoir as the only gift a poor man like me can bequeath his American grandchildren" (5). The narrative of homeland that was associated with abandonment, betrayal and loss in the contention between repatriates and non-repatriates in the Korean War prisoner camps has already proved to be damaging and traumatizing. It is practically outdated for his immigrant son and grandchildren living on American soil. Therefore, Yu Yuan's memoir, or in other words, the legacy of Ha Jin's

appropriation and fictional re-presentation of the Chinese POW experience in English, is a new narrative of “homeland” for the immigrants and diasporic groups living in America today. On one hand, the new narrative demonstrates the need as well as the creative power of the immigrant experience in redefining the idea of homeland and affirms the in-between-ness and foreignness of the immigrant identity. Such need and creativity problematize the marginalization of certain people imposed by a collective identity as well as the imprisonment and restrictions in a language of loyalty and allegiance. On the other hand, framing the storytelling in a post-9/11 America, the new narrative that plays with alienation, border crossing and betrayal speaks directly to homeland security America and challenges the increasing border control and expansive power of the state, challenging the homogeneity and rootedness imagined in the discourse of homeland security.

In the end of the memoir, Yu Yuan insists that “do not take this to be an ‘our story.’ In the depth of my being I have never been one of them. I have just written what I experienced” (350). His deliberate distancing from the collective affirms a recursive relation to his political tattoo, as when we re-read “FUCK...U...S...” it turns out also to be “FUCK US,” which reverses its representation of an expansive state power and the political restrictions imposed by the collective into a liberating cry of the individual and the marginalized. The linguistic playfulness of Ha Jin thus demonstrates that language is a double-edged power. Through taking a defamiliarizing subject matter of the Chinese POW experience of the Korean War as well as a defamiliarizing linguistic strategy, he moves across boundaries to find his own position and space in the field of American literature that highlights border crossing, heterogeneity and the marginalized experience. Just as Ha Jin writes in his next novel *A Free Life* that focuses entirely on America and tells the story of an immigrant Chinese,

You must go to a country without borders,  
where you can build your home  
out of garlands of words,  
where broad leaves shade familiar faces  
that no longer change in wind and rain. (Ha *A Free Life* 660)

A home can be built and the story of homeland can be re-told and re-written. In a homeland security America and its increasing border control, Ha Jin's linguistic movements perhaps meaningfully animate such revision and reimagining of the narrative of the American homeland.

#### **4.3 The Antinomy of War for the Future: War, Orphans, and the Limit of Benevolence in Chang-Rae Lee's *The Surrendered* (2010)**

In 2010, Chang-Rae Lee, one of the most well-received Korean American writers and a major voice in American literature, published his third and so far the most formally ambitious novel *The Surrendered*. It tells an enigmatic and tragic tale of the Korean War. While the Korean War has loomed in Chang-Rae Lee's literary imagination since his debut novel *Native Speaker* (1995), *The Surrendered* directly deals with the Korean War and a major theme is war orphans and Korean adoption. Indeed, a lasting legacy of America's military intervention and occupation in South Korea comes from the transnational adoption of Korean orphans after the Korean War. The war not only left a devastated Korea but also created an "orphan crisis" in Korea that 100,000 children were without homes or families. Just between 1953 and 1954 more than three hundred orphanages were created, and they supplied orphaned Korean children for transnational adoption later (Pate 14 & 30). As a matter of fact, Korean adoption was a media sensation during the 1950s in America with the promotion of the Holts story. Harry and Bertha Holt, a farming couple from Oregon, adopted eight mixed-race Korean orphans during a visit to South Korea in 1955. The Holts' story was widely publicized by mainstream newspapers and the couple became a symbol of American benevolence and humanitarianism towards a war-torn Korea. Their efforts quickly stirred increased interest in Korean adoption in the United States and marked the institutionalization of transnational adoption with more adoption programs and agencies established.

In *The Surrendered*, the Holts' story is also referenced but it is transformed in Lee's re-creation of the Stolzes story. In effect, Lee's storytelling rewrites the Holts story in the 1950s by

giving an alternative look into the orphanage in Korea and through the perspectives of Korean orphans. More importantly, Lee frames the narrative of war orphans to complicate the narrative of American benevolence and ultimately to transcend the Korean War in order to display the collective human sufferings under warfare on a larger historical and geographical scale. Spanning from Manchuria under Japan's imperial control in the 1930s, to a war-ravaged Korea during the 1950s, and finally to America in the 1980s, the novel gradually unfolds the intertwined and traumatized lives under wars of June, a war orphan; Hector, an American GI; and Sylvie, a missionary. Yet, as Lee himself admitted, as the novel was written while he was watching the military violence in Afghanistan and Iraq on media every day, the story "is really not just about the Korean War: it's about many conflicts, and I very consciously did that" ("War Story" 2). In other words, Lee's tale of the Korean War is also a meaningful story of the present, mirroring the current homeland security America and its War on Terror.

Focusing on the intersection of the war orphan, the GI and the missionary, Lee's *The Surrendered* brings together various wars and military violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This section explores the way the Korean War is employed as an axis point to map out the collective human suffering under warfare. In particular, the narrative of the war orphans in Lee's novel reveals the vast disparity of the world and the loss of future obscured by the discourse of benevolence. Lee's narrative also makes visible the limit of benevolence in creating truly meaningful human connectedness and equal futures. Situated in the global War on Terror and the ongoing violence brought up by preemptive operations and military actions, Lee's storytelling ultimately problematizes a benevolent, future-oriented and ever forward moving American homeland that ignores the unbearable human endurance in a world of violence, injustice and disparity.

The novel revolves around the stories of three key characters, June, Hector and Sylvie, whose life paths cross as a result of the Korean War. However, all of them are either directly or indirectly orphaned by wars and their intersection in the Korean War gradually becomes the contact point where a history of wars is revived, mapping out the collective human suffering in

warfare and in the afterlife of the wars and violence. In the novel's first thirty one pages, June, the eleven years old girl, losses her entire family one by one: her father is executed by South Korean soldiers, and his brother is conscripted and sent to the frontline fighting the North; her mother and sister are bombed by American airplanes while resisting the rape of North Korean soldiers; and finally her two younger siblings are amputated and die miserably when falling from the train on their refugee trip. Sylvie, the troubled wife of Reverend Tanner who manages the orphanage New Hope in South Korea, witnessed the murdering of her missionary parents by the Japanese soldiers in Manchuria at the dawn of World War Two and is tormented by the memory of killing and raping. Hector, to some extent, is orphaned as a collateral damage of World War Two when he left his drunken father for a tryst with Patricia. Patricia is a young widow who lost her husband in World War Two and has to lash out her grief as well as desire through making love with Hector. Unfortunately, Hector's father was later drowned on his way home alone and the guilty Hector goes to the Korean War. Then during the last months of the Korean War, Hector also losses her mother and begins his self-imposed exile.

In their disparate lives before encountering each other in the orphanage, we learn of their individual losses and the specificity of their sufferings that manifest themselves in various forms even after the wars: Sylvie relies on drugs to sooth her pain and the haunting memories; June becomes a "cruel" girl and later a hardhearted mother who depends on her emotional estrangement to deny any suffering of loss; and Hector makes himself a quintessential loser and drunkard to evaporate any expectation of a decent future and responsibility for the present. However, it is also their shared experience of loss and being orphaned by wars that leads to their bonding in Korea. Such way of bonding moves past the conventional benevolence narrative that characterizes the GI and the missionary as elevated saviors and the Korean orphan as the grateful aid recipient. Indeed, instead of being bonded together by benevolence, they were drawn together by suffering. In the novel, a material manifestation of their bond is the book *A Memory of Solferino* which Sylvie always carries and reads and later both June and Hector project their

attachment to Sylvie on the book. Written by J. H. Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, the book is the author's account of the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in 1859. When Hector first opened the book and read the scene of the wounded, he was astounded and immediately hooked, not only to the book but also to the book's owner Sylvie:

The description matched any number of his memories from the war, and as much as they pained him—an icy clawing at his lungs, puncturing his breath—the feeling soon gave way to a numbing pause. It was a pause not of reflection or reckoning but of a pure self-erasure in which he felt that he had died, or, better, had never existed; that as such he had not had an effect on anything or anyone, going either forward or back; that he had, for a moment, completely disappeared. The solace of this state might have compelled him to read further if not for his deepening curiosity about the book's owner, this stubborn, jade-eyed woman, quietly fierce and persistent and yet also clearly fragile. Perhaps infirm. A book was a book, but it was another thing to keep a particular one close, and then one such as this, and he couldn't help but wonder what private vigor or calamity of hers this tale of woe was shadowing, keeping vigil over (Lee 147).

Similarly, June is drawn to the book and reading the book cultivates an uncanny intimacy and comradeship between June and Sylvie that transcends racial, cultural and age differences. When she first opens the book, June is able to visualize the description without effort, and “the words sharpening and crystalizing and soon enough disappearing, the reading coming to her as easily as if she were viewing a picture show in a theatre” (257). Perhaps her ability to visualize is not because of her ability to imagine but because the words only articulate what has been imprinted on her mind during her refugee trip. And later, June would ask Sylvie to read the book to her regularly, and “the passages entering them, June thought, with both pain and bliss like the medicine in the kit, and making them cling more tightly to each other” (345). As Page argues on Lee's maneuver of Dunant's book, “the specificity of individual human suffering stands in the context of collective horror, but only in individual experience can it be perceived” (87). The book on the Battle of Solferino is operated to create a bond between the three, and its description of horror and suffering becomes intertextual for the three characters who experienced different wars but located the similar unspeakable horror. In the end all wars are devastating and all the

three, the missionary, the GI and the Korean orphan, are equally orphaned and damaged subjects that show before our eyes the collective suffering in warfare.

In fact, through operating on a larger temporal and geographical scale, Lee's narrative of war orphans not only creates an equal ground to understand collective human sufferings but also reveals the disparity of the world and the essentially unequal futures that the narrative of benevolence threatens to obscure. Sylvie's orphaned experience in her transnational movements marks the loss of a future that an average teenage American girl would have in the States. However, Sylvie's devastated life was the normal life of Korean children during the war and every child in the orphanage shared. With the specter of war coming when they were in Manchuria, Sylvie's parents had begun to prepare Sylvie for leaving—they talked about sending her back first to Seattle where she would go to college. Sylvie imagined living in a cozy house by the lake, although in reality, they were enduring the cold and hunger in a bare missionary school during the severe winter of Manchuria. Witnessing the murdering of her parents, Sylvie was permanently traumatized and certainly could not get into that future even though she managed to survive and get back to America. Being back in the serene small town life in America where her parents' humanitarian deeds were admired, she would be invited to "recount her parents' dedication to improving the circumstances of the poor and powerless" (226). However, the circumstance of her parents' death and the extent of horror she experienced as well as her damage are never revealed and understood by people around her in America and she could only find solace in drugs and carnality with another victim of war, Jim, who was a veteran in the First World War and was emasculated in battle. On the contrary, Sylvie's loss of future renders her equal to the orphans in Korea and thus naturally capable of comprehending the Korean orphans. She is genuinely adored and trusted in the orphanage. When she is conducting interviews for the children to create their adoption profile, a girl suddenly breaks down and confesses to Sylvie how she lost her family during the war; then word goes around, and many others confess to Sylvie, "even some of the toughest boys unwinding upon her the circumstances

that had brought them to this place” (162). Sylvie herself understands that it is her loss that offsets the disparity between the Korean orphans and herself, as she

often felt a great part of her had been fixed in time, that despite appearances she had been simply stuck in place, never quite getting anywhere. Maybe that’s why the children liked her; it wasn’t her bright, golden hair or even her obvious adoration of them but their instinctive sense that she was as vulnerable as they, as desperately keen for a lasting bond. (410).

While Sylvie’s loss of future could reveal the disparity of the world, a conventional narrative of benevolence and futurity could easily dismiss the disparity and obscure the loss behind the imagination of a bright future. In the novel’s adaptation of the Holts’ story, a Stolzes family from Oregon comes to visit the orphanage for adoption. The couple promises June a future with plenty of room, plenty to eat, and many animals—horses, cows, chickens, dogs and cats, and that June can have her own pets, “[n]ot like here” (401). Like all other civilian Americans, they seem impossibly rich, and they are generous enough to take six orphans to their home. In the eyes of the Stolzes, their adoption is certainly an act of mercy, saving the Korean children from hunger and poverty. But in June’s eyes, the rosy-cheeked American couple dressed in denim work shirt, rough wool trousers, and scuffed-up shoes, were country people and small town citizens just like the villagers from where she had grown up, who treated her family “with suspicion and resentment and ultimately callousness and cruelty” (401). As a matter of fact, June was born from a scholarly and proud family and well educated, but everything was ruined by the war. The Stolzes does not recognize the way the war had turned June’s world up side down and their promise of future in the countryside farm ironically would remind June what she was deprived of by the war.

Hector, the American GI who is supposed to be a heroic figure in the conventional narrative of American benevolence, also proves to be a loser of the future that is standardized in the narrative of American good life. Physically, Hector is the perfect soldier. With a poster-boy image, a local committee makes a war-bonds poster with Hector as the model during World War

Two. During the Korean War, he is an unhesitating soldier, vigilant, tireless and fearless; and he seems to be immortal and magically swift in healing—he remains almost ageless and his wounds, scars and pains pass quickly. Such a model soldier, however, never becomes the hero that people back in America would welcome and hail. Instead, Hector is a lowlife after he returns to America: he is filthy, alcoholic, destitute, and works the lowest job as a janitor in a Korean mall. But he would have an alternative life as a typical middle-class man and suburban husband without the Korean War:

If the North Koreans hadn't invaded their brethren in the South, he would simply have worked at Remington, if not in arms, then in typewriters, adding machines, whatever else. He would have been a husband and a father and played baseball on summer Saturdays with his buddies and inevitably slept with some of their wives, but at least it wouldn't have been at his invitation, never his initial doing. In his alternate life there would have been the customary troubles, his own wife may be leaving him and coming back and leaving him again in a serial drama that had as its greatest satisfaction the comfort of familiarity, of reprise, his days played out in a circle no larger than the carry of a human shout. He sometimes wondered what his life would be like for him now, as a middle-aged son of Iliion; by now he'd be drawing a small pension and playing with his grandchildren on the porch of a row house on a street thick with other Brennans and wondering what it would have been like to have ventured out and seen the wider world (103-104).

In his imagination of an alternative, he would live a trivial, familiar and self-contented life just like his townspeople, quintessentially American in the 1950s. His imagination and loss of that future, compared to what he had witnessed in Korea during the 1950s—the woes and loss of the children, the hunger and privation in the orphanage, and the uncertain future of the children who were constantly threatened by abandonment and vagrancy on street, similarly reveals the vast disparity of the world that renders America's normalized future imagining is in essence narrow and unequal.

As the novel gradually uncovers the tangled past in Korea among Sylvie, June and Hector, it is also revealed that Hector's choice of a low life functions as his traumatized response to his "benevolent presence" in Korea. We begin to see the limits, failures and more pain brought

about by benevolence. Hector himself knows that “his near-indigence was also easy cover, a way to hide and be freed from responsibility for anything in the least vital or important, which in effect was to be freed from the present, and the foreseeable future, if never quite the past” (97). Indeed, his experience with war makes he see his presence as a premonition of collateral damages. His “benevolent presence” in the orphanage which was supposed to help build and maintain the place, causes the crippling of Min, a young orphaned boy, in an accident, and thus ruins his chance for adoption. In the end, the desperate Min, together with June, sets up a fire to kill himself, which not only led to the collapse of the orphanage but also killed Sylvie and Reverend Tanner when they tried to save Min in the fire. Perhaps Hector’s serial collateral damages, unintended but mortal, allegorically mocks America’s military presence in Korea that was framed as an act of saving Koreans and human civilization from communism but only caused tragic destruction, deaths and the “orphan crisis.”

Even June, the beneficiary of American benevolence who immigrates to America after the war and later becomes a quintessential subject of model minority as a successful antique dealer in New York, turns out to be the one who most acutely feels and understands the limit of benevolence in creating genuine, lasting and equal human connectedness. When she was in the orphanage, she well understood the rule of adoption, that to be adoptable she had to remake herself— “to keep her hair and face and fingernails neat and clean, to be polite, even smiling and pretty, just as the younger girls who had been adopted before had been polite and pretty, so eager to please” (397). She imagines that if she takes every chance to better herself and changes that hard and fierce old self, she would become a “model adoptee” that Reverend Tanner would see as “the living picture of his grace” (396) and thus adopt and include her in the Tanner family. Repressing her true self to please and thus becoming adoptable reveal a kind of reciprocal expectation behind such benevolence, and an unequal relationship embedded in the burden of gratitude. Such a relationship easily turns awry when Sylvie at last reveals that she and Reverend Tanner would leave without adopting any orphans. Then June realizes the benevolent Sylvie

would not return an equal love and was not committed in creating a truly lasting bond as she herself fantasized through creating a new adoptive family with the Tanners. Devastated, June and Min tried to commit suicide in a fire. It is seeing the debt inherent in benevolence and the impossibility of equal reciprocity that years later the rich but dying June decides to bequeath to Habi, a war refugee from Congo she has befriended, only a limited amount of ten thousand dollars. For June, the amount was small in her scheme of finances and just enough for Habi to put a down payment on a house or to open a small business. Nevertheless, she intentionally limits her offering because “she didn’t want him to feel beholden to her because of some inordinate sum; she didn’t want him to have think of her always in gratitude, which often, to resentment” (38). June has come to believe that there is a limit in benevolence and a misspent benevolence could easily corrupt a genuine connectedness between her and Habi, one that is sustained by empathy and equal suffering.

Indeed, as we can see in the fatal love affair between Sylvie and Hector, instead of realizing a promising future, a misspent benevolence proves to be disastrous, because it misrecognizes hope as the solution for all human calamities and fails to be committed in sustaining any meaningful and equal interconnection. Sylvie is drawn to Hector not only because their shared suffering but also because she is willingly merciful and drawn to desperate needs, ready to offer herself to satisfy the wants of others, as if seeing herself as an instrument of mercy. Yet, Hector’s infatuation with Sylvie is complicated. He desires Sylvie because he looks at her as “someone who required as much grace and succor as she herself readily offered, someone both he and June desperately need, a mother and a lover and a kind of child, too” (323). His queer fantasy of Sylvie as a mother, lover and child altogether, to some degree, reflects his traumatic family loss but also reveals that his desire and love are two-directional and bonds the two in both giving and accepting love. In their affair, Sylvie’s erotic response to him is certainly comforting and gives hope to his fantasy of such a family and his future union with Sylvie. But Hector is too young and ignorant at that time to realize that Sylvie “was not acting or dissembling but rather

offering herself to his pure and towering want, surrendering to his great keen need, which to her was as lovely as he” (470). In the fateful night, moments before the fire and the exposure of their affair, the angered and disillusioned Hector scolds Sylvie that hope is her “drug.” Indeed, Sylvie’s benevolent offering is certainly a relief of Hector’s want and desire, and Hector becomes addicted to her loving mercy and his fantasy of a future with Sylvie. However, just like Sylvie’s mother once told her, there was a surplus of benevolence in the world and “when it was misspent...it was no good at all” (472). Without any commitment to sustaining an equal and meaningful connectedness with Hector, Sylvie’s offering cannot cure Hector, nor could it sustain itself in her marriage and commitment with her husband. At last everyone is damaged, and we see how future is rendered impossible for all in the subsequent deaths of the Tanners and the collapse of the orphanage named New Hope.

Under the narrative of benevolence, the nature of humanitarianism is questioned again and again from different angles in the novel, and the storytelling’s relentless revelation that benevolence could be misspent, hope does disappoint, and future is already offers an allegorical way to think about the current homeland security America and its confidence in American generosity and victory in its War for the Future. In addition, in a most pertinent case of June’s cancer treatment by her American doctor, we begin to see in a meticulously specific way the irony of America’s militarized humanitarianism and the capricious nature of its mercy in face of the vast human suffering. Although she has escaped the hunger and death in Korea, June in her late forties is dying from stomach cancer in America, as if carrying out the pact she had made when she was marching on the refugee road—“*Let me eat until I can’t, let me fill this infinite cave, and I’ll die right here. I’ll surrender*” (58). Her doctor, Dr. Koenig, is “famous for his aggressive, innovative techniques, but also for his utter refusal to relent, no matter the circumstance” (241). In Dr. Koenig’s mind, June is the “model patient” and his favorite, because June “placed herself at his disposal, completely, never declining or even hesitating when he would request that she undergo yet another uncomfortable or painful procedure or submit to a

new battery of tests” (242). Even though there is little hope for June and no matter how much suffering and pain his aggressive treatment imposes on June, Dr. Koenig insists on his way of saving June’s life, making “every strand of her lustrous black hair gone and her bones droning with a pain that was insidiously alive and the veins in her arms as brittle and ruined as Roman aqueducts and the right half of her back angrily stippled with an outbreak of shingles” (242). Here the doctor believes that his aggressive treatment is an absolute humanitarian act and his determination to not to surrender but help June hold on to life is his mercy towards June, regardless of the fact that his treatment causes more intolerable suffering and agony, and how little quality and decency this life has left for June.

Dr. Koenig’s aggressive medical discourse and cancer treatment by and large mirror America’s discourse of homeland security that militarizes humanitarianism and its war efforts to cure the problem of terrorism. Just like it is revealed by President Bush’s ironic coupling of American generosity in dropping food and medicine with America’s militarism of dropping bombs, America’s humanitarian assistance ignores that much of the suffering has being exactly raised and intensified by its military operations. In Iraq it was generally estimated that more than 200,000 civilians were killed from 2004 to 2007 (“War on Terrorism”). Even though America quickly announced its victory in military actions, sectarian wars ensued in Afghanistan and Iraq, and guerrilla wars wreaked havoc on cities and civilian life, ever prolonging the suffering and endurance of people living in those foreign lands.

At last June choose to surrender to death though she is characterized as the most tenacious figure in the novel. Writing a note for Dr. Koenig—“My whole life I cheated days. Please give the rest of mine to someone else” (245), June leaves the hospital by herself. She has learned in her war experience in Korea that clinging to the future in a diminished present is only cheating days, and there should be a limit to enduring and accepting suffering, because she herself has witnessed and experienced horrors worse than death. On the refugee road when she and her two younger siblings became the only left ones, the three powerless children had not

been able to eat anything for days. Looking at her younger siblings in grave condition—sharply drawn and jutting cheekbones, unnaturally distended bellies, and listless and dull-eyed, June thought about poisoning them, not to relieve her burden but out of loving mercy— “[s]he would give her life for them, but she had begun to understand that the other face of that will was that she could allow them to suffer only so much” (26). In contrast to Dr. Koenig, June deeply understood the pain and suffering of her little siblings because she had suffered no less but perhaps more, as she also had to take care of the little ones. In face of the cruelty of war and the vast suffering, to surrender is not to give up but an acknowledgement of understanding and a mercy for decency when there is practically nothing left to offer.

In the end of the novel, June was in her last minute of dying when the moment on the train came back to her mind. It bears one of her most traumatic minutes in life: to catch the last car of the train passing by, June had to abandon her amputated and bleeding little brother behind—she had to run, and her “legs were working, straining, madly pumping beneath her like pistons, pushing her to make this brief sprint she had been running the whole of her life” (484). At this point of dying, the past comes to the present and June compares her later struggles in the orphanage, her hardworking immigrant life as well as her fighting with cancer to her last all-out running and sprint for survival on the train. Perhaps underlying her tenacity and perseverance for life, the more acutely painful subject is the cost of survival and the burden of guilt. As an orphan and refugee coming from the Korean War, June is keenly aware of the exertion to survive and behind her story of model adoptee, model immigrant and model patient is others’ unequal loss of lives and futures.

As Lee stressed, *The Surrendered* is not just about the Korean War but is also “interested in the private, singular expression and consequences of war in general” (“The Rumpus Interview with Chang-Rae Lee”). The tale of the entangled private lives of Sylvie, June and Hector at last could be read as an analogy of the global War on Terror. In reality, America’s campaigns against terrorism caused more human woes and left a lasting impact on the local life. The major military

campaigns against terrorism, by 2011, had left 7.8 million refugees among Iraqis, Afghans and Pakistanis, besides an overall death-toll of at least 225,000 (Rogers 75). The theatre of the global War on Terror continues to expand, and counterterrorist operations led by America in its Saharan front line destabilized the area and immensely damaged the livelihood and wellbeing of the peoples there. Moreover, while the political discourse of homeland security promises liberation and peace to the local people and America poses itself as benevolent, the global War on Terror ironically turned to strengthen the repressive state apparatus of many regional regimes such as those of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad to crack down on opposition from minority groups or on forms of civil democratization, further deteriorating the life of the ordinary people in the regions. (Keenan 206). Such ironies are critically exposed in Chang-Rae Lee storytelling of the Korean War that measures the cost and lasting impact of warfare across geographical and temporal boundaries. When we read in specificity the ways the future of ordinary people in Korea were lost permanently and traumas rendered living a form of endurance, we see that a War for the Future is in essence an antinomy. In the end, the narrative of American benevolence and the militarized humanitarian can hardly withstand the trial of today's globalized world, and the need to rewrite becomes pressing. In an increasingly interconnected world and with the gravity of challenges that concern all humanity, the questions are how to distribute justice and what is effective and long-term cooperation.

## CHAPTER 5. CODA: FROM THE KOREAN WAR TO THE GLOBAL TRADE WAR

In the evening of May 16, 2019, China's national channel of movies CCTV6 posted a special announcement at a short notice on Weibo, a major social media platform in China, announcing a sudden schedule change and that a war classic *Yingxiong ernv* (1964) (Heroic sons and daughters) would be broadcasted at 20: 25 p.m. instead. The film was a Korean War classic in the 1960s that tells the story of family bond and sacrifice in the war to Resist America and Aid Korea. Several hours later at 23:44 p.m. CCTV6 posted a second special notice of schedule change on Weibo, again announcing that the next day another Korean War classic *Shangganling* (1956) (The Battle of Triangle Hill) would be broadcasted. Quickly in the following two weeks, another seven Korean War classics were re-broadcasted on screen, making the memory of the Korean War a predominant theme in the major media channel in May.

The unusual move of CCTV6 and the sudden intensity of replaying Korean War films stirred a heated online discussion and instantly drew wide media attention. It was also interpreted as a quick reaction to the recent escalation of US-China trade war. Jokingly dubbed as “The Sixth Princess” by netizens, CCTV6, with its willful schedule changes, was widely lauded for her mischievous response to America's willful global trade war and its growing pressure on Chinese imports. The trade war between China and America was dramatically escalated by America's tariff increase on 200-billion-dollar worth of Chinese goods from 10% to 25% on May 10<sup>th</sup>. Greater criticism against America was raised in China when the US Department of Commerce added Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd and its affiliates on its “entity list” on May 16th, banning the Chinese company Huawei purchasing from American companies without US government approval.

From an American perspective, the global trade war was a war for America's national security. On April 20, 2017, President Trump instructed Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to

self-initiate investigations to see whether imported steel and aluminum threatened American national security under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. Under the 1962 Act, the President is authorized to adjust imports through tariffs or other means when the quantity or circumstances of these imports are deemed to threaten national security. Since early 2018, the Trump administration has announced tariffs on solar panels, washing machines, steel and aluminum, and autos, and the trade conflict began to increasingly concentrate on US and China. An official report released on March 22, 2018, accused China of unfair trade practices related to technology transfer, intellectual property and innovation, and China-specific tariffs were implemented after July 6, 2018. At the same time, China continued to retaliate with tariffs on imported American products.

Trade talks continue on an on-and-off basis and the two powers have wrestled back and forth in continuing confrontations and negotiations. The release of Korean War film classics in China reflects the ongoing US-China confrontation and an anti-America sentiment; yet, more importantly, the Korean War is used and re-produced as a historical analogy to illuminate on the current international politics and trade crisis in China, informing the patterns and paths of “the second war” between China and America since the Korean War.

News commentaries in China frequently look back to the Korean War when reviewing today’s US-China trade talks. An article published on the popular news website *Guancha* on May 10, 2018, teases out the history of armistice negotiations during the Korean War and the way strikes of China’s People’s Volunteer Army against American pressure during the negotiations advanced the process of armistice talks during the Korean War. In particular, it was the hard won victory of Shangganling in late 1952 which defeated America’s Operation Showdown and finally led to a relative military balance between China and U.S.. Consequently, the armistice negotiation resumed in 1953. As the article concluded, the first official agreement between China and U.S. was finally reached on July 7, 1953, through machine guns and cannons; and in today’s trade war where the two nations confront with each other again in the

global trade war when fighting and negotiating continue and alternate, another battle on “Shangganling” is necessary (Xi “Dangnian yeshi biandabiantan”).<sup>27</sup> The line of arguments and the historical insight of the Korean War are not uncommon in the public discussion of the U.S.-China trade war, and the metaphor of “Shangganling” has garnered increasing attention and significance in China when China’s leading tech company Huawei was banned by the U.S. in the escalation of the trade war.

As a matter of fact, Huawei has become the “Shangganlin” in China’s imagination of the global trade war with U.S.. Earlier in October, 2018, Zhengfei Ren, the founder and CEO of Huawei, delivered a speech in Shanghai Institute of Huawei, mapping out the company’s future in the field of 5G research and business. As he claimed to the employees, “Our 5G business is the fight for ‘Shangganling,’ the strategic highland of the world. The war on 5G is a matter of life and death for our company, so we have to win the war at any cost. It all depends on you to charge upon the mountain of Shangganling” (Ren “Gongshang ‘Shangganling’”).<sup>28</sup> Later on December 1, 2018, Wanzhou Meng, Ren’s daughter and CFO of Huawei was arrested in Canada under the request of U.S. government for allegedly defrauding financial institutions in breach of America’s ban on dealing with Iran. Although since early 2018, Huawei networking services and phones have been claimed as security concerns in America, Britain and Australia, Meng’s arrest was lusciously publicized on media that made Huawei increasingly the focus in the U.S.-China trade war. The incident was widely interpreted as U.S. government’s move to wield political pressure over Huawei for its growing influence and leadership in 5G research and the future of telecommunications, and to gain political leverage in the trade negotiations with the Chinese government. Quickly in early 2019 the U.S. government strengthened pressure on Huawei,

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<sup>27</sup> Translated and summarized by myself from Yazhou Xi’s article originally in Chinese, “Dangnian yeshi biandabiantan, jintian haique yige ‘Shangganling’.”

<sup>28</sup> Translated by myself from Zhengfei Ren’s speech originally in Chinese, the original text is “我们5G就是争夺‘上甘岭’，就是世界高地。5G这一战关系着公司的生死存亡，所以我们一定要在这场‘战争’中不惜代价赢得胜利。攻上‘上甘岭’，全要靠你们”

discouraging European countries from using Huawei. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo argued that countries using Huawei technologies and services pose a risk to the US security. On May 15, 2019, President Trump even declared a national emergency over threats against American technology with an executive order to authorize blocking transactions involving technologies or information threatening America's national security. Not surprisingly, Huawei was added to the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) Entity List, and the move was interpreted as America's containment and suppression of Huawei and a show of muscles to China in the trade talks. Consequently, Huawei refreshes China's memories of American imperialism and the battle on Shangganling. Instead of being the charging force towards "Shangganling" in 5G research, Huawei began to be looked upon as "Shangganling" itself in China's strike back against U.S. pressure in a larger global trade war. Tough comments spread online with rising nationalism in China, warning that the battle for Huawei is the battle for Shangganling in today's U.S.-trade war and the nation should be mobilized to defend Huawei.

Indeed, the image of Shangganling appeals enormously to the Chinese public emotionally, and Huawei's transformation into Shangganling re-produces a national narrative of the Korean War and shapes the public's understanding of the global trade war in China. It is remembered that the Battle of Shangganling decided the military demarcation line on the Korean peninsula, with 11,500 Chinese sacrificed and injured in only 43 days. In the national memory, national heroes such as Huang Jiguang<sup>29</sup> in the Battle of Shangganling signify the determination to "never yield an inch of ground" and win at any cost, and the major defending force of Shangganling, the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps of PLA, remains the most elite and revered corps-size unit in China until today. The surge of nationalism goes hand in hand with China's increasingly stronger position in the trade negotiations, and the economic disputes in the trade war evolve as a matter of national honor and sovereignty. The climax and turn follows with Huawei announcing its

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<sup>29</sup> Jiguang, Huang was a soldier in People's Volunteer Army and a most remembered and highly decorated Korean War hero in China. In the Battle of Shangganling, Huang, according to official accounts, Huang put himself against a machine gun slit on the blockhouse after running out of ammunition, blocking enemy fire to allow his comrades to overrun the position.

backup plan against the U.S. ban. Immediately at the midnight of May 17 2019, President of HiSilicon, the fabless semiconductor company owned by Huawei sent an internal letter to all employees, revealing Huawei's self-developed chips to ensure Huawei's continued production and manufacturing under America's ban that restricts Huawei purchasing from major American suppliers such as Intel and Qualcomm. The midnight memo quickly became one of the most trending topics on Weibo, and support for Huawei and China in the trade war poured into social media. Soon stories of Huawei's self-developed backup operating system, Hongmeng OS, also appeared on various media outlets, stimulating the public to speculate excitedly on Huawei's visionary move in creating an independent mobile operating system in case of U.S. restrictions that prevent it from using Android. The speculations were verified several days later on May 24<sup>th</sup> when Huawei registered "Hongmeng OS" as a trademark in China. Nationalists online hailed on Huawei's quick and effective response to the U.S. ban, claiming the company's release of self-developed high-tech products and 5G technologies re-produced the heroic spirit in the Korean War and successfully defended the strategically critical "Shangganling" in the U.S.-China trade war. As if providing a script, the stories of the Korean War seem to foretell the path of the current U.S.-China trade war. Indeed, neither side would back down in the trade disputes and the negotiations seem to replicate scenarios of the intermittent armistice negotiations during the Korean War.

Nevertheless, if the stories of Shangganling and the Korean War armistice negotiations are truly prophetic, we can not afford to look away from the other part of stories on human sacrifice and loss. The 43-day battle on Shangganling was the bloodiest conflict in 1952. Intense UN shelling and bombardment cleared the ground of Shangganling, and the hills changed hands between the two sides alternatively. In the end, America suspended its Operation Showdown, failing to seize the highland of Shangganling. Nevertheless, thousands of Americans as well as South Korean soldiers were killed in the procrastinated tussles. While finally being able to hold the ground on Shangganling, China suffered a heavy casualty of 11,500 and many units were

decimated. In the end, there was no territorial gain for either side. Similarly, the armistice talk was also a procrastinated process while the conflict continued and even escalated. Both sides suffered during the war with many lives lost and injured, but when the war finally ended with more than two years of negotiation it ended where it started at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Looking from this perspective, it becomes doubtful where the current U.S.-China trade war would end and how much loss can both sides bear before eventually a settlement can be reached.

Yet, the revitalization and reproduction of the Korean War stories in the global trade war have even ominous implications in the current post-Cold War time. Early in 2018, a *New York Times* article warned of an incoming “Technology Cold War” as the trade disputes between China and U.S. are increasingly cleaving in the high-tech realm. As the article pointed out, American tech giants such as Apple and Amazon have to partner with Chinese companies to join in the Chinese market while others such as Twitter and Facebook are blocked in China; meanwhile, Chinese tech groups have been repeatedly thwarted from acquiring American tech companies by American regulators, and major Chinese tech companies such Huawei are largely kept out of the scene of the American market (Zhong and Mozur “A Technology Cold War”). Both sides vie for technological dominance and have imposed political and policy barriers that slow down effective technology exchange and cooperation. However, perhaps the U.S. ban on Chinese tech giants such as Huawei and Huawei’s launch of “Hongmeng OS” finally map out a future of the Tech Cold War where a digital iron curtain would demarcate the territories of two worlds. “Hongmeng,” a name borrowed from the Chinese ancient mythology *Shan Hai Jing* (The classic of mountains and seas) which means the primordial chaos before the creation of the world, meaningfully describes the status quo of next generation tech competition between China and the U.S.. While probably chaotic and staggering in the first stage of developing and launching in the market, a fully-fledged Hongmeng OS would gradually stabilize, cultivate and improve an independent ecosystem different from the America-developed ones such as Android and IOS, which dominate the current world market. With a large population, an energetic market

and the low cost of production, it is possible that a viable Chinese version of ecosystem would grow stronger and increasingly split the world market as well as networking users. In addition, the ban on technological exchange eventually can hardly stop growth of high tech companies outside America such as Huawei; instead, it would gradually stimulate the creation of a different path of research in high tech hardware as well as the production and application of a new set of technical specifications and networking protocols. Gradually, the rift would be opening up and estrangement would become entrenched with the evolution of isolated ecosystems and networking technologies.

Ultimately we could imagine a future where the world would be bifurcated with an invisible but powerful digital iron curtain: on one side, a group of countries adopt networking technologies and supporting protocols within the ecosystem created by American giants such as Apple and Google; on the other side, following China, another group of countries chose to adopt technologies and protocols developed by emerging high tech Chinese competitors such as Huawei. The incompatibility of technologies and protocols and the isolation of ecosystems, born out of the chaos of competition and conflicts of “Hongmeng,” slowly but eventually would lead to the creation of a divided and even antagonistic world in which two sides are heavily defended and blocked for the sake of security.

In the end the Chinese version of the Korean War stories today is both a familiar historical lesson and a strange fable of future apocalypse. The discourse of national security is familiar to the American audience, but its re-production in the global trade war and the way it directs the ongoing technology competition and economic disputes also reveals an apocalyptic future where the world is antagonistic and divided by networking technologies that are supposed to connect human beings and places. The cost is high, as we can see in the history of the prolonged Korean War and America’s national security programs during the Cold War. The war was never cold for people caught between the superpower struggles in Asia, Middle East, and Latin America, and conflicts and turmoil were real life there. Again, the Chinese perspective

allows us to see the persistence and vitality of the Korean War across time as well as spatial and linguistic borders. Together with Korean War stories from the 1950s to the present time in America, the continuously morphing Korean War under different writers and in different contexts demonstrates the vast possibilities and power of narratives and storytelling. The possibilities and power lie not only in giving historical lessons of wars and the national security politics. They also lie in envisioning and reflecting on the kind of future that we, the collective human beings, want and are able to create.

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