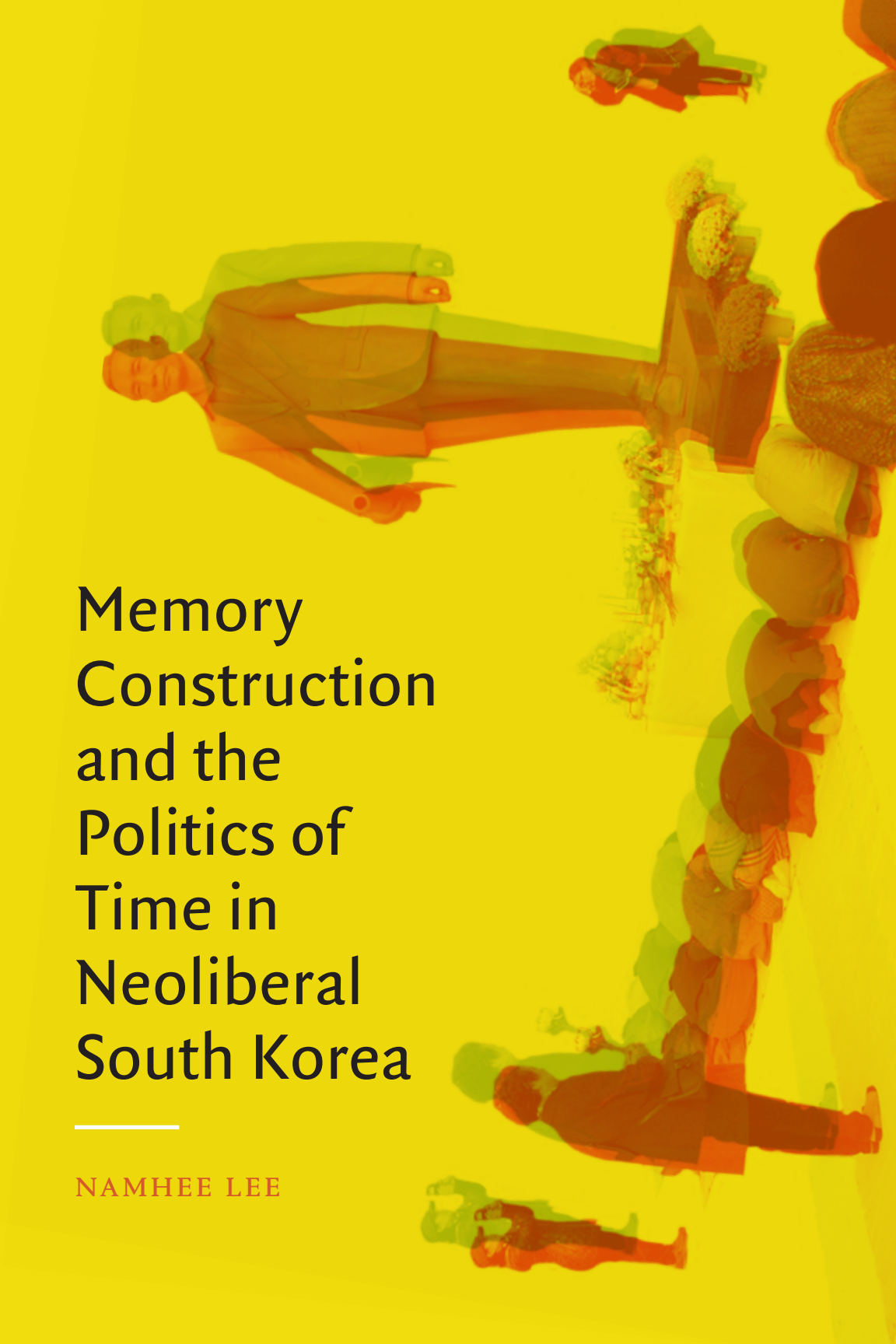

Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea

NAMHEE LEE

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Namhee Lee

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Contents

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Acknowledgments

It is now difficult to appreciate the sense of urgency that initially prompted this project, given the long delay in finishing it. At the time, the beckoning of the need to comprehend and to engage in the debates that I discuss in this book overwhelmed all other research projects and writings. Along the way, the task that I set out seemed too daunting, that I was not equipped to engage fully with all the relevant historiographical, theoretical, as well as ethical issues. The book manuscript languished for a number of years. I took it up again only with help of friends and colleagues, and I hope the current shape of the book is still considered worthwhile an endeavor, if only to share what Korean scholars commonly call *munje ŭisik* (awareness of the issues) in place of a comprehensive and in-depth treatment of all the relevant issues that the topic deserves.

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Democratic Movements," in *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society*, ed. Gi-Wook Shin and Paul Y. Chang (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41–57; "Social Memory of the 1980s and Unpacking the Regime of Discontinuity," in *Revisiting Minjung: New Perspectives on the Cultural History of 1980s South Korea*, ed. Sunyoung Park (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019), 17–45.

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Notes on Romanization and Translations

This book employs the McCune-Reischauer romanization; exceptions are those Korean authors who have published in English using a different spelling and the names of well-known historical figures and places, such as Syngman Rhee and Seoul. In the case of Korean authors with different spellings in their English publications, the McCune-Reischauer romanization is provided in square brackets at the first occurrence of the name in the main text and in the bibliography. East Asian names are written according to the standard usage in East Asia, with surnames preceding given names. English translations of the titles of cited works are provided in the bibliography.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in the book are by the author.

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Introduction

The Politics of Time and Neoliberal Disavowal

In March 1997, ten years into South Korea's transition to liberal democracy and as the news of Dolly, the world's first cloned sheep, went out globally, the Korea University student publication asked its students who among historical figures they most wished to clone. Six out of 180 respondents selected Park Chung-hee, South Korea's dictator for nearly two decades. In a country where university students waged a tenacious and vociferous protest and brought down an authoritarian regime more than once, that their successors would even consider cloning Park—even as a mischievous way to express their disapproval against sitting president Kim Young-sam, whom they selected as the least desirable figure to clone in the same survey—caught the attention of the mass media. What would have been unthinkable even a year or two before was soon emerging: politicians, public figures, and ordinary Koreans were professing their

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admiration for the former dictator, which the mass media promptly dubbed the "Park Chung-hee syndrome."[1] Heated debates on Park's legacies followed in newspapers, online forums, and academic conferences.

The syndrome was the first of a series of paradigmatic shifts in the collective memory of recent history in post-1987 South Korea. In 2004, a presidential committee to investigate "pro-Japanese collaborators" of the colonial period (1910–1945) again reignited public debate on the colonial period. There has always existed the view that the country could move forward only by dealing with the issue of collaboration, even if only symbolically by publishing a list of collaborators some sixty years after liberation from Japan. By the beginning of a new century, however, the country's attainment of democracy and global economic standing gave rise to a view that it had overcome any pernicious colonial influences, that it was time to move on, rather than dwell on the painful past.

The latest transformation in historical judgment has been the New Right revisionist scholarship. Emerging in the early twenty-first century, the New Right history, as in the case of the Park Chung-hee syndrome and the debates on the colonial period, centers on the notion that "times have changed." Not only did the previous era's "leftist nationalist" perspective of the *minjung* historiography no longer serve the present moment, but it also got in the way of country's future progress. Offering a positive and celebratory view of Korean history better accommodated the needs of contemporary society. Through these debates, the paradigm of minjung, the central conceptual framework under which the three-decade-long democratization movement was carried out and that also generated one of the most profound social, academic, religious, and artistic movements the country has seen, had been declared anachronistic and consigned to the past.

This book examines what might be called the minjung project's "afterlives," its changing meanings and its representation over the last three decades, and the ways in which the discourse of the end of the minjung paradigm operates to make its emancipatory and egalitarian aspirations illegible or obscure in the present. With the retreat of authoritarianism by the 1990s and the explosion of previously neglected and unvoiced identities and desires, academics, social commentators, and some of the erstwhile minjung practitioners effectively announced the end of the minjung project, that there had been paradigm shifts from minjung (people) to *simin* (citizen), from the political to the cultural, and from the collective to the individual. Minjung had become a grand narrative whose time had passed, its vision of politics as "a practice of conflict and as a horizon of emancipation" considered no longer suitable in the new era.[2] Not only was the minjung project judged as too partisan and no longer appropriate for the democratic society, but, simultaneously, violence and oppression

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were construed as perpetrated not only by the authoritarian state but also by self-righteous and militant radical leftists. The rise of the Park Chung-hee syndrome and New Right scholarship also functioned to discursively allocate to the past or deem outmoded all the events and development that do not conform to contemporary South Korea's dominant liberal democratic ideal. I call this the politics of time. Arising from the profound and wide-ranging transformations both in and out of South Korea, the politics of time has largely worked to disavow the revolutionary politics of the twentieth century in general, and in particular the 1980s minjung project, and to discharge contemporaries from both to injustices that happened in the past as well as to the present that has not dealt with the past historical injustices.

My discussion of the politics of time is indebted to Jacques Rancière's suggestion that a notion of time that separates the present from the past acts as "a principle of impossibility" and to Walter Benjamin's critical view on the notion of history as progressive. In the era of post–grand narratives, Rancière notes, a seeming innocuous statement such as "times have changed" is effortlessly recast into "a statement of impossibility." That is, to say that the times have changed does not simply denote an actual passage of time and the disappearance of things that had been present in that time period. It also denotes that the possibilities that had been imbued with the idea of time have become impossible, no longer belonging to the present and in the realm of what is possible.[3] Benjamin's well-known "Theses on the Philosophy of History" offers a similar understanding of time and a view of history where history does not progress according to a prescribed linear trajectory, where there is a deep and abiding connection between the past and the present, especially a connection between the injustice committed in the past and the emancipatory possibility of the present. For Benjamin, the view of history as progress presents twofold dangers: first, a reconfiguration of the history of the past entailing an erasure, distortion, or toning down of subversive dimensions, and second, the danger of historical writings falling into complicity with the tendency of the present, aligning with the dominant of contemporary society. A critical view of history is obtained when the view of history as continuous progress is rendered void and when the historian—and society—sharpen the awareness of the past injustice and engage with the struggles of those who suffered defeat, their aspirations and dreams unfulfilled.[4]

For sure, the discourse of the paradigm shifts in recent South Korean history is first and foremost grounded in the wide-ranging societal transformation. Political liberalization following the democratic transition gave rise to the "liberalization" of culture and "massification" of popular culture, with the outpouring of a dizzying array of cultural outlets. This period also saw the

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emergence of a new generation who was no longer "obsessed" with ideology and politics and instead sought self-expression, leisure, and entertainment as active creators and critics of popular culture.[5] The paradigm shift from minjung to simin and from the political and cultural also marks the profusion of creative energy in all spheres of society.

At the same time, the much-celebrated transition to democracy was immediately followed by a set of global transformations: the collapse of the Soviet Union and the "actually existing socialism" of Eastern Europe, the extensive economic restructuring ushered in by globalization and neoliberalism, and the emergence of "free market democracy" in former authoritarian regimes. Even as the country was undergoing an exhilarating and swift political liberalization, a series of economic downturns and financial crises in 1997 known as the "International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis" drove the country toward a path of all-out neoliberal restructuring, giving priority and acquiescing to the demands of the market.

The politics of time that operates in the revisionist history cannot be considered without the twin development of political liberalization and neoliberalism injecting the ferocity and alacrity in the process of the paradigm shifts. As scholars from Michel Foucault to Wendy Brown have observed, neoliberalism is much more than economic or trade policies, or change in the relationship between the state and economy; it has become a governing rationality that "extend[s] specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life."[6] In the process of disseminating the model of the market to all domains and activities, human beings are reconfigured "exhaustively as market actors . . . as *homo oeconomicus*."[7] American studies scholars in particular have observed how neoliberal development globally was both a response to emerging decolonization and new social movements, as well as a way to obscure unequal and racially hierarchical structures of global capitalism by promoting multicultural neutrality.[8] In this context, neoliberalism is viewed as an "epistemological structure of disavowal," mobilized to respond to the emancipatory post–World War II social movements. The structure of disavowal transfigures the previously liberatory movements and ideas into a new mode of power through the process of selective and uneven affirmation and incorporation of previously marginalized subjects, ideas, and practices.[9]

Public discussions of the legacies of Japanese colonial rule and the Park Chung-hee regime, and the revision of textbooks initiated by the New Right, have shown the extent of neoliberal rationality, the economization of human life in all of its aspects, including "the most basic cultural and ethical values" that inform one's view of the past.[10] Scholars writing about the historiographi-

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cal debates have so far been mostly informed, understandably so, by the binary ideological framework that focuses exclusively on the historical experience of Korea's twentieth century and do not take into account the neoliberal development. Scholarly discussion of neoliberal rationality in South Korea has also so far been focused on institutional reorganization and management of power resources propelled by neoliberal restructuring—the domain of political economy.[11] Neoliberal governance in the domain of culture and society at large so far has been discussed mainly in the context of how neoliberalism has pushed certain institutional changes. Until recently, even this kind of critique aimed to expose how neoliberal institutional changes were not in sync with their professed ideology.[12]

My discussion of the memory reconstruction and history rewriting extends analyses of neoliberalism to the domains of both political economy and culture, showing that alongside paradigm shifts in political and economic spheres, contestation over history and memory—the domain of knowledge production—has emerged as one of the more distinctive features of the by-products of neoliberal rationality in South Korea. As Park Chung-hee's brand of developmentalism—South Korean–style capitalism, as it were—is considered universal and a model to be emulated by other developing countries, and as Park Chung-hee is revived as a nationalist hero singularly responsible for South Korea's "Miracle on the Han River," not only is his authoritarian rule whitewashed, but also the minjung project is disavowed as inherently authoritarian and destructive. New Right scholars also reconfigure the individual first and foremost as Homo economicus, constructing a form of "neoliberal historiography."[13] In particular, they argue that the colonial subjects who were conscripted forcibly to provide sexual service for soldiers and other forms of industrial labor were merely performing their jobs for which they received wages commensurate with their labor, eschewing the colonial context in which threat and violence were used for mobilization of their labor along with the other historical and ethical considerations.

This book also expands the current theoretical understanding of social memory by highlighting the central role of mass media, especially the conservative mass media, in constituting the Park Chung-hee syndrome and later in the emergence and articulation of the revisionist views of New Right scholarship. Scholars have emphasized how social memory, rather than fixed and immutable, is culturally reconstructed, with the decisive roles played by the trinity of agents of memory, collective practices of recollection, and the creation of spaces through which such memory is expressed and conveyed.[14] South Korea's democratic transition gave the conservative mass media an unprecedented

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opening to become a powerbroker and an arbiter of social issues. As such, conservative mass media plays a central role in aiding the vested interests to retain their hegemonic position, playing off deeply entrenched Cold War anti-communism.[15] Yet, there has been scant attention paid in scholarly work to the rapidly expanding role of mass media in collective memory making and rewriting history. I analyze how the conservative mass media has become the agent and venue of the trinity of social memory, as well as a "historiographical apparatus," setting the agenda and the parameters and terms of public discourse.[16]

The Regime of Discontinuity

The organizing framework of disparate developments and phenomena analyzed in this book is the regime of discontinuity, around which each chapter revolves and through which chapters interact with one another. I characterize articulations or narratives that not only enunciate a radical break from the past but that which function to modulate, distort, or silence a certain kind of memory or history of the past as constituting the regime of discontinuity, following historian Pierre Nora's formulation in a different context.[17] Nora's well-known project in the 1970s was initiated by what he perceived to be an overall decline in the capacity of French national culture to sustain what he called realms of memory—the array of rituals, sites, ideas, and traditions that had long been considered part of the nation's collective past. Faced with revelations of atrocities of the Stalinist era and failure of the Soviet Union, French intellectuals at the time also attempted to recast the memory of their previous leftist political engagements. The French Revolution, a lived tradition that had animated French politics until then, was also consigned to a relic of the past. Memory stepped in to offer a way out of the traditional left-right dichotomy and the revolutionary republic tradition.[18] Nora's notion of the regime of discontinuity was therefore a case of nostalgia for a unitary nation that was no longer a "convincing or operative unit of study,"[19] as well as a case of retreat from politics.

The regime of discontinuity in South Korea that I examine in this book shares much the same political orientation and ethos as Nora's in its overall effect—it engages in the politics of time, making certain experiences of the past illegible or concealed in the present. It has manifested in a variety of forms and with varying degrees of articulation and cohesiveness. It also has a number of different historical references. The first such historical reference is South Korea's transition to parliamentary democracy in the late 1980s, which was clearly a break from the previous authoritarian system and was welcomed as the dawn of a new era. Revision of the constitution with the consequent direct

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presidential election of 1987, and the subsequent political liberalization were some of the most obvious cases of such a break.

The second reference is the 1990s, when the claim by academics, commentators, and cultural gatekeepers that South Korea had entered a new era and was in the midst of a break with the past became all the more vigorous. With the emergence of the aforementioned series of discourses of paradigm shifts, from minjung (people) to simin (citizen), from the political to the cultural, from the collective to the individual, the regime of discontinuity became a defining ethos of the 1990s. The rise of New Right historiography in the 2000s, with its attempt to reassess the colonial period and the Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee periods, constitutes another kind of regime of discontinuity. This discourse is also celebratory, à la Francis Fukuyama's end of history which anticipated the new millennium to be free from limitations of the past and considered capitalism as universally beneficial, with only democracy now remaining as the "final form of all human government."[20]

Democratic Transition in the Late 1980s and the Minjung Movement

Every decade of post-1945 South Korea began with a major historical event,[21] but the decade of the 1980s remains singularly significant in the history of South Korea. That decade witnessed the most explosive and remarkably vociferous emancipatory project, known as the minjung movement, whose goal was to build a new society based on more expansive ideas that went beyond the principles and values of Western-style liberal democracy. The minjung movement was a civil and human rights movement, a democracy movement, an anti-government movement, a labor movement, a farmers' movement, a women's movement, a student and youth movement, an environmental movement, and a decolonization project. Building on previous anti-colonial and post-1945 social movements in South Korea and with "a striking commonality of purpose, so many people in so many settings devoted themselves so ardently to the work of transformation."[22] Tackling everything from South Korea's real and perceived dependent status vis-à-vis the United States and Japan to the government legitimacy, to collusion between the state and the *chaeböl* (family-owned large conglomerates), to equitable distribution of wealth, to revaluating preexisting values and meanings, and experimenting with new forms and content in art, literature, music, and theater, the minjung movement was "an epic contest," as Robert Darnton characterized the French Revolution, of "possibili[ty] against the givenness of things."[23] After nearly three decades of persistent challenges and with much

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sacrifice,[24] 1987 saw the peaceful transfer of government through direct presidential election and the establishment of parliamentary democracy.

The magnitude of post-1987 changes led scholars to designate the term *1987ch'eje* (1987 regime or 1987 system) to denote their significance, as they continue to shape today's political landscape.[25] Even the names of the post-1987 governments—such as the Civilian Government of Kim Young-sam (1993–1998), the Government of the People of Kim Dae-jung (1998–2003), and the Participatory Government of Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2008)—suggested the hopefulness of this era and optimism about the progress of history.[26] It is safe to say that ordinary Koreans by and large shared the sense of an irreversible path toward historical progress.

Yet, post-1987 democratic consolidations have been less than satisfactory in their overall outcome, leading many to cast doubt on the real achievements of the democratization movement. The much celebrated reforms of the early phase of the Kim Young-sam administration ended with widely shared disappointment over the corruption of Kim's inner circles and family members; the politically progressive governments of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun adopted further neoliberal measures that gave rise to further polarization of society, among other discouraging developments.[27] The experience of the IMF crisis in the late 1990s was so devastating that many South Koreans considered it their second toughest experience after the Korean War. Despite high-level political liberalization, the overall quality of life declined as real income was reduced, and the gap between the haves and have-nots intensified virtually in all aspects of society; by 2011, the "phenomenon of polarization" (*yanggŭkhwa hyŏnsang*) had entered the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*.[28] The sense of increasing insecurity about the future in the post-1997 years was in sharp contrast to the earlier authoritarian period. Notwithstanding that Chun Doo-hwan was the scourge of the nation in the 1980s, the country was reveling in spectacular economic development—"the first of its kind since the time of Tan'gun."[29] The concomitant rise of confidence of Koreans in their ability to bring about such development also drove them to the streets in June 1987 to demand political reform and democratization of society.

Over the course of the radically transformed post-1987 era, the previous era's emancipatory movement, as encapsulated in the slogans of *minjok*, *minju*, and minjung (nation, democracy, and people), lost much of its theoretical purchase and sociopolitical relevance. To invoke minjung in the 1990s was to be charged with invoking platitudes and being anachronistic. The 1980s came to be mostly remembered as an era of antagonism, with ubiquitous images of streets strewn with broken stones and Molotov cocktail bottles, riot police with their Darth Vader–like gear, and the strident shouts of "Down with military dictatorship!"

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and "Liberation of labor" (*nodong haebang*). The subsequent paradigm shift in discourse from minjung (people) to simin (citizen) effectively announced the end of the minjung project—the end of the "politics of antagonism"—and the inauguration of a new era.[30] Some well-known former *undongkwŏn*—an epithet referring to either the South Korean democratization movement of the 1980s as a whole or its individual participant, or both[31]—have also become not only a part of the establishment but also agents of neoliberalism, if only unwittingly, as I discuss in chapter 1.

Post-minjung South Korea became not only post-authoritarian and postmodern but post-ideological as well. The postmodern critique of modern subjectivity as the core constituting element of modernity also meant the privileged ontological place of minjung as the cohesive and unitary subjectivity of minjung discourse became no longer ideal or tenable. As historian Im Tae-sik puts it, "Anyone who still talks of minjok, minjung or revolution became as rare as a state-designated national monument . . . and became a [target of] mockery by the public."[32] Those who seemed unable to move on were admonished to be "flexible," "cool," and "commonsensical."[33]

Even as post-1987 South Korea became increasingly disenchanted with the minjung project, the 1980s and its minjung movement not only continue to define Korean society but also remain crucially alive. The decade has served as a primary reference point for current debates as well as for the political identity of not only the "386 generation" but also for later generations.[34] One's relation to and perspective on the 1980s and its minjung movement were considered to be a key barometer of one's position on the political spectrum in South Korea until recently. The 1980s minjung project has also remained a source of both inspiration and refutation for contemporary Korea and particularly its social movements, even as it has been scrutinized as yet another form of a will to power and its ethos—its communal spirit, self-effacement, and self-righteousness—seem to offer steady fodder for both nostalgia and ridicule in popular culture.[35]

Neoliberal Restructuring

Only a decade had passed since the democratic transition before South Korea was hit by the wave of global neoliberalism and its extensive restructuring. Many of the recently democratized countries in Latin America, Asia, and Southern and Eastern Europe have undergone extensive restructuring ushered in by globalization and neoliberalism that is geared to establishing the free market on a world-economic scale. More specifically, *restructuring* here refers to a set of structural reforms "designed to seek the deeper integration of the economy

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of developing countries into the capitalist world-system through trade liberalization and the removal of all barriers to the cross-border flow of capital, goods and services, with the extended role of the market and the re-oriented role of the state."[36] The consequences of this restructuring are not only that these countries have often been without corresponding democratic practices or institutions but also, more insidiously, that the democracy they avow has become a specific type of democracy, a "free market democracy."[37]

Needless to say, the neoliberalism that brought about the devastating restructuring is much more than economic or trade policies, or an ideology or reorientation of the nexus between the state and the economy. Earlier neoliberal development was also in part a response to a series of crises of legitimacy in the wake of decolonization and desegregation movements and fights for civil rights that occurred globally following World War II. The culmination of key anti-colonial and new social movements occurred in the same decades as the collapse of the Bretton Woods Agreement and election of neoconservatives such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the United States and in the United Kingdom, respectively. These new social movements challenged the legitimating frameworks of existing liberal governance with their social differences, alternative social worlds, and potential alternative projects.[38]

In the United States, neoliberalism has worked to obscure racist and classist structures of global capitalism by promoting multicultural neutrality; capitalism appears as a natural process isolated from politics and culture, as argued by scholars such as Lisa Duggan.[39] The neoliberal turn in the United States incorporated the language of identity from Black, Chicano, and Asian American nationalist movements, as well as a celebratory version of the discourse of freedom and equality coming out of the civil rights era, exploiting the call for more equitable redistribution of resources.[40] In *Death beyond Disavowal*, transnational feminist studies scholar Grace Hong extends these arguments further and argues that neoliberalism is first and foremost an "epistemological structure of disavowal," as previously discussed. Through the structure of disavowal, the previous social movements' ethos, ideas, and practices have been selectively appropriated to serve the contemporary capitalistic order.[41]

As many scholars have noted and political theorist Wendy Brown aptly sums up, neoliberalism represents the "'economization' of political life and of other heretofore noneconomic spheres and activities, a process of remaking the knowledge, form, content, and conduct appropriate to these spheres and practices." To say such is "not to claim that neoliberalism literally *marketizes* all spheres, even as such marketization is certainly one important effect of neoliberalism. Rather, the point is that neoliberal rationality disseminates the

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model of the market to all domains and activities—even where money is not at issue—and configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only, and everywhere."[42] Sociologist Hyun Ok Park characterizes the logic of the contemporary neoliberal economic order as "capitalist unconscious" in her compelling analyses of how this capitalist logic manifests in seemingly disparate pursuits of various peoples and states, cutting across political spectrums and across the borders of South Korea, North Korea, and China.[43]

It was therefore not only the democratic transition but also the neoliberal turn following the transition that propelled the paradigm shift from minjung to simin in South Korea. The shift ushered in primacy of the notions of "citizen" and "liberal democracy" in both public discourse and social movements. "Citizen" here ultimately meant "middle class," the discourse of which swept the globe in the 1990s.[44] The primacy of citizen signaled that the individuals construct their emancipatory narrative—following the liberal principles of individual freedom, formal equality, and political rights—as rights-bearing and rights-claiming citizens. With the neoliberal turn, the widely circulated discourse of liberal democracy during the 1990s and early 2000s became transposed into a discourse of neoliberalism. That is, democracy is invoked not only to "rescue the social" eroded by the market but also to defend "the liberty of the market."[45]

Post-1997 South Korea has experienced neoliberalism not only as the structural and institutional reorganization of society but also as a reconstitution of the "moral economy of the society, a whole way of life, a mode of social being—and becoming—in the world."[46] Indeed, South Korea has become a Thatcherian place where there is no "such thing as society; only individual men and women and family."[47] This book illustrates how the neoliberal rationality has also permeated contestation over history and memory in South Korea.

Contestation over History and Memory

The 1990s were celebrated as an era freed from the shackles of a surfeit of ideologies—both state-led Cold War anti-communism and minjung-focused leftist ideology. Political liberalization that followed the democratic transition also brought about new interpretations and new perspectives concerning the most critical moments of Korean history. Literature and popular culture, such as films and TV dramas, proliferated, giving new and varied voices to the past. The emergence of blockbuster films that became a part of the "Korean wave" (*hallyu*) also pointed to the pervasiveness of memory and history in society; many of these films dealt with major historical events such as the division of the country, the Korean War, and the conflicted legacy of Park Chung-hee's

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regime.[48] The advent of blockbuster films, as well as the general boom in film and TV dramas, also indicated that cinematic images increasingly reconfigure not only narratives of the past but also how one acquires knowledge about the past; these narratives involve a diverse array of social and cultural processes far beyond the walls of academia or the printed word.

President Kim Young-sam, the first civilian president in over thirty years, called for the "rectification of history" (*yŏksa parojapki*) as a way to establish legitimacy of his own government and to show his administration's willingness to "deal with the past."[49] Related actions included the demolition of the building that had housed the former Japanese governor-general and the trial of the two former presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, held responsible for the 1980s Kwangju massacre.[50] State-initiated projects were soon phased out, but the mantle of the rectification of history was taken up by a large number of individuals and grassroots groups, becoming a veritable social movement.[51] Individuals in this movement had disparate goals and different projects but shared an intense and personal engagement with history. History became pervasive in public consciousness.

Individual and social memories of the 1980s are deeply intertwined with the above development and some of the more iconic literary, filmic, and dramatic representations of the period. The immensely popular television drama *Sandglass* broadcast in 1995, for example, brought to the Korean public for the first time actual footage of state troops indiscriminately killing citizens during the Kwangju uprising, at a time when many people were still in the dark about what had happened in Kwangju.[52] It is possible to think of the proliferation of memory culture as a case of an "excess" of memory, where the historical consciousness of the public exceeds the capacity of the received framework or interpretation, thus resisting incorporation into institutional history.[53] What is relevant here is that all of the above developments indicate Korean society's tremendous need or desire for "truths" to live by, a sense of participating in a national story, and meanings that sustain its variegated identities. It also indicates that professional historians have a more limited impact on public discussions than do literary, filmic, or cultural works, public memorial sites, and claims by politicians.[54] The case of the Park Chung-hee syndrome suggests, for example, that "real" histories of the Park Chung-hee period exist outside academia.

Even as history has become a major site over which various groups make divergent and often diametrically opposing claims and where they negotiate and contest the meanings of the past and visions for the future of Korea, there is also an equally powerful sense that history is no longer a stabilizing force, a sense of uncertainty about whether history will be able to guide the country and chart

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its future. This is so even as history is present everywhere—in films, television dramas, novels, museum exhibits, literature, and theme parks. Although this predicament is a global phenomenon,[55] contentious debates about history in Korean society of recent decades have only heightened this sense of uncertainty.

One of the most consequential developments of the post-1987 era has been a series of debates about how to evaluate colonial and authoritarian legacies: from the Park Chung-hee syndrome, to the Roh Moo-hyun government's attempt to legislate resolution of the issue of "pro-Japanese collaborators,"[56] to the New Right's claim that the history textbooks used by middle and high schools were too critical of South Korea. Inordinately contentious and protracted, these debates have been called a civil war, *tout court*.

These debates reveal a deep division within Korean society over how central a role their country's overcoming the colonial and authoritarian past should play in undergirding current political development and visions for the future. Should the country's commitment to democracy and its future vision require that it continue to remind itself of its colonial and authoritarian legacies? Or are these legacies—seven decades after the liberation of the country from Japanese colonial rule, four decades after the death of Park Chung-hee, and three decades after the historic 1987 triumph of democracy—by now secondary matters for contemporary and future South Korea? Should not "truth" about the past and any unresolved historical issues be left for future historical judgment? Might not repeated and public retelling of the "shameful" stories of Korea's past, as some on the right have insisted, actually get in the way of standing tall as a modern democracy and a global economic power? Is it not time to move on?

These questions, though raised not only by the New Right,[57] constitute the core underlying intellectual and political grounds of New Right scholarship, the emergence of which marked the most dramatic and contentious turn to the right in Korean historiography to date. The New Right's regime of discontinuity includes revisionist scholarship on the colonial period and on the authoritarian presidencies of Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee. Immediate political context aside, one might say that the revisionist views stem from conflicting perspectives on the relationship between modernization and democracy, the two main tasks Koreans designated as national goals as early as the late nineteenth century—and achievements for which South Korea has deservedly been recognized. Efforts to resolve contradictions and social conflicts arising from modernization and capitalism and to seek alternative forms to capitalism consumed much of the intellectual struggle and revolutionary politics globally in the twentieth century, and Korea was certainly no exception. The emergence of New Right scholarship with its triumphalist narrative of the victory of

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capitalism over other alternative ideologies signaled a declaration to abandon this historical struggle and to reconfigure the meaning and practice of politics.

The discourse of the victory of capitalism over socialism at the end of the last millennium has made capitalism appear as "the only valid social horizon, granting it a sacralized sense of finality."[58] For those aligned with the New Right in South Korea, celebration of such achievement seemed further justified by not only South Korea's meteoric rise economically but also by the dismal conditions in North Korea from the early 1990s. In the neoliberal age, economic development has become "cultural dominant."[59] As such, North Korea deserves its subalternity vis-à-vis South Korea, if not globally. Indeed, the New Right's triumphalist discourse would have been unlikely without the demise of socialist regimes worldwide and the economic deterioration in North Korea.[60]

Persistence of the Cold War Regime and Mass Media

It is the ultimate irony of history that one of the most valuable forms of social capital of the New Right is the continuing Cold War system in the Korean Peninsula. In fact, one might say that the only thing that has not changed in the Koreas since the division is the Cold War system. Even though the Cold War was effectively over in 1989 everywhere else, it is still very much alive in the Korean Peninsula. Not only has North Korea been an archenemy of South Korea, but anti-communism has become the south's "emotional infrastructure"; South Korea's "ideological chastity" had to be protected at all costs.[61] The generation who did not directly experience the war also inherited bipolar allegiances that the war required.[62] At the same time, anti-communism as state ideology and state policy was part and parcel of the Park Chung-hee developmental state's pursuit of high economic growth. A large percentage of the population, beneficiaries of the unprecedented economic growth, became ardent supporters of Park's regime. Even though Park's type of developmental state faced bankruptcy in the financial crisis of 1997, the support base remained more or less intact until recently.[63]

High-profile political liberalization in South Korea often belies the still-pervasive Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula. Despite claims of a total break from the past in the post-1987 era, South Korea still maintains the National Security Law (NSL),[64] for example, a most draconian body of law that restricts freedom of thought and whose indiscriminate application has been one of the principal mechanisms used by previous authoritarian regimes to control and discipline society.[65] The NSL has functioned as a "ventilator" for the Cold War system that should have been a historical relic.[66] Even during the presidency

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of Kim Dae-jung, who remains one of the most notable victims of this law, the application of the NSL was not reduced.[67]

Given the interlocking relationship between anti-communism, economic development, and continuing Cold War infrastructure on the Korean Peninsula, South Korea's ideological topography cannot be adequately explained along received notions of left and right that pivot on the issue of class as based on European historical experience. The axis on which the left and right is divided in South Korea is generally considered anti-communism. But, more precisely, it is anti–North Korean sentiment. If the earlier politics of anti-communism was born out of unrelenting competition with North Korea and the state-building process of eliminating dissent, the rise of the politics of *chongbuk chwap'a* (leftists who follow the North Korean state ideology of self-reliance) in the late 1990s and early 2000s has functioned more specifically to discredit groups or individuals who advocate a reconciliatory approach to North Korea and also those who are associated with or sympathetic to the governments of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun.[68] The two governments' Sunshine Policy of engaging North Korea through economic assistance and cooperation has been an object of scathing criticism from the conservatives.[69] In fact, by the 2000s, one's attitude toward and support of the Sunshine Policy became a major criterion by which to judge and categorize one's political identity, whether one was on the left or right, progressive or conservative.[70]

Along with the continuing Cold War system, the narrative of a clear break from the past articulated in the Park Chung-hee syndrome and New Right scholarship has also been encouraged, shaped, and sustained, if not underwritten, by conservative mass media. Mass media's close ties with the dominant global trend is nothing new, with its spread of celebratory discourse of globalization with corporate advertisements and songs from the 1960s. This trend was intensified by the breakdown of the socialist bloc and subsequent predominance of neoliberalism.[71]

Conservative mass media in particular remained one of four entities that political scientist Jang-jip Choi [Ch'oe Chang-jip] identifies as the core power bloc—along with the military elite, chaebŏl, and technocrats of state organizations—that sustained authoritarianism in South Korea even after the 1987 democratic transition.[72] The seeming coherence and remarkable cultural and social capital that the New Right display are due in major part to mass media. It has promoted and coordinated disparate individuals and groups, including academics, literary figures, artists, social commentators, and politicians, into a unified group that has gradually cohered as the New Right. An intimate relationship

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between the conservative mass media and well-known conservative figures whose fictional and nonfictional writings became a foundational revisionist text of Korean history also was part and parcel of the continuing culture war.

Much as in other parts of the world, mass media sets the agenda, parameters, and terms of public discourse. It has also increasingly become what Allen Feldman calls in a different context a "historiographical apparatus," replacing or substituting professional historians' scholarship.[73] Both the Park Chung-hee syndrome and more recent debates over New Right scholarship show that the conservative mass media has become a most assiduous student of the Gramscian call for a "war of position"—a "culture war," as it were.[74]

The Postmodern Predicament and the "Failure" of Revolutions

Although perpetuation of the Cold War structure on the Korean Peninsula makes deciphering South Korea's ideological landscape a hazard, it does provide an ideological infrastructure for triumphalist discourses of the regime of discontinuity. The global end of the Cold War—the breakup of the Soviet Union and of actually existing socialism—heralded the concomitant demise of left and Marxist social theory and of political Marxism, giving rise to questioning of the premises of modernity. As philosopher Alain Badiou notes, Jean-François Lyotard's declaration of the end of "grand narratives" was a kind of "melancholic farewell to the twentieth century," which for Lyotard meant above all "the end of Marxist politics, the end of the 'proletarian narrative.'"[75]

Some of the recognized authorities on postmodern thinking such as Lyotard locate the "origin" of postmodernity in the "failure" of modernity in Europe and in the experience of mass violence and colonial counterinsurgencies, among other challenges.[76] Sociologist Jeffrey Alexander finds yet another more localized and recent "origin" of postmodern thinking in the "failure" of the 1960s; that is, many leftists who were demoralized and became uncertain about modernity's promise of grand narratives embraced postmodern theory as a way to explore the meaning of their experience of and disappointments with the 1960s.[77]

Another spin-off of the discourse of "failure" of the 1960s is the narrative of failure of revolutions found in the European academic community's discrediting of worldwide revolutionary experiences and revolutionary discourse, from François Furet's revisionist work on the French Revolution to German sociologist Wolf Lepenies's claim that "nothing happened in France in 1968,"[78] to the too-swift equation made reducing the Chinese revolution to the "excess" in China's Cultural Revolution. Given the intertwined history of modernity and revolu-

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tions, the narrative of failure has had profound consequences for the assessment of modernity.[79]

Furet's 1978 book, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (*Penser la révolution française*), one of the earliest efforts to reassess the French Revolution in the context of rising doubts about the premises of modernity, was "the history of the illusion of revolutionary politics."[80] Most significantly, it ushered in an intellectual trend of reducing major revolutionary movements of the past to "the convenient and politically paralyzing category of 'totalitarianism,'" with Auschwitz and the gulag as the presumed ultimate destinations of any project that does not align itself with the tenets of liberal democracy.[81]

As historian Geoff Eley further elaborates, for someone like Furet, the collapse of communism "confirmed the bankruptcy and final defeat of the radical democratic fantasies" of the French Revolution and any radical hopes of the leftist movements of the twentieth century, as merely "violent and irrational." In this view, Bolshevism might have been an outcome of the violent and chaotic circumstances of World War I, but the later violence of the Soviet Union came from the utopianism in Bolshevism that was inherently dictatorial and innate in the idea of revolution itself—"in the illusory belief of revolutionaries that society was available for the remaking."[82]

With *Interpreting the French Revolution*, Furet declared the revolution and its import in the French society, as well as the revolutionary ideas, was over.[83] He also offered an analysis of contemporary French society and its extremely sectarian politics by examining Jacobinism mainly in the context of, and as a genesis of, totalitarianism. The philosophical and historical linkage between Jacobinism and the post-1945 French intellectual left also contributed to the latter's demise.[84] The view of revolutionary ideas as inherently violent and dictatorial also informed the revisionist scholarship of the New Right in West Germany in the well-known instance of the historians' dispute of the 1980s. For the Holocaust denialist and historian Ernst Nolte, the French Revolution was "a dress rehearsal for Lenin's Red Terror which was a dress rehearsal for the Holocaust and the Holocaust itself as a defensive response to 'Asiatic terror.'"[85]

Postmodern and Postnational Histories

That the protagonist of the above narrative of failure is also specifically European needs no retelling.[86] Still, it should also be pointed out here that the beginning of history as a professional discipline was in part a product of revolutionary experience. The role of history was to assess the meaning of the Enlightenment

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and the French Revolution; both supporters and opponents of the French Revolution mobilized history as their "guide and weapon."[87] The legacy of the French Revolution was also critical in liberal historians' advocacy for radical change.[88] Historian Ch'oe Kap-su argues further that the revolutionary experiences in fact contributed to the European claim that it had experienced a true transformation of society—the claim that constituted one of the core tenets of modernity—and therefore the right to universalize its own history. The rest of the world either did not have a history (such as Africa) or had a stagnant history (such as Asia).[89] For the first half of the twentieth century and beyond, historical narratives, whether Marxist or the Annales school inspired, also projected the possibility of historical change that would take place through dynamic interactions between human and structural conditions.[90] This deeply optimistic view of history as progress, and the belief in historians' ability—as well as responsibility—to capture and explain such historical transformations, went hand in hand with a totalistic view about history: "grand narratives, rational expectation, and unitary power."[91] Such a totalistic view and belief in the emancipatory potential of historical narratives were also an expression of the self-confidence derived from Europe's experiences of historical changes through revolutions.[92]

Europe's optimism about historical progress began to wear off in the aftermath of the horror of the Holocaust and World War II. It also coincided with the emergence of formerly colonized subjects coming to the fore in the three decades of the "decolonizing era" marked by the radical and insurrectionary politics of emancipation—insurgency, revolution, nationalism, and national liberation struggle. From the beginning of the 1970s, the world system stumbled into economic recession and attendant political crisis. The consequent political reaction was to attempt "the containment and recuperation of the historic challenge from the 'Third World' that had been expressed in the struggles for decolonization in the boom years following 1945; to force a restructuring of class relations in the interests of capital in the core capitalist countries, a rolling back of the challenge represented by 'Third World' insurgency at the peripheries."[93] In the discipline of history, if previous historical writings were concerned with forces and energy that had moved history forward, then the new approaches to history began with questioning a totalistic view of history and class as a stable and unitary category through which to understand a society.[94]

Previously discussed accounts of revolutions as inherently destructive and damaging represent one of the more reactionary set of responses coming out of the post-1970 European intellectual community to these worldwide developments. These accounts, as Arif Dirlik argues, not only "call into question

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one of the founding moments of modernity" but also "cast doubt on all revolutions, regardless of political orientation, and the aspirations and visions that endowed revolutionary change with meaning."[95] This kind of scholarship also impedes consideration of why and how revolutions emerge—their rise as a product of sociopolitical and economic forces and their role as a voice of the aspirations of the oppressed and marginalized in society.[96]

For much of modern Korea, revolutionary transformation of society—the yearning for, the actual experience of, however partial and incomplete, and future prospects of—was indeed part and parcel of how modernity was experienced. The extreme violence, terror, and deaths that accompanied the series of "incomplete" or "passive" revolutions left most Koreans deeply traumatized, with the ensuing anti-communism as state ideology expunging society of any leftist politics by the end of the Korean War, be it in political philosophy or a social movement.[97] Starting from the late 1970s and the 1980s, however, a new generation devoted itself to the cause of reviving the previously "failed" attempt at revolution, a possibility that had seemed not only imminent but also inevitable at the time.

The insurgent demands for decolonization and self-determination among third world countries were critical for this generation's anti-authoritarian, anti-hegemonic, and anti-imperialist discourse. Minjung practitioners aligned themselves with the kind of nationalism that was taken up by the newly independent countries of Southeast Asia and Africa.[98] Some literary critics from the mid-1970s also envisioned Korean literature as a part of third world literature, which they considered the most "advanced" among world literature, holding out the promise of reinvigorating world literature.[99]

With the end of faith in the grand narrative of universal progress toward emancipation of humanity, new approaches to history both in terms of research topics and their implicit aims seemed bereft of emancipatory goals that had been previously associated with historical narratives. In the words of Ch'oe Kap-su, for historians seeking transformative politics with their history writing, "it was no longer possible to locate where to attack [for a change of society]. Each object of [the new approaches to history such as cultural history or microhistory] can be used for attack, but there is no longer a detonator that could explode the whole."[100] As the arrival of postmodernity in South Korea coincided with the demise of the minjung project, among other aspirations of societal change, it only further amplified an already pervasive sense of uncertainty about projecting any future political vision.[101] For many intellectuals, the appearance of the Korean translations of the foundational texts of postmodern thinking and

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postmodernism in 1992—Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* and Jean Baudrillard's *Simulations*—were like "new machinery that had just been imported and went through customs clearance but that nobody knew how to operate yet."[102]

As elsewhere, the advent of postmodernity in Korea meant not only the end of a particular theory or ideology or certain kind of knowledge production but also, and perhaps more importantly, the end of categories of thinking with which people had long engaged the world. If the 1980s marks the end of what Alain Badiou calls the twentieth century's historical sequence, literary scholar Wang Hui identifies the end of this historical sequence "not as an end to history, nor as a willed ideological farewell, nor even as the end to the relevance of revolutionary politics altogether, but rather as the end of the possibility for twentieth-century solutions to contemporary problems."[103]

This book strives to gain a critical and comprehensive understanding of the twin trajectories of democratization and neoliberalism in post-1987 South Korea in the larger context that I have briefly discussed above, whereby the Cold War persists on the Korean Peninsula while it ended globally, while the neoliberal restructuring has been ratcheted up. Loss of faith in the grand narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to the resulting postmodern thinking in whose political vision the twentieth century becomes the final epoch of modernity. This book integrates analyses of the nexus of neoliberal governance in political economy, culture, and society. To this end, I examine a wide range of materials such as memoirs, biographies, literary works, and academic literature, along with analyses of government policies and social movements. While paying attention to the profound and wide-ranging sociopolitical and global transformations that gave rise to the regime of discontinuity, I explore how and in what ways the regime of discontinuity functions to disavow the previous emancipatory politics of their relevance to contemporary society.

Chapter Outlines

In what follows, I discuss four separate but related developments that together constitute the regime of discontinuity. Chapter 1 tracks the conceptual paradigm shift from the people (minjung) to the citizen (simin) both in social discourse and in social movements of post-1987 South Korea. I examine how this paradigm shift ushered in primacy of the notions of "citizen" and "liberal democracy," with claims that the citizens' movement represented a new form of social movement away from the previous and more radical minjung movement.

Further scrutinizing the meaning of "citizen" in liberal democracy, I discuss how South Korea's discourse of liberal democracy widely circulated in the 1990s

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has been converted into a discourse of neoliberalism. Some of the neoliberal policies introduced by the newly established liberal democratic administrations were accepted as measures to correct earlier authoritarian regimes' practices. More specifically, probing the meaning of "citizen" in the case of the labor movement, I explore how the labor movement gained its social citizenship in the 1990s only to be subjected to demands of both the state and of capital.

Whereas chapter 1 is about the paradigm shift from minjung to simin at the nexus of the democratic transition and neoliberal restructuring, chapter 2 is about how these two developments brought about a shift from the political to the cultural in the 1990s. I examine *huildam* (literature of reminiscence) as symptomatic of this shift, constituting the regime of discontinuity that posits the post-1987 period as a radical departure from the previous era. Appearing in the 1990s, in the aftermath of the setback of the 1980s minjung movement, this genre deals largely with loss of revolutionary hope and vision, as well as a loss of faith in history and the future. Protagonists in these literary works are usually former undongkwŏn whose transition to sosimin (petty bourgeois) in a liberal democracy is fraught with unrelenting—in some cases fatal—self-interrogation and remorse. At the same time, I suggest that the very act of self-examination and self-exposure also functions as a Benjaminian "form of remembrance"; as it documents the unrealized hopes, dreams, betrayals, and failures of the minjung movement and the undongkwŏn, it also calls to mind the unfinished and unsuccessful struggles of the past generation as well as the ruptures in the continuity of history.

The next two chapters explore the construction of social memory and history writing of the immediate past in popular culture as well as in academia and the subsequent reorientation of history as part of a turn to the right in South Korea in the 1990s. Chapter 3 discusses the Park Chung-hee syndrome as a case of how the regime of discontinuity manifest in reconstruction of social memory of Park Chung-hee and his regime. The syndrome was not only an indictment of the Kim Young-sam government's failure to carry out its much-promised reform, nor just a case of nostalgia for the bygone days of economic boom. It was also a cocreation of powerful conservative media and a group of well-known sociopolitical and literary figures. I analyze memoirs, biographies, and literary works, showing how this vast amount of narrative labor facilitated and constituted the syndrome. The Park Chung-hee syndrome is therefore another critical site where contestation over memory and history has taken place.

With the rise of the New Right and its attempt to rewrite Korean history, the culture war in South Korea has turned into a "civil war," the focus of chapter 4. I explore how the rise of the New Right and its triumphalist discourse

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constitute a main pillar of the regime of discontinuity—a neoliberal disavowal of the minjung project. New Right historians' embrace of postcolonial scholarship and their critique of leftist nationalist historiography of the 1980s have pushed out the nation, only to bring back the state in its place. Intellectually and politically, the New Right's appropriation of postcolonial scholarship is a triumphal discourse that is unapologetic about neoliberal capitalist development in South Korea as well as the willful ordering of the disappearance of North Korea.

The epilogue explores the politics of time that the regime of discontinuity engages in and its historiographical and ethical implications. That is, the regime of discontinuity and the New Right scholarship discursively assign as past or anachronistic all those phenomena that do not accommodate contemporary society's hegemonic ideal. This view of temporality vindicates contemporaries in relation to injustices that happened in the past as well as to a present that has not rendered justice for past historical injustices. Informed by Benjamin's view of historical temporality that sees history as not a continuous accumulation of homogeneous empty time but as time filled with the intermingling of past and present, I suggest as an alternative a poetics of remembrance. To make amends for the previously unacknowledged suffering of the past generation and to make efforts to continue the unconcluded struggles of the past is to open up a possibility for true emancipation of society and for thinking about the limits and possibilities of a transformative political praxis as well.

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 Chŏng Hae-gu, "Pak Chŏng-hŭi sindŭrŏm."

2 This is of course not unique or specific to South Korea. The New Left of the 1960s was criticized by Hannah Arendt on similar grounds that they sought to comprehend the reality of the twentieth century through political categories of the nineteenth century, such as the concept of progress. Arendt, *On Violence*, 88.

3 Rancière, "In What Time Do We Live?"

4 Löwy, *Fire Alarm*, 44–45.

5 See, among others, Kim Ch'ang-nam, "Taejung munhwa ionyŏn"; Kim Ch'ang-nam, "90nyŏndae sinsedae munhwaŭi aik'on."

6 Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*; Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 30.

7 Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 30–31.

8 See, among others, Duggan, *Twilight of Equality?*; Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*; Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*.

9 Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 19–20.

10 Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories*, 51.

11 Kim Chong-yŏp, "Chagi kyebarŭl nŏmŏsŏn chayuŭi ŭijirŭl wihayŏ," 292–93.

12 Kim Chong-yŏp, "Chagi kyebarŭl nŏmŏsŏn chayuŭi ŭijirŭl wihayŏ," 293. Historians have recently begun to examine the 1960s and 1970s from the perspective of Michel Foucault's idea of neoliberalism as governing rationality. See, for example, Yi Sang-nok, "Sanŏphwa sigi 'ch'ulsse.'"

13 Miller, "Idea of Stagnation," 10.

14 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

15 Choi, *Democracy after Democratization*, 131.

16 Feldman, "Political Terror."

17 Nora, "Between Memory and History," 17; see also Schwarz, "Memory, Temporality, Modernity."

18 Mercer, "Moral Rearmament," 108.

19 Mercer, "Moral Rearmament," 107–8.

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20 Fukuyama, "End of History?" 4.

21 Such events include the Korean War in 1950, April 19 student uprising of 1960, self-immolation of Chŏn T'ae-il in 1970, Kwangju uprising in 1980, and the historic summit between North and South Korea in 2000. The IMF crisis in 1997 was the most critical event of the 1990s.

22 Varon, Foley, and McMillian, "Time Is an Ocean," 1.

23 "What Was Revolutionary about the French Revolution?" *New York Review of Books*, January 19, 1989, 10; quoted in Varon, Foley, and McMillian, "Time Is an Ocean," 1.

24 See Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 294–95.

25 More specifically, the 1987ch'eje denotes the regime governed by the revised constitution of 1987, as well as all the changes that were brought about since, both worldwide and in South Korea. Kang Wŏn-taek et al., "6wŏl hangjaeng 30chunyŏn," 72.

26 Kim Ho-gi, "1987nyŏn ch'eje," 13.

27 See, among others, Kyŏnghyang sinmun t'ŭkbyŏl chwijaet'im, *Minjuhwa 20nyŏn ŭi yŏlmang kwa chŏlmang*.

28 *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaekkwasajŏn*. See also Song, *South Koreans in the Debt Crisis*.

29 From 1986 to 1988, the rates of GDP growth was at 12 percent annually, the highest in the world. Eichengreen, Perkins, and Shin, *From Miracle to Maturity*, 44–45. The average growth rate during the Chun Doo-hwan regime (1981–1987) was 8.7 percent and the national GDP reached $100 billion. Heo et al., "Political Economy," 10.

30 Pak Yŏng-gyun, "Minjung undong," 16.

31 For more detailed discussion of this term, see Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 8–9, 147–86.

32 Im Tae-sik, "*Haebang chŏnhusa ŭi chaeinsik* ŭl p'yŏlch'yŏbon kandanhan sohoe," 12.

33 Kim Kyu-hang, *B-kŭp chwap'a*, 272.

34 Coined in the 1990s, it refers to those who were born in the 1960s, went to college in the 1980s, and were in their thirties at the time.

35 See Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 14.

36 Lim and Jang, "Between Neoliberalism and Democracy," 8.

37 Lim and Jang, "Between Neoliberalism and Democracy," 9.

38 Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment*, 25–26.

39 Duggan, *Twilight of Equality?*

40 Duggan, *Twilight of Equality?*; quoted in Ferguson and Hong, "Sexual and Racial Contradictions of Neoliberalism," 1058.

41 Hong, *Death beyond Disavowal*, 19–20.

42 Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 30–31.

43 Park, *Capitalist Unconscious.*

44 Therborn, "New Masses?" Historian Yi Sang-nok argues that the discourse of the middle class (*chungsanch'ŭng*) in South Korea was in full swing by the 1980s, in which the growth of the middle class was seen as a preemptive measure against any radical movements. Yi Sang-nok, "1980nyŏndae chungsanch'ŭng tamnon," 292–94.

45 Yi Sang-nok, "1980nyŏndae chungsanch'ŭng tamnon," 282.

46 Cohen, "Finding Uncommon Ground," 124.

47 Thatcher, "AIDS, Education, and the Year 2000!"

48 These films include *Shiri* (1999), *Joint Security Area* (2002), *Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood of War* (2004), and *Welcome to Dongmakgol* (2005). *Tae Guk Gi: The Brotherhood*

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of War, narrating the Korean War from the point of view of two brothers who each end up joining the opposite side, reportedly drew over ten million moviegoers—approximately one out of four South Koreans. See, among others, Lee, "South Korean Blockbuster."

49 As will be discussed in chapter 1, Kim Young-sam's presidency was made possible in part due to the merger of his political party with the ruling party in 1990.

50 See, among others, Ha Sang-bok, "Ŭijehyŏngsŏngŭi chŏngch'ihak." On the evaluation of the Kim government's effort, see, among others, Sŏ Chung-sŏk, *Sajin kwa kŭrim ŭro ponŭn Han'guk hyŏndaesa*; Cho Yong-hwan, "5.18 t'ŭkpyŏlbŏpkwa Chŏn-No chaep'anŭi munjejŏm."

51 See, among others, Chŏn Myŏng-hyŏk, "Han'gugesŏ kwagŏch'ŏngsanundongŭi yŏksa"; Kim Chu-wan, "Cho Tu-nam ch'inil nonjaeng kyŏnggwabogo"; De Ceuster, "Nation Exorcised," 219–22.

52 The drama was so popular that it was said that streets were empty during the time it aired in the late evenings. The 1980 Kwangju uprising is a pivotal event in the lives of the protagonists, and the mass media would refer to this generation as "the generation of the *Sandglass*." See Kim Chong-wŏn, "Urinŭn moraesidae sedaeigirŭl kŏbuhanda." Hye-rin, one of the three main protagonists and a university student activist from a wealthy family, pretends to come from a poor family and lives in a one-room rental out of guilt about her privileged background. She delivers one of the most memorable television dialogues capturing the ethos of the 1980s *minjung* movement, the self-denial of the intellectual at the sight of the suffering minjung: "I bought this sack of rice with money . . . while female workers [at Tong'il Textile] are waging a hunger strike, risking their lives" (episode 5, broadcast on January 15, 1995). More recent television dramas such as *Respond 1988* (broadcast in 2016) and films such as *A Taxi Driver* and *1987: When the Day Comes* (both released in 2017), dealing with the Kwangju uprising and the 1987 June uprising, respectively, were also immensely popular, the two films drawing more than ten million and seven million moviegoers, respectively. Park, "'A Taxi Driver' Attracts 10 Million Viewers."

53 Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History."

54 For similar cases of other countries, see, among others, Friedman and Kenney, *Partisan Histories*.

55 See, among others, Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*.

56 The official name of the body formed to investigate is the Presidential Committee for the Inspection of Collaborations for Japanese Imperialism. On collaboration and South Korean historiography, see, among others, De Ceuster, "Nation Exorcised"; Tikhonov, "Rise and Fall," 9–14.

57 President Kim Young-sam initially refused to bring the two former presidents to trial, saying that history would make a final judgment about their role in the massacre of civilians in the Kwangju uprising. I discuss this issue in more detail in chapter 1.

58 Coronil, "Towards a Critique," 351.

59 Coronil, "Towards a Critique," 354.

60 See, among others, Kyogwasŏ p'orŏm, *Han'guk kŭn-hyŏndaesa*; Kim Tong-gil, Pok Kŏ-il, and Yi Ch'un-gŭn, *Pukhan chayu sŏnŏn*.

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61 Yi Ch'ŏl-hŭi, "Posunŭn wae Kim Dae-jungboda," 26.
62 See, among others, Kwon, *The Other Cold War*.
63 Yi Ch'ŏl-hŭi, "Posunŭn wae Kim Dae-jungboda," 27. Many accounts of the 2016–2017 candlelight protests that led to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye, Park Chung-hee's daughter, suggest that this base may have been shattered for the first time by the protests.
64 First enacted in 1948 and revised several times since, South Korea's NSL mandates harsh felony punishments for "any person who has organized an association or group for the purpose of . . . disturbing the state or who prepared or conspired to do so." Quoted in Shaw, *Human Rights in Korea*, 184. Even the joint membership in the United Nations since 1991 did not change the enemy status of North Korea until the June 2000 summit meeting.
65 See Lee, *Making of Minjung*, 70–108.
66 Ko Chong-sŏk, *Ko Chong-sŏk*, 42.
67 During the first year of Kim Dae-jung's presidency, the number of those who were arrested for violation of the NSL and the number of political prisoners increased fourfold compared to the first year of the previous Kim Young-sam government. Son Ho-ch'ŏl, *Sinjayujuŭi sidae*, 157.
68 See, for example, Doucette and Koo, "Distorting Democracy." The trajectory of the discourse of *chongbuk chwap'a* is more complicated than rendered here, as the term first originated within a leftist political party to denounce its members who were seen as intransigent followers of North Korea's *chuch'e sasang*. Chŏng Yŏng-t'ae, *P'aböl: Minjunodongdang chŏngp'a kaldŭngŭi kiwŏn'gwa chongmal* [Factions: Origin and end of the factional strife within the Democratic Labor Party] (Imaejin, 2012), 217; cited in Kim Chŏng-in, "Chongbukp'ŭreim," 212.
69 This does not mean the two administrations were immune from criticisms by the left. The left became highly critical of the government's neoliberal economic policies as well as other acts such as Roh Moo-hyun's decision to send troops to Iraq in 2003. See, among others, Yu Pyŏng-mun, "Kim Se-gyun Min'gyohyŏp sangimgongdongdaep'yo"; French, "Despite Protests."
70 See, among others, Pak T'ae-gyun, "Haetpyŏt'chŏngch'aek."
71 Coronil, "Towards a Critique," 352n11.
72 Choi, *Democracy after Democratization*, 131.
73 Feldman, "Political Terror," 63. Feldman's use of the term is in the context of how, in the case of Northern Ireland, retributive violence, such as revenge, retaliation, or punishment, acted as a way to construct a certain memory of the country's immediate past and to settle some contentious historical disputes.
74 Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 168.
75 Badiou, *Century*, 208n19. Historian Ammar Ali Jan elaborates this point further: "For a significant part of the 20th century the word 'Marxism' denoted a global movement for a radically different world from the prevalent order, one that brought together diverse struggles of workers, peasants, women, anti-colonial fighters and civil rights activists, to engage in the collective project of emancipation. Since the late 1980s, however, the dominant memory of these struggles is one of a pedagogical project that ended in a 'totalitarian' disaster signified by the 'gulags.'

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Against the authoritarianism of Communist politics, the contemporary liberal ethic emphasizes the futility (and danger) of any project that aims to radically alter the 'essence' of man, and instead privileges the 'protection' of citizens from the excesses of totalitarian projects through a discourse of human rights enforced by powerful states ('western' states in the global arena). Revolutionary thought, a crucial pillar of politics in the 20th century, became unthinkable at the end of the century, since it was deemed to be neither possible nor desirable by the dominant consensus." Jan, "'Beyond Good and Evil.'"

76 I thank Lisa Yoneyama for this point.

77 Therborn, "After Dialectics," 71; Alexander, "Modern, Anti, Post, Neo," 82.

78 Quoted in Ross, *May '68*, 19.

79 Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories*, 46.

80 Christofferson, "Antitotalitarian History," 572.

81 Jan, "'Beyond Good and Evil.'"

82 Christofferson, "Antitotalitarian History," 557. For example, Richard Pipes, historian of Russia and the Soviet Union, compares the Russian Revolution to a "virus." Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 132–33. Furet's 1995 book *Le passé d'une illusion* (*The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999]), as well as other publications in the late 1990s, such as Stéphane Courtois et al., *The Black Book of Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), also share the same view of a substantial identity between Nazism and Bolshevism, the former resulting in "racial genocide" and the latter in "class genocide," as "epiphenomena of equivalent ideological essences." Traverso, "Totalitarianism," 111.

83 Mercer, "Moral Rearmament," 108.

84 Christofferson, "Antitotalitarian History," 557.

85 Heilbrunn, "Germany's New Right," 85.

86 I thank Lisa Yoneyama for reminding me of this important point.

87 Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth*, 42.

88 Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth*, 42–43.

89 Ch'oe Kap-su, "Yŏksaesŏ pyŏnhyŏgiran muŏsin'ga," 41. Historians Mike Haynes and Jim Wolfreys write that the French Revolution was also "a self-conscious appeal to the world. The Declaration of the Rights of Man embodied part of this wider claim. It was, said Mirabeau, 'applicable to all times, all places and all climes.'" Haynes and Wolfreys, "Introduction," 2–3.

90 Ch'oe Kap-su, "Yŏksaesŏ pyŏnhyŏgiran muŏsin'ga," 42.

91 Maxwell, "Political Economy," 491.

92 Ch'oe Kap-su, "Yŏksaesŏ pyŏnhyŏgiran muŏsin'ga," 41–42. Susan Buck-Morss points out that the Black slaves of San Domingo "surpassed the metropole in actively realizing the Enlightenment goal of human liberty, seeming to give proof that the French Revolution was not simply a European phenomenon but world-historical in its implications." Buck-Morss, *Hegel*, 39; quoted in Tassone, "It Is Not Over Yet," 343. As Tassone adds, this did not mean that history of San Domingo was incorporated into history of Europe. Tassone, "It Is Not Over Yet," 343.

93 Lazarus, "'Third Worldism,'" 3–4.

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94 For the history of emergence of cultural history, see, among others, Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth*, 217–23; Eley, "History in a Moment of Danger?" 11–13.
95 Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories*, 46.
96 Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories*, 46.
97 See, among others, Dong-Choon Kim [Kim Tong-ch'un], *Unending Korean War*. On the notion of passive revolution, see, among others, Thomas, "Gramsci's Revolutions."
98 See Paek Wŏn-dam, "Asiaesŏ 1960-70nyŏndae pidongmaeng."
99 Yi Chin-hyŏng, "Minjok munhak," 125, 136–38.
100 Ch'oe Kap-su, "Yŏksaesŏ pyŏnhyŏgiran muŏsin'ga," 43–44. The military metaphor here, as problematic as it is, is also symptomatic of both the sense of importance historians used to attach to their own profession in the 1980s as well as the sense that historical writing, much as literary work, was considered a "weapon" to be used for social change.
101 Kim Chong-yŏp, "P'osŭt'ŭmodŏn sahoe iron?" 265.
102 Kim Chong-yŏp, "P'osŭt'ŭmodŏn sahoe iron?" 265. For a powerful critique of postmodernist history, see, among others, Eley, "History in a Moment of Danger?"
103 Karl, "Foreword," viii.

1. THE PARADIGM SHIFT FROM MINJUNG (PEOPLE) TO SIMIN (CITIZEN) AND NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE

1 Kim, "1988 Parliamentary Election," 480.
2 The thirteenth general election of April 1988 took place soon after the presidential election of December 1987, which was won by Roh Tae-woo and resulted in the ruling Democratic Justice Party winning only 87 seats out of 224. As a result of the 1990 merger of three parties, though, the DLP became a supersized ruling party, taking 216 seats and leaving the Peace Democratic Party headed by Kim Dae-jung as the only minority party.
3 Details of the merger have yet to be disclosed, but it was widely speculated that Kim Young-sam made a political bargain to grant impunity to Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo in return for their financial and political backing needed to defeat Kim Dae-jung in the 1992 presidential election. West, "Martial Lawlessness," 103–4.
4 From 1988 to 1995, over 1,877 workers were arrested for their union activities. Kim, "Rethinking the New Beginning," 496.
5 Twelve university students committed suicide as a protest, prompting Kim Chi-ha, an erstwhile dissident and well-known poet, to publish the now-infamous "Clear away the shamanic ritual of death!" Kim Chi-ha, "Chugŭmŭi kutp'an."
6 Chŏn Chae-ho, Kim Wŏn, and Kim Chŏng-han, *91yŏn 5wŏl t'ujaengkwa*, 16.
7 Kang Nae-hŭi, "Munhwa wa sijang," 243.
8 Sŏ Tong-jin, *Pyŏnjŭngpŏp ŭi natcham*, 200.
9 Sŏ Tong-jin, *Pyŏnjŭngpŏp ŭi natcham*, 200.
10 Kim Myŏng-hwan, "1987nyŏn 6wŏl hangjaeng," 225.

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