DIGITAL SPIRITUALITY AND GOVERNMENTALITY: CONTEXTUALIZING

CYBER MEMORIAL ZONES IN KOREA[1]

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This dissertation entitled

DIGITAL SPIRITUALITY AND GOVERNMENTALITY: CONTEXTUALIZING

CYBER MEMORIAL ZONES IN KOREA

by

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Abstract

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DIGITAL SPIRITUALITY AND GOVERNMENTALITY: CONTEXTUALIZING

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This is an interdisciplinary study in which the fields of media studies, religion, and political economy are integrated from the perspective of cultural studies. This study explores how shamanism, the indigenous belief system in Korea, has been revived as the dynamics of shamanic inheritance with the advancement of cybercultures in Korea. Cyber memorial zones, as an apparatus of Korean cybercultures, testify to the rebirth of shamanism in the form of digital spirituality. With the historical consideration of Korean shamanism, which has been oppressed and marginalized by the ruling classes, this study attempts to understand the rebirth of shamanism as the empowerment of the Korean populace. The notion of digital spirituality is significant as an instrumental tool to better understand the relations of Korean cybercultures and other cultural contexts. By examining the construction of digital spirituality in various cyber memorial zones, this study articulates the different power tensions lying within socio-political and cultural contexts in Korea.

Cultural studies was adopted as the methodology of this research for contextualizing cyber memorial zones in the different contexts and articulating their power relations, especially between Korean cybercultures and the new culture of death. By doing so, this study explores the relations of technologies of the Korean people's self and those of government domination. Textual analysis, online and in-

depth interviews, and participant observation were selected as the methods and were used circumstantially.

This research finds that cyber memorial zones are the outgrowth of the combination of the government-driven information policy and the rebirth of shamanism as inherited dynamics. Cyber memorial zones have multiple facets that reflect not only the technologies of the empowered Korean populace's self but also the power of capital flow that deterritorializes the rite of death. Cyber memorial zones also mirror technologies of government domination that enhance capital flow. Technologies of the Korean populace's self, although empowered through the cyber cultural contexts, do not seem to be counter-technologies in response to the power of capital flow and the technologies of government domination.

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Dedication

For Heajin, forever my love and an embodiment of Dharma Kaya Buddha.

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I am also grateful to the users of cyber memorial zones who have been very cooperative in helping me deal with very delicate subject of this project: the death of loved ones and memorial letters. Although I was contacted them only through email or telephone, they showed frankness to my inquiries, which made this project dynamically progress.

I express my deep gratitude to Heajin, my wife, whose love and support helped me to complete this journey. Heajin has always encouraged me whenever I encountered the difficulties of advancing in this work and became frustrated. I would like to dedicate this work to Heajin, who has kept me from the difficulties as an embodiment of Dharma Kaya Buddha.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One evening early in autumn 2002 I was sitting in the school library, surfing

the Net to find a research topic for a term paper. By chance I found a Korean

memorial website called *Cyber Memorial Zone* operated by the Seoul city

government. In a section titled "The Post Office in Heaven," I found thousands of

memorial letters, including this one:

> Dear Dad,
> How are you? We have heavy snow today. All the places of the city
> were laden with the snow. Feeling the snow falling down on my
> shoulders, I remembered the time when you and I built a snowman
> together. It has already been two years since you left mom and me
> without even saying goodbye. But I still cannot believe you live in
> another realm absolutely different from where mom and I live. Isn't
> the place you live now cold? I hope not. When can I see you again? I
> also want to be with you. As you know, you were all in my life.

I assumed that the writer of this letter was a girl in her late teens whose father passed

away not long ago. While reading this letter I was overcome by strange and subtle

feelings of sorrow, fear, and curiosity. My eyes moistened with tears. Her broken

heart touched me through cyberspace. When I read, "I also want to be with you," I

thought that she might die of a broken heart. A chill went down my spine. I imagined

an invisible being from another world having some type of connection with a being in

this world through cyberspace.

Above all, I was overcome with curiosity. The memory of death and ritual in

my mind consisted of scenes such as a small funeral parlor located in a village, a

mourning lamp hanging on the gate of a house, but not in the memorial letters posted

in cyber memorial zones. This unfamiliar feeling of a new culture of death came from

the difference of time and space. Because I had left Korea in 1993, I could not keep

up with the fast-paced changes of Korean society. Despite the unfamiliarity, the cyber

memorial zone that I encountered attracted my attention. What does this letter mean to the mourner? What motivated the mourners to write memorial letters in cyberspace? Do they believe that cyberspace is a spiritual realm different from the secular realm? Why do women cyber mourners write more memorial letters than men do? As a former Buddhist monk and now a researcher in the field of communications, I felt that the study of a new culture of death integrated with developing technologies was an unavoidable karma.

Playing with Puzzles
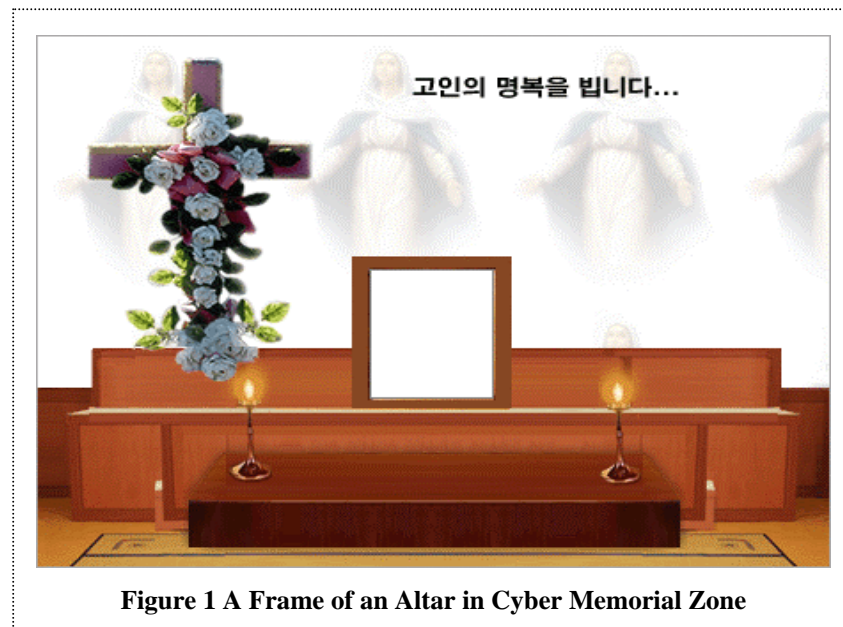
Figure 1 A Frame of an Altar in Cyber Memorial Zone

A cyber memorial zone is a website where people remember their late loved ones beyond the restrictions of time and space. In this zone, mourners write memorial letters and sometimes post photos or videos of the deceased. Those who have posted pictures or videos tend to use cyber altars, as shown in Figure 1, that feature the photos in frames. A cross covered with flowers and the misty effect of the background indicates that this altar is for Christian believers. In Korean, it proclaims, "May the departed spirit rest in the peace." Different types of digital flowers appear next to the

altars. Moreover, the sample memorial zone, created for promotion, uses Flash effects

to grab the mourners' attention. Many of the mourners in this memorial zone did not

use cyber altars; instead, the section for writing memorial letters was most popular.

For this reason, I decided to analyze the memorial letters to explore their meaning for

cyber mourners.

Puzzle of Contextualizing – Korean Shamanism in Cybercultures

The memorial letters are considered the reflection of the distinctive dynamics

derived from the shamanic inheritance. This finding has significance because, in the

past, Korean shamans have been oppressed by the ruling class as social evils that

threaten the social system with their enigmatic power. Even in the modern era, many

shaman shrines were removed by military regimes. In such a time of oppression and

marginalization, negative discourse against shamanism formed.

Figure 2 A Shamanism Promoting Website

However, Korean shamanism has re-emerged in a modified traditional form in

the Internet age. As S. N. Kim (2000) points out, "Korean shamanic heritage is

indeed surviving in the cyber world and undergoing drastic transformation even though it is still in its incipient stage" (para. #4). As shown in Figure 2, this type of shaman promotional website has flourished in recent years. This is a so-called shamanism portal site where many Korean shamans attempt to promote themselves. Clicking each photo of shamans on the site allows users to get the contact and personal information. Considering the negative discourse against shaman in the past, this is one of the biggest changes in the history of shamanism in Korea. This site is structured to disseminate information of Korean shamanism. Summarizing these trends, S. N. Kim (2000) classifies the functions of shamanism in the Internet age as informative and commercialized.

Although shamanism in cyberspace disseminates the traditional form of shamanism, it still cannot explain the changing spiritual and religious trend in Korea. The advanced Internet culture has influenced perception of spirituality and religion; therefore, shamanism in cyberspace should be more focused on how it functions as the spiritual source for Koreans. For that purpose, emphasis should be more placed on dynamics of shamanism as the spiritual source that has unendingly flown in the veins of Koreans since the founding of the nation. Traditionally, shamans in Korea were mediators between human beings and higher beings. While performing *Kut,* the Korean word for a shaman ritual, shamans channeled the revelation of divinity in ways to enliven the living and appease the dead. These two aspects were different expressions of one quality: the threshold between this world and the other world. On the edge of these two worlds, shamans helped the living experience the exulted spirits and vitalize their lives, while managing the rite of death to lead the deceased to the other world.

When death occurred, shaman ritual helped the deceased and the bereaved to soothe their *han,* or the multi-layered complex of deep sorrows and pain intermingled with resentment, regret, spite, or grief. Whether *han* is individually accumulated or the agony of the entire village, the shaman rite of death was an important method for the Korean populace to handle the sorrows and pains from the *han*-ridden death, the experience of unexpected or unjust situations or those beyond one's control. The experience of appeasing *han* in the shaman rite of death produced the distinctive dynamics that has been embedded in the Korean ethos.

Now memorial writings in the cyber memorial zones have arisen as new shamanic rite of death. When the emergence of cyber memorial zones was considered in relation to the dynamics of shamanic inheritance, the roles of traditional shamans are replaced, to a certain extent, by writing memorial letters. Writing such letters, as an unconventional but alternative form of the shamanic rituals, functions as "words against death" (Davies, 2002), by which sorrows and pains caused by *han*-ridden death could be overcome.

The concept of shamanic inheritance expanded the interpretation of shamanism not only as the means to promote the informative and commercial potential of shamanism in cyberspace but also as an instrument to appreciate the new spiritual tendency of Koreans within cybercultures. The cyber memorial zones as an apparatus of Korean cybercultures are not only individually-oriented but also represent socio-political changes. Cybercultures comprise the formation of political, social, and cultural discourses in cyberspace; these discourses reflect everyday life (Bell, 2001). From the view of cybercultures, the division of cyberspace and real space becomes obsolete. The term "inside and outside of cyberspace" more

appropriately represents the quality of cybercultures. This characteristic of Korean

cybercultures corresponds with the dynamics of shamanic inheritance, which operates

as a mediator between this world and the other world.

When contextualized in the notion of inside and outside of cyberspace, the

dynamics of shamanic inheritance become the driving force of another dimension of

spirituality called digital spirituality. Digital spirituality refers to individual or

community aspirations and practices for relationality in the cybercultural contexts. As

a new spiritual concept derived from the situation where the proliferation of computer

mediated communication (CMC), dynamics of shamanic inheritance, and the

emergence of cybercultures are intermingled, digital spirituality functions as a cultural

tool for understanding the relation of political, social, and cultural contexts in Korea.

From the perspective of digital spirituality, the following puzzles suggest an

interesting aspect in contextualizing cyber memorial zones.

Puzzle of Contextualizing - Heaven Possible Without Religion

The religious tendency of Koreans has radically changed over the past two

decades. In June 2005, the *Korea Times* reported on the changing views of heaven

within institutionalized religions:

> According to the survey, 71.5 percent of the respondents answered
> "False" to the statement, "A good-hearted person without religion
> cannot go to paradise (the netherworld) or heaven." To the statement
> saying "Paradise or heaven does not exist in the after-life, but in this
> world," 63.4 percent answered in the positive, while 23.9 percent
> answered negative, indicating many Koreans are secular-oriented. (J. A.
> Park, 2005. para. # 3-4).

These statistics suggest that the spiritual realm and the secular realm have become

much closer in Korean perception and that Koreans are more likely to "practice

spirituality" (Wuthnow, 1998). Practicing spirituality refers to "emphasizing the

importance of making a deliberate attempt to relate to the sacred" (Wuthnow, 1998, p. 854). Such a change needs explanation from the view of digital spirituality; its main feature, immanence not transcendence, allows us to visualize the way of practicing spirituality. The *Korea Times* reported on a related trend

> On the other hand, the number of believers in the Buddhist idea of transmigration has increased. To the statement, "When someone dies, he or she is reborn in this world in a different form," 27.4 percent said yes, a 6.7 percentage point increase from 1984 (J. A. Park, 2005, para. # 9).

The concept of transmigration has been embedded in Korean culture as a mixed form of shamanism and Buddhism. Traditional shamanism differentiates this world from the other world, while Korean Buddhism interprets transmigration in relation to the other world. Thus, transmigration in this world is unfamiliar to Koreans. However, this report shows a tendency toward change.

How are the proliferating cyber memorial zones relevant to this tendency? Does writing memorial letters suggest greater secularization, or does it indicate that Koreans are more likely to practice spirituality while realizing the non-dual characteristic of the spiritual and the secular realms? These questions can also be explored from the perspective of digital spirituality, the driving forces of which are inherited shamanic dynamics.

Puzzle of contextualizing – Threshold between This World and The Other World

In 2002, Korean cybercultures conspicuously expressed these different dynamics of shamanic inheritance: the revelation of divinity in ways to enliven the living and appease the dead. The dynamic of vitalizing the living was expressed in the fever of the Red Devils; the dynamic of appeasing the dead was expressed in the protest for two schoolgirls who were crushed to death under a U.S. armored vehicle.

Figure 3 Cheering Crowds Summer 2002

The fever of the Red Devils began with an online club that supported the national soccer team, the Red Devils. During the 2002 FIFA World Cup, discourse spread at a fast pace through cyberspace, leading most Koreans to become the Red Devils. As seen in the Figure 3, crowds gathered at the Seoul City Hall as the fever caught on across the country.

Figure 4 Two Teenage Girls Killed by a US Armored Vehicle

Red Devil fever reached its peak, however, a tragic incident occurred in a

small town near Seoul where U.S. troops are stationed. An armored U.S. car ran over

and killed two teenage girls. Because many accidents had been reported since the

presence of U.S. troops in Korea, the media paid little attention to the incident at first.

The matter became more serious when photographs of the scene (Figure 4) appeared

on the Internet. The news made headlines and outraged citizens. This is an example

of cybercultural discourse influencing public discourse. In lamenting the death of the

girls, many cyber memorial zones were created. When a jury later acquitted the

soldiers who were indicted for the accident, cyber memorial zones became the space

to express outrage over relations between the U.S. and Korea.

Figure 5 Mourning Crowds Winter 2002

As seen in Figure 5, thousands of Koreans held a candlelight vigil to pray for

the young souls. This candlelight vigil was ultimately the expression of the improved

status of the Korean populace. They empowered themselves through cybercultural

practices to become aware of their situation with the U.S. and to demand

independence. In this sense, Kim Ji-ha (2003), a Korean poet/social activist, insists

that the power of the populace in the candlelight vigil cannot be appropriately

appreciated through the simple lens of hatred and resentment. He argues that the

candlelights represent the profound and impartial power of the numinous that called

on and appeased not only oppressed souls but also the national soul. By talking of the

national soul, Kim insinuates that the power of numinous has been embedded in the

Korean ethos for a long time as inherited shamanic dynamics. Kim suggests that:

> Red Devils symbolize the Sun or burning fire. In contrast, the candles represent the Moon or quiet water. But Red Devils are the very candles. The young crowds in the summer were those in the winter. Fire became water and *yang* became *yin*. After all, they were yang as well as yin. It is amazing (J. H. Kim, 2003, p. 5).

Kim views the Red Devils and the candlelight vigil as different expressions of one

quality, which is characteristic of the emergence of the new generational culture in

Korea. This can be also seen in the expressions of yin and yang, the operative forces

of Tao; the exulted spirits of the Red Devils as yang are melded into the mystical

power of the candles as yin. The characteristic of the Korean new generational culture

-- the harmonized forces of yin and yang -- was presented as the Red Devils and the

candlelight vigil. The concept of Tao is identified with that of the Body without

Organs or a field of immanence (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.157). These concepts

are associated with inside and outside of cyberspace, where the dynamics of shamanic

inheritance are embedded as driving forces and reveal themselves as the threshold of

this world and the other world.

Puzzle of Contextualizing – Cyber Memorial Zones as Commercial Vanguards

So far I have examined puzzles of contextualizing cyber memorial zones

focusing on how internal dynamics of the zones influence the external dynamics of

the zones. An example is the relation between dynamics of shamanic inheritance and those of Red Devils and the candle vigil. Then, the fieldwork with the funeral industry professionals in Korea allowed me to look into the construction of the relation, in which different kinds of external dynamics in the new funeral culture affect the internal dynamics of cyber memorial zones. Here the external dynamics refer to the commercializing trends of the funeral culture.

In the fieldwork, I could observe that the Korean funeral culture, which has been under the strong influence of the tradition of Confucianism and therefore has remained little changed despite the wave of modernization and industrialization, was experiencing a great change. Small-scale mortuaries have dissipated while large, commercialized funeral parlors, mostly run by large hospitals, have emerged. At first, hospitals subcontracted services to funeral parlors that resided within the hospital, but now most hospitals operate the parlors directly. Independent funeral parlors have also flourished with the changes of government policy.

These changes demanded more educated funeral professionals, such as morticians and funeral directors, prompting some colleges to establish departments of mortuary sciences. The funeral professionals that I interviewed were graduates from these colleges. Most of the professionals showed positive attitudes to industrialization of the funeral culture and the opening of the medical and funeral sector to foreign investments. They pointed out that in the past the funeral culture operated in an unsanitary environment; now the industry is competitive and the quality of service is very high. In one of the interviews, Ji-suk, a funeral director, expressed this sentiment:

> Industrialized funeral culture changed not only the unhygienic
> environment but also the custom that morticians asked for too much

money for their services. Customers are the chief beneficiaries of this change. The [funeral] market is limited, and the industry is so competitive. In this situation, it is crucial how to spread the tale of quality and service through the grapevine. The success depends on marketing the service.

Another funeral professional, Jung-tae, testified to his attempts to market service as a managing director in a provincial funeral parlor. In the region where his company is located, the average number of deaths in a month is between 60 and 70. One day, he learned that another funeral parlor was planning to open in the same town. His company invested money to make his parlor more luxurious, purchasing a Cadillac hearse. This marketing strategy proved effective, and the new parlor did not open. Jung-tae's experience reflects the market-driven and commercialization environment of the new Korean funeral culture.

During the last decade, the cremation rate has also sharply increased along with the number of the large-sized columbaria. A government-driven funeral policy sought to promote cremation to resolve the shortage of burial grounds. During fieldwork, I visited The Korea Funeral Culture Expo sponsored by the Korea Stone Industry Cooperative. The family vault was heavily promoted by the stone companies; more than half of the pavilion was used to promote private columbaria made of stones. The stone industry appears to be the chief beneficiary of this emerging funeral culture. The funeral professionals interviewed were concerned by the proliferation of stone vaults because while graves become eroded by weather exposure within a few decades, stone vaults last nearly forever. For this reason, stone vaults may create an environmental problem while encroaching on the country.

Among these trends, cyber memorial zones are considered the commercial vanguard to attract the attention of the mourners. While the dynamics of shamanic
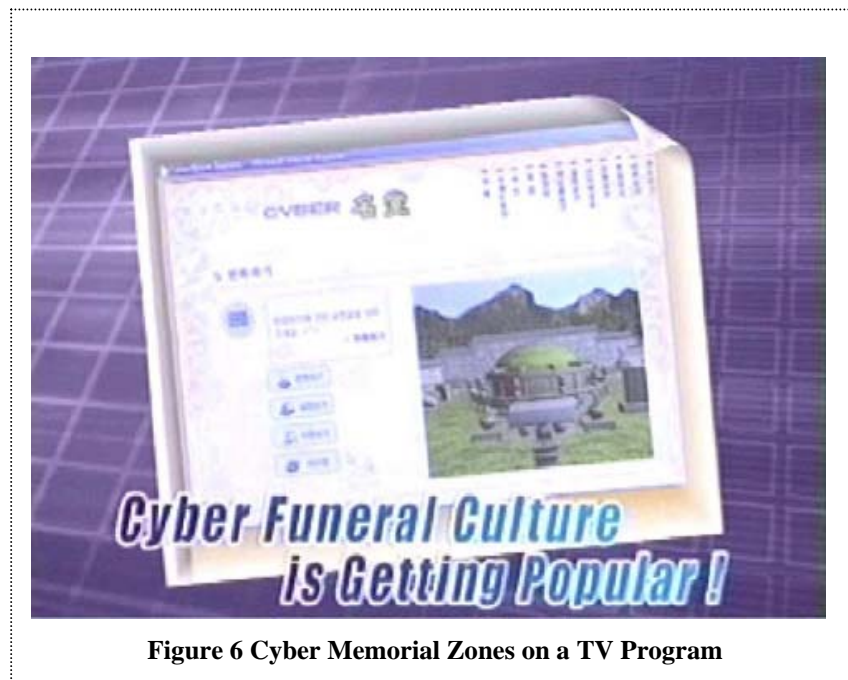
Figure 6 Cyber Memorial Zones on a TV Program

inheritance were important factors in understanding individual or socio-political

oriented cyber memorial zones, cyber memorial zones seem to be no more than a

promotional means to the funeral industry. A video clip (Figure 6) demonstrates that

cyber memorial zones are a byproduct of changing funeral trends that combine

information technology and the new funeral culture. The host of this program states

that cyber memorial zones are "a new form of IT business." A comment by a funeral

industry professional implies that the advance of the IT business facilitated the

adoption of the cyber memorial zones within the funeral industry:

> At first, cyber funeral culture was difficult for Koreans to accept. But
> as computer and the Internet are popularized, people better understand
> it and it's settling down in the Korean society. They might feel empty
> about cremation and charnel but the cyber funeral will be a good way
> to soothe their hearts.

This comment is also associated with a government official's acknowledgment that

cyber memorial zones were developed in order to appease the mourner's empty heart

with cremating their loved ones. According to one government official that I met,

cremating a body leaves only a handful of ashes to the bereaved while a grave becomes the tangible connection between the bereaved and the deceased. For this reason, the bereaved could have a greater sense of loss in cremation than in ground burial. In this sense, memorial letters or media files of the deceased in cyber memorial zones could be a good way to ease this sense of loss. Thus, cyber memorial zones are not only byproducts of the IT industry and the new funeral culture but also of government funeral policy.

So far I have played puzzles of contextualizing cyber memorial zones in the Korean cybercultures and the funeral culture. The dynamics of shamanic inheritance and the construction of digital spirituality inside and outside of cyber memorial zones can also be considered as a new religious trend in Korea. The contextualization of cyber memorial zones in relation to socio-political contexts has allowed the modern political environment of Korea, which was built on authoritative and hierarchical military power, to move toward a participatory democracy where people join in active formation of cyber cultural discourse in an attempt to influence public policy. Cyber memorial zones can also be seen as the space in which social norms of the patriarchal hierarchy have been transformed to empower women.

In contrast, cyber memorial zones as related to the funeral industry are deemed as commercial vanguards and governmental techniques. When cyber memorial zones were contextualized in this way, the dynamics constructed inside and outside memorial zones are different from those embodied through digital spirituality. The constructed digital spirituality in the zones helps the people empower themselves to soothe their individual or collective *han*; however, commercial forces with the techniques of governmental domination are exercised to enervate the inherited

shamanic dynamics. The emergence of these two cultural contexts—the new funeral culture and cybercultures—creates tension based on these dynamics. Playing puzzles of contextualizing cyber memorial zones suggests the direction of this study, which is the articulation of the tension constructed between these contexts. The following research questions are addressed to explore the tension constructed between these contexts.

Research Questions

RQ 1: How do the dynamics of shamanic inheritance construct digital spirituality in the cybercultural context, and how does the spiritual resonance of digital spirituality differ from that of conventional spirituality?

Understanding the inherited shamanic dynamics in Korean cybercultures is important because this research attempts to present the basis of the construction of digital spirituality in relation to the spirituality of shamanism, the Korean indigenous belief system, which has been oppressed and marginalized from the mainstream culture until today. Through the exploration of how the marginalized spiritual source can be the driving force of the emerging cybercultures and the new dimension of spirituality, the cultural changes of the empowerment of the populace can be explained. Dynamics of shamanic inheritance as process inside and outside of cyberspace help to differentiate the spiritual resonance of digital spirituality from that of a more conventional one.

RQ 2. In what ways and to what degree do the discourses of death in memorial writings encourage social change?

Related to RQ1, this question allows cyber memorial zones to be contextualized not only individually but also socio-politically. By doing so, it

broadens the understanding of the role of dynamics of shamanic inheritance. This question examines how dynamics of shamanic inheritance become the mainspring of transforming the discourses of death into the dynamics of social changes while traditional shamans played a role of appeasing collective *han* as mediators between this world and the other world.

RQ 3: How can cyber memorial zones provide emancipation spaces for Korean women, and how do their identities differ inside and outside of cyberspace?

Women write more than two thirds of memorial letters posted in the cyber memorial zones. While asking this question, this research explores the improved social status of Korean women. Understanding cyber memorial zones as space for women, this research also looks at the new identities of Korean women.

RQ 4: How are the technologies of government domination along with commercial forces exercised on the technologies of Korean self?

While RQ 1, 2, 3 focus on observing the internal dynamics of the cyber memorial zones, which is cybercultural dynamic, this question intends to examine the external force of cyber memorial zones that causes tension between two cultural contexts—the new funeral culture and cybercultures. With this question, the other side of Korean cybercultures that may weaken the cybercultural dynamics can be explored.

Methodology and Method

As shown in the puzzle playing of contextualizing cyber memorial zones, this research looks at cultural changes in Korea by articulating the power tensions derived from different dynamics in the contexts of the new funeral culture and cybercultures. It also explores how and why these contexts interplay and influence the new cultural

formation in Korea. For this purpose, cultural studies methodology provides a unique

tool to map out strategies of power construction in the new funeral culture and

cybercultures. Cultural studies, I define, is an interdisciplinary intellectual tool, which

maps out strategies of articulating power relations in the rhizomatic collection of the

contexts that constantly reiterate the process of de-and reterritorialization. Rhizomatic

collection underlines the transitory not eternal relations among contexts. Coined by

Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the notion of rhizome:

> A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between
> things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is
> alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the
> fabric of the rhizome is conjunction, "and … and … and …" This
> conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be"
> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25).

By defining rhizome in this manner, rhizomatic collection also connotes the

unpredictable connection of the multiple contexts. In this view, cultural studies

methodology is suitable for my study from two aspects. First, cultural studies is based

on "radical contextualism" (Grossberg, 1997, p.253); second, cultural studies is an

instrument to articulate the subtle and indiscernible power tensions constructed

between constantly changing contexts.

Contextualization as Methodology

From the perspective of radical contextualism, context is "not empirically

given beforehand; it has to be defined by the project" (Grossberg, 1997, p. 255).

Grossberg continues that context is:

> not merely background but the very conditions of possibility of
> something. It cannot be relegated to a series of footnotes or to an
> afterthought, to the first or last chapter. It is precisely what one is
> trying to analyze and it is the most difficult thing to construct. It is both
> the beginning and the end of cultural studies, although the two are not
> the same point (1997, p. 255).

Grossberg views that the world consists of multiple contexts that are based on power tensions; therefore emphasis is placed more on mapping out strategies to explicate the contexts of the research project than on choosing and relying on certain kinds of theories or focusing on the application of a certain method. However, mapping out is not only difficult but also unpredictable because the world is contextualized as the rhizomatic collection of multiplicities in the process of incessant de- and reterritorialization, not stagnated. For this reason, the goal of cultural studies is about "how the possibilities for meaning are themselves organized" rather than "interpretation of texts and artifacts" (Sterne, 1999, p. 263).

My playing puzzles of contextualizing cyber memorial zones supports this point. In the beginning of this research I perceived cyber memorial zones within the context of online websites. The memorial zones were completely isolated from the socio-political, economical, and cultural contexts. Nor could I posit that cyber memorial zones were the vanguards of commercializing forces or governmental technologies. But, by playing puzzles of contextualizing, the possibilities for meaning of cyber memorial zones were *constructed* in the contexts of Korean cybercultures and the new funeral culture. This experience also confirmed the view of Grossberg that producing contexts is "both beginning and the end of cultural studies, although the two are not the same point."

Articulation as Methodology

Cultural studies pays special attention not only to the connection of contexts, which has its own specificity, its own historicity, its own locality, but to the power relations between contexts. The concept of articulation is "the form of a connection between two or more previously unrelated elements (such as ideologies, practices,

social groups, technologies, techniques, etc.) to make a temporary unity" (Sterne, 1999, p. 263). When the concept of articulation is deemed as a methodology in cultural studies, it is on the premise that the world as multiple contexts are temporally connected, and always able to be changed.

Morris (1997) elaborates on this concept, claiming that articulation is "not an ideal but a model; it is a model of the social formations of power, and also of its own practice or method" (p. 46). Going further from this first glance, Morris considers articulation as "the process whereby social forces are connected and disconnected, make alliances and break them or reshape them, thus forming and transforming contexts" (pp. 46-47). From this reasoning, Morris insists that the method of cultural studies "can be defined as 'articulation'"(p. 45).

Miller (2001) goes further in elaborating the concept of articulation. While discussing what is or isn't cultural studies, Miller suggests an interesting comparison of cultural studies and conventional disciplines. While cultural studies commits "to articulate knowledge with social change," and therefore is about "a transformation of social order," conventional disciplines focus on the surveying of "knowledge with social reproduction" which entails social replication (p. 7). Why does cultural studies have relevance to knowledge of social change? The answer to this question is found in Meaghan Morris's view of articulation. Social forces change with their connections and disconnections, and both of which occur in different modes. Knowledge produced from this occurrence becomes related to social change and focuses on politicizing people and historicizing the relations of contexts.

Here I revisit Morris' claim that the method of cultural studies can be defined as articulation. From the view of established disciplines, this standpoint can be subject

to the criticism that cultural studies lacks methodological strictness. Given that my research also adopts cultural studies as methodology, the criticism is an important matter. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg (1992) maintain that cultural studies in fact "has no distinct methodology, no unique statistical, ethnomethodological, or textual analysis to call its own. Its methodology…could best be seen as a bricolage." Thus, "no methodology can be privileged or even temporarily employed with total security and confidence, yet none can be eliminated out of hand" (p. 2).

Morris' claim should be considered in this context. Based on the radical contextualism, articulation should be the principal methodology of cultural studies without ignoring other methods. The claim that articulation is the method of cultural studies does not necessarily mean the exclusion of the existing methods or the total security and confidence of them. As Hall (1990) asserts, the goal of cultural studies is "to enable people to understand what was going on" (p. 22). As Sterne argues, "experimental approach to epistemology and method is actually one of cultural studies' strengths as a field" (1999, p. 264). The methodology of articulation in this research aims to discover the temporary power relations of the contexts of cybercultures and the new funeral culture in Korea.

Descriptions of Methods: Textual Analysis

For contextualizing cyber memorial zones, the qualitative methods of textual analysis, participant observation, and interview (interpersonal, online, or telephone) were selected according to circumstances. First, I attempted to perform textual analysis of cyber memorial letters posted in The Post Office in Heaven, the memorial zone operated by the Seoul city government. Since autumn 2002, I have reviewed the memorial letters of the zone on a weekly basis and tried to find the letters most

frequently posted. Performing textual analysis, I tried to have an "educated glass at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (Mckee, 2001, p. 140). With the educated glass, I wanted to analyze how *han,* or the multi-layered complex of deep sorrows and pain, is embedded in the memorial letters and how the letters "act as some form of expression or representation of relevant elements of the social world" (Mason, 2002, p. 106). By doing so, I found that the memorial zone provides the mourners with spaces to release their *han.*

While analyzing the memorial letters, however, I realized the limitation of this method. The memorial letters "should not extend to treating them as though they are direct representations or reflections of 'reality'" (Mason, 2002, p. 107). In other words, I was not sure, as McKee indicates, the accuracy and the correctness of my interpretation of the letters. As a solution, I tried to do online interviews with cyber mourners who posted the letters in the memorial zone. When I began this research in 2002, the cyber memorial zone was designed in a way that the visitors could contact mourners or reply to letters. However, when I continued this research full scale in 2004, the revised information policy, implemented for the protection of online user privacy, obstructed such networking functions of the memorial zone. I realized that it would be impossible to interview the writers of the memorial letters through online communications. To advance my research, I decided to do fieldwork in Korea.

Descriptions of Methods: Participant Observation

The fieldwork commenced on January 10, 2005 and lasted about eight weeks until the end of March. This period included the most important Korean holiday, the Lunar New Year. Because most Koreans worship their ancestors during this holiday season, I hoped to gather comprehensive data about the cyber memorial zone and the

newly emerging funeral culture. As planned, the administration office of the cyber

memorial zone was my first contact. For participant observation, I visited the

administration office, which was located in the public columbarium established and

managed by the Seoul city government.

Usually participant observation refers to "methods of generating data which

entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting'" (Mason,

2002, p. 84). However, I could not be immersed into the setting of the administration

of the cyber memorial zone because the staff seemed uncomfortable with my

observation and were uncooperative. Before the commencement of the fieldwork, an

administrator of the cyber memorial zone emailed me and explained that they could

provide me with the contact information of writers with their consent. However, it

seemed almost impossible to collect contact information about writers of memorial

letters.

Contrary to my expectation, the administration office was not conducive to

participant observation. The office was not specialized for managing the memorial

zone; rather, it controlled the computer system of the columbarium facility. The cyber

memorial zone was not a main concern in the office. What was worse, the staff

numbered just three including the head of the office, and because they were so busy

handling with the other services, no one took responsibility for the memorial zone.

The employees in the office held the positions by rotation, and all the employee in the

office wanted to leave the position as much as they could. Working in the

columbarium facility seemed to make them unpleasant. I could not have predicted this

kind of malfunction in the facility when I planned the fieldwork. Under these

circumstances, I shortened the period of participant observation to three days. But, a

staff member did provide contact information for three cyber mourners. One of them was Mun-kyu, who has written almost 600 letters to his late wife.

The participant observation was not as successful as expected, but it allowed me to broaden the range of contextualizing cyber memorial zones. I discovered that the cyber memorial zone was used as an auxiliary tool in the funeral policy of government to promote the cremation trend. Until then I believed the cyber memorial zone was the unique Korean cultural phenomenon that happened with the people's active engagement not with the government's artificial intervention. From this finding, I broadened the range of collecting data and learned that there were many different kinds of cyber memorial zones that were part of the new culture of death in Korea. These various kinds of cyber memorial zones can be classified as individually-oriented, socio-politically-oriented, commercially-driven, and celebrity-driven. I found cyber mourners posting in other cyber memorial zones who could be contacted through email, which the mourners responded to at their discretion.

Descriptions of Methods: Interviewing

Given the delicate subject matter, the main barrier of interviewing in this research was the reluctant responses. Because of the cultural tendency in Korea to perceive death with "a sense of deep resentment" (J. S. Choi, 1996, p. 11), the cyber mourners were "sensitive respondents" (Alder & Alder, 2002, p. 519). Although the mourners have already disclosed their personal emotions in the memorial letters, they seemed to feel it an intrusion of privacy to have interviews regarding the death of their loved ones. For this reason, interviews with cyber mourners were mainly conducted through email exchanges.

According to Mann and Stewart (2002), "when email is used as a mutually responsive medium it may evoke 'rapport talk' not only between women, but also between men and women…[and] it offers and invaluable communicative tool to qualitative researchers" (pp. 174-175). Broadly interpreted, email as rapport talk means private speaking instead of public speaking in that it includes private and intimate emotions. Cyber mourners' emails about the feelings about their late loved ones are also rapport talk. Email exchanges became a comfortable medium for cyber mourners to disclose emotions to a strange researcher who they have never met before.

In contrast, narrowly interpreted, email as rapport talk refers to talk of women. Cushing (1996) suggests, "basic email is exchanged directly between people who know each other (from the virtual or physical world) and thus most closely resembles "Rapport Talk" in "Private" environment – both female conversational preferences" (p.59). Two-thirds of my interview respondents were women, who were at first sensitive respondents. However, email exchanges created relaxed environments, enabling them to talk about their personal experience in cyber memorial zones, which testifies to email as talk of women.

Email interviewing with the mourners in various cyber memorial zones led me to "a hybrid approach" of ethnography and textual analysis (Sterne, p. 269, 1999). The interpretation of the memorial letters from textual analysis became more accurate. More importantly, the continuity inside and outside of cyber memorial zones could be found. I realized that the cultural dynamics of cyber memorial zones in Korean society were contextualized and reciprocally intertwined. These cultural contexts consisted of industrialized funeral parlors, increased cremation rates, the dynamics of shamanic inheritance, the development of Internet culture, the rising progressive with

the falling conservative, the decentralized power of government, women's self-awareness of potential, and so on.

As opposed to the interviews with cyber mourners, in-depth interviews were conducted face to face although sometimes telephone interviews were used in my fieldwork within the funeral industry. I enlisted the help of Ki-sung, a funeral industry professional, who could meet other professionals without difficulties. Because Ki-sung has been in the industry for many years, he helped me collect data with "snowball sampling" or "respondent driven sampling," which is "appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate" (Babbie, 2001, p.180; Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Although the use of snowball sampling could raise concerns about the problem of biases (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004), it was useful method for me to locate the hidden respondents. Ki-sung became a native informant in the Korean funeral industry and introduced other funeral professionals, who also introduced the professionals who they knew.

The funeral professionals included journalists, government officials, morticians, directors in funeral parlors, professors, students, and so on. I conducted the ethnographic interviews, as Spradley (1979) suggests, with an attitude that " I want to know what you know in the way that you know it…Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" (p. 34). Such an attitude allowed me to overcome the "serious concerns about ethical and epistemological issues in contemporary interviewing" (Heyl, 2001, p. 370). Interviews with funeral professionals focused on how funeral policy has been interconnected with the commercialization of the funeral industry and how this combination of policy and industry could play a role in

governing people's individual ways of life. In addition, I explored each professional's

understanding of cyber memorial zones.

Contextualizing Cyber Memorial Zones and Articulating Cultural Contexts

After the fieldwork, I transcribed or translated the data collected using

different methods. I organized the data, focusing on how to contextualize and

articulate cyber memorial zones in relation to the Korean cultural contexts. However,

a problem arose at that point. As Grossberg (1997) indicates, contextualizing cyber

memorial zones was never easy. The more I attempted to contextualize cyber

memorial zones, the more I became confused about the direction of the study. I

understood that cyber memorial zones were the apparatus of the new culture of death

in Korea, but it was difficult to discern why most websites of funeral companies

included various types of cyber memorial zones or what the relevance was between

the decentered power of government and the industrialization of funeral parlors. I felt

caught in the complex maze of contexts from which I could not escape.

As Sterne suggests, I concentrated more on "how the possibilities for meaning

are themselves organized" rather than the "interpretation of texts and artifacts"

(Sterne, 1999, p. 263). From textual analysis of cyber memorial letters and email

interviews with cyber mourners, the dynamics of shamanic inheritance, women's self-

awareness of potential, and the development of cybercultures could be articulated.

The data from participant observation allowed me to examine the contextual relation

of cyber memorial zones with the technologies of government domination. From the

data of ethnographic interviews with funeral professionals, I could articulate the

contexts of industrialized funeral parlors and increased cremation rates. Cyber

memorial zones became more broadly contextualized in relation with the rising

progressive with the falling conservative, the decentered power of government, and the emergence of neo-liberal paradigm in Korea.

Like this, I realized that I was not in the mirror of contexts; the contexts were rhizomatically constructed. Thus, I should not panic about the intricate structure of the contexts. Instead, I began to map out the structure of the rhizomatic contexts as if playing with puzzles. I was not sure that playing with puzzles would lead to the successful mapping out of these contexts but I knew it would be a rough, basic delineation toward the complete mapping out the rhizomatic contexts. Now the puzzle playing of cyber memorial zones unfolds in details.

Chapter 2 looks at the continuity of control on the Korean funeral culture in the past and the present. From the view of control, the history of Korean traditional funeral culture is considered in relation to the isolation of shamanism from the Korean ethos. Foucault's concept of governmentality is discussed to examine the technologies of government on the culture of death in colonial and postcolonial modernity in Korea.

Chapter 3 juxtaposes characteristics of Korean cybercultures and the new Korean funeral culture to examine how these two contexts are interconnected. The initiation of Korean cybercultures, based on the government driven policy in the context of new liberal paradigm, is examined. The dynamics of shamanic inheritance as the driving force of Korean cybercultures are presented as well as the establishment of the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea and its relevance to the new funeral culture.

Chapter 4 presents data collected from fieldwork and the analyses of the letters posted in cyber memorial zones. Various types of cyber memorial zones are categorized and the characteristics of cyber memorial zones are explored, including

not only individual but also socio-political and cultural concerns. The degree of inherited shamanic dynamics is considered in classifying the zones.

Chapter 5 explains the characteristics of digital spirituality as constructed in cyber memorial zones. Digital spirituality is presented as a channel of the dynamics of shamanic inheritance inside and outside of cyber memorial zones and functions as driving forces of social changes in socio-political, and cultural contexts. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of territorialization is at the center of the discussion to validate the construction of digital spirituality in the Korean cybercultural contexts. Technologies of government domination on the new funeral culture are also addressed.

Chapter 6 interprets the articulated puzzles of contextualizing cyber memorial zones. Cyber memorial zones are the outgrowth of the combination of the government-driven information policy and the rebirth of shamanism as inherited dynamics. Cyber memorial zones have multiple facets that reflect not only the technologies of the empowered Korean populace's self as well as the power of capital flow that deterritorializes the rite of death. Cyber memorial zones also mirror technologies of the governmental domination that enhance the capital flow.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF CONTROL IN THE

KOREAN FUNERAL CULTURE

Shamanism and Korean Funeral Culture

The Myth of Princess Pari

Princess Pari, or *Pari-kongju*, is believed to be "the ancestor of shamans by

shamans and shamanists in Korea" (Cho, 1999, p. 52). The myth of Princess Pari is

considered one example of the "imaginal realm of Korean shamanism" along with the

Tan'gun myth, the founding myth of Korea (Cho, p. 51). Considering that the

Tan'gun myth is a discourse through shamanic symbols about the beginning of

Korean history (Hogarth, 1996; Cho, 1999), the analysis of the myths of Princess Pari

and the *Tan'gun* supports the claim that Korean shamanism as a belief system

"existed since the beginning of Korean history" (Cho, p. 50). The myth of Princess

Pari follows:

> A king marries but begets only daughters in succession, until a seventh was also a girl. Angered, he gave an order that the baby should be abandoned. Princess *Pari* was thrown away in a box made of jade. An old woman and an old man took pity on her and rescued her. They raised her to become a lady. Years later, the king and the queen fell victim to a fatal disease due to the guilt of having abandoned their youngest princess. They consulted a fortuneteller, who said that medicines had to be sought and brought from the other world. A favor was asked of the other six princesses, but all of them refused with excuses. So there was no choice but to ask Princess *Pari*. The princess, who recognized that she owed her existence in this world to his parents, willingly accepted the request and set out for the cure. The princess overcame every ordeal in the world beyond with the help of *Sinson* (a Taoist hermit with supernatural powers) and *Siptaewang* ('ten kings'), until she met *Mujangsung* (a Taoist supernatural being). She secured the medicines by bearing him seven sons before she left for this world with all her family. On her way out, she came across a funeral bier containing her dead parents, and brought them back to life using flowers and medicinal water. Princess *Pari* volunteered to be a shaman to lead the dead to the heaven (Cho, 1999, p. 52).

Then how is this claim relevant to the subject of this chapter, the historical consideration of control and the Korean funeral culture? Here is an important point that should not be discounted. Although shamanism is the indigenous traditional belief system rooted in the Korean culture, it has been marginalized and sometimes demonized by the ruling class through the late modern era (D. B. Lee, 1995). In addition, the myth of Princess Pari focuses on the power of a shaman to lead the dead to the other world. This myth shows how Princess Pari goes through and then overcomes many ordeals before the initiation as a shaman for the ritual of the dead. Although there are about seventy different versions of this myth, they all have share the rebirth of the princess as a shaman for the dead. For this reason, the myth of Princess Pari is mainly recited in *Mangja-ch'ondo-gut,* a shamanistic ritual for the dead in Korea (Cho, 1999, p. 52). The historical inquiry of controlling shamanism by the ruling class provides insight into a history of controlling Korean society.

The social oppression of shamanism embodied in the myth insinuates the control of the death ritual by the ruling class. Before the introduction of imported religions to Korea, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and later Christianity, shamans had presided over most rituals, including the death ritual. Shamanism in Korea was marginalized with the introduction of these major religions; therefore, the shamanist influence on the death ritual was limited in its intermingling with major religions. The formation of a new ideology based on the introduction of new religions was followed by the estrangement of the indigenous belief system for easy control; the degree of the control was different according to the time and period. Therefore, the oppression of shamanism implies that the ruling power controlled the performing of the rite of passage for the dead. Considering that most of the followers of Korean shamanism

were marginalized in the society, the struggling experience of that populace was also thought to be embodied and expressed in the myth. Thus, the myth of Princess Pari provides much information for discussion in relation to the considerations of control and the history of Korean funeral culture.

This myth is a sacred form of discourse that has been constructed of its own accord in a certain time period and handed down among Koreans. The sacred form of discourse refers to an analytical definition of myth, which is neither to reduce the "simply logical result of the naïve realism" (Cassirer, 1946, p.6) nor to exaggerate the extent that interprets the sacred as the transcendent realm completely separate from reality. The discursive sacredness appears to be not only imaginative, invisible, and impermanent but at the same time visible, tangible, permanent, and thereby empowering. Such qualities of a myth can be understood as the representation of the complexity of inner feelings of members of a society; these qualities can also be interpreted as constructed formulas that reflect social and cultural contexts. Because the myth of Princess Pari encompasses the ethos of the populace constructed in the discourse and represents social cultural construction in Korea, interpreting the myth as the sacred form of discourse is an appropriate to allow for later discussion of the shamanistic uniqueness of the Korean death ritual and the historiography of that control.

Before pondering the myth of Princess Pari in detail, let us explore the following scholarly views in relation to myth. The "mysterium tremendum" (Otto, 1992, p. 78) is a phenomenological understanding of the feeling of awe embodied among the members of a society. Levi-Strauss views this myth as "consist[ing] in logical relations which are devoid of content" (1969, p. 240). Cassirer understands the

myth as a symbol which "produces and posits a world of its own" (Cassirer, 1946, p.8).

Myth as Symbol

Otto's notion of "mysterium tremendum" delivers atypical messages to those who have a conventional understanding of religion based on a rationality that disregards such feelings. Otto recognized the source of such feelings as "urgency" or "energy" that "clothes itself in symbolic expressions- vitality, passion, emotional temper, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, impetus" (Otto, p.82). Otto suggests that energy immanently fills the universe and human beings, encouraging human beings to pursue harmony with the universe. The pursuit of harmony is an intuitive response to the energy of awe, which motivates them to know the deeper meaning of life or to be one with the energy of universe beyond capacity.

Efforts to harmonize energy with the universe need not emphasize the numinous aspect, because principles of physics can delineate the interaction of the universe's energy with human beings. However, Otto argues that the moment when the energy of human beings encounters that of the universe should be differentiated from other physical phenomena. The moment of this encounter gives an inexpressible experience to human beings, through which human beings drive themselves to merge with the universe. Such an experience cannot be analyzed at the level of rationality; it is the momentum of mysterium tremendum. However, Otto cannot explain how such an experience is transformed into myth.

Levi-Strauss underlines structure rather than content in his analysis of myth (Levi- Strauss, 1969, p. 338). Questioning why myths in the different regions of the world have such similarities, he explores the reasons by studying the order of

language. Levi-Strauss believes that the real meaning of myth is created in the structure of oppositions. With the influence of Hegelian dialectics (Douglas, 1999, p. 133), he suggests that the opposed codes of myth can be a driving force to clarify the deeper meaning of the myth. The essence of the myth is "founded on the property inherent in all codes: that of being mutually convertible" (Levi-Strauss, 2002, p. 212). While Hegel's dialectics points to its limitation due to his misinterpretation of sense, essence, change, and transformation (Deleuze, 1983, p. 158), the efforts of Levi-Strauss to understand the essence of myth based on the Hegelian dialectics exposes his failure to consider the content of myth.

Levi-Strauss analyzes the bi-polar opposite of systemized symbols by tracing coded words but does not explain how the symbols become systemized through human interactions. With the view of myth as the expression of "social dialectics" (Douglas, p. 137), Levi-Strauss argues that he can find essential meaning through the analysis of myth code. The will of human beings and the energy produced through their interactions with the world is the content of myth. Levi-Strauss is vulnerable to critique because his work does not examine the subjective role of human beings whereas Otto focuses too much on emotional aspects of human beings constructed through the interactions with the world.

To compromise the different approaches to discerning the meaning of myth by Otto and Levi-Strauss, I am drawn to the work of Cassirer (1946) and Langer (1958). Their works successfully explain how the structure of myth can be examined without discounting the subjective involvement of human beings in the process of forming the discourse of sacredness. For Cassirer, an imaginative work of human beings based on their experiences is not mere imitation nor is it "a mere record of

something initially given in fixed categories of real existence" (1946, p. 8); it is the expressed embodiment of their experience, thereby becoming a symbol, a force of creating its own meaning. While delineating Cassirer's work in *Language and Myth*, Langer claims that language "must reflect a system of thoughts that is soberly true to a mode of experiencing, of seeing, and feeling." She continues that language should be "different from our accepted mode of experiencing fact" (1958, p. 384).

From Langer's view, the religious or spiritual feelings of the members of a society becomes hypostatized as systemized symbols and are handed down as a discourse of sacredness from generation to generation. The perspectives of Cassirer and Langer are significant in approaching the different interpretations of myth between phenomenology and sociology. Otto's concept of mysterium tremendum, the phenomenological interpretation of the feeling of awe, is embraced by Langer's view that language reflects "a mode of experience, of seeing, and feeling." Furthermore, the structural elucidation of myth from Levi-Strauss is not discounted in Langer's discussion of hypostatization, which forms a discourse of sacredness through the signifying and imagining of an object that can be identified with the structure of myth. Until now, I have considered three approaches to understanding the meaning of myth. In the following discussion, I will look over the myth of Princess Pari in relation to the issue of control in the history of Korean funeral culture.

Characteristics of the Myth of Princess Pari

When Langer's notion of hypostatization is reflected in the myth of Princess Pari*,* all the systemized symbols, such as the princess, the king and queen, the funeral bier, and so on, reflect the meanings that are embodied in these symbols. As Cassirer suggests, the symbols are the reification of the experience of members in a society.

The myth of Princess Pari embodies the struggling experience of the Korean people from their perspective. The myth, of which the main theme is the birth of the origin of Korean shamans, alludes to the historical and social oppression of shamanism and the struggle of its followers. The princess, abandoned by her parents to suffer before her rebirth as a shaman, symbolizes the status of shamanism in Korean history.

The myth insinuates that the shamanist understanding has considerably influenced the Korean perception of death and dying and therefore of the funeral culture. The denouement of the myth reaches the climax when Princess Pari makes a dramatic encounter with her parents' coffins and resurrects them with her shamanist power. The dramatic reversal of the myth reflects the Korean's negative view on death, which is this world centered (Choi, 1996; Lee, H.S., 1996). According to Choi, shamanism's view of death has been prevalent among Koreans, among whom death is "something fundamentally connected to a sense of deep resentment" (p. 11). For Koreans, death is not a natural phenomenon but a deplorable one that cannot be accepted without difficulty. In the myth, Princess Pari has to overcome many ordeals to obtain flowers and medicinal water, which are symbols of power and are used for resurrecting the dead. The myth suggests the aspiration to live longer rather than to die. For this reason, the ordeal of the princess is considered worthy if it avoids death.

It is therefore not strange that Koreans consider death in relation to *han*, an "originally shamanistic term used to describe the entanglement of the dead, the bereft, and the down-and-out" (A. S. Park, 1996, p. 10). Given the multi-faceted characteristics of *han*, the term can be defined as the multi-layered complex of deep resentment, regret, spite, and grievance. The entanglement embodied in *han* can grow from the accumulated experiences of "a tragic event, unjust deprivation, personal

failures that are beyond one's control, or structural discrimination" (U. C. Kim & S.C. Choi, 1995, p. 255). Therefore, *Mangja-ch'ondo-gut,* a shaman's ritual for the dead, primarily centers on soothing *han* for the deceased and the bereaved. During this ritual, a shaman recites the myth of Princess Pari and experiences the revival of her *han* . Simultaneously, the ritual participants come across the revitalization of their *han* (J. H. Lee, 1994, p.100). While reviving the *han* of the princess, the shaman strives to preserve the power that leads the dead to the other world in a right way and which the princess gained after overcoming her ordeals. With that power, the shaman is able to help the ritual participants to release their *han.* Although the introduction of foreign religions has marginalized shamanism, such a shamanistic feature of the Korean funeral culture has influenced the present (H.S. Lee, p. 51).

The belief system of shamanism has been deeply rooted among the *han*-ridden downtrodden, *"minjung."* The term *minjung* literally means "the mass of people." However, when the term resounded in the Korean social and cultural movement in the twentieth century, it referred to "those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated sociologically, kept under-educated in culture and intellectual matter" (Seo, 1983, p. xvii). When the parents abandon their daughter because she is not a son, the princess symbolizes one of the *minjung* who are abandoned and marginalized by the social norm. In fact, the term *Pari* literally means "abandoned" in Korean (Cho, 1999, p. 51). That is, the *han* of the abandoned princess is not mere embodied individually but also represented as the collective *han* of *minjung*.

For this reason, the *han* of *minjung* needs a different interpretation from the individuated one. N. D. Seo delineates *han* of *minjung* as "the suppressed, amassed

and condensed experience of oppression caused by mischief or misfortune so that it

forms a kind of 'lump' in one's spirit" (p. 1981, p.65). In addition, *han* is:

> a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice, a sense of
> helplessness of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of acute pain
> of sorrow in one's guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and
> wriggle, and an obstinate urge to take "revenge" and to right the wrong
> all these combined (Y. H. Hyun, 1982, cited in A. S. Park, 1996, p. 9).

From these views, *han* is extended to the level of structural injustice; therefore, the

way of releasing *han* also needs distinction on an individual level. The *han* of *minjung*

cannot be appeased by simply soothing their inner trauma. *Minjung* have been

exploited by the structural injustice of society; for this reason, to right the

fundamental injustice can be one of the ways to release the *han* of *minjung*. It is to

allow *minjung* to empower themselves to be aware of and to rectify the problem

beyond venting *han* at the personal level. From the view of hypostatization in myth,

the myth of Princess Pari symbolizes the potentiality of *minjung*.

Although abandoned by her parents, Princess Pari does not remain deserted.

After overcoming the ordeals that befall her, she gains the power to resurrect those

who abandoned her in the past. When the ordeals of Princess Pari are construed as the

representation of *minjung* who are despised socially and culturally, her given power

of reviving the dead indicates the power of *minjung* that prevails over the oppression

from the ruling power. In that sense, the *han* of *minjung* was not always helpless and

hopeless; sometimes the *han* played an important role in forming the dynamic energy

of *minjung*. However, Korean history testifies that this symbolic indication of the

power of *minjung* in the myth embodies their aspirations rather than reality. Since the

introduction of foreign religions until recent times, the culture of *minjung* has been

disregarded along with the marginalization of shamanism. Accordingly, the

characteristics of the ritual for the dead rooted in shamanism have been despised and targeted for control by the ruling class. In this context, the myth of Princess Pari is central to understanding the marginalization of shamanism throughout Korean history and the issue of control by the ruling class.

Historical Consideration of Control On the Korean Funeral Culture

The Assimilation of Shamanism and Buddhism

Buddhism was introduced to Korea via China in the fourth century when the political and economic system of ancient states began to develop. The formation of ancient states around the fourth century was made possible with the advancement of farming appliances and the increase of agricultural productivity. Subsequently, the change of economic system entailed "a shift from tribal-based ruling system to one of centralized governance that could assert its authority over individual members of society" (B. O. Ahn, 2003, p. 6). The introduction of Buddhism was well-timed with such social and economic changes. The influence of Buddhism unfolded in two ways: it allowed ordinary people to consider the self, and it gave the ruling power a new ideology for centralized governance.

The increase of agricultural productivity brought about the "establishment of the individual household as an agricultural unit and its right over the arable land" (Na, 2003, p. 24). Such changes were revolutionary enough to destroy the communal bases of the previous society. For the ordinary people who encountered these changes, the Buddhist existential view led people to consider the notion of self. Self-awakening was unfamiliar because the previous view, based on shamanism, had emphasized the harmony of community rather than the self of the individual. Moreover, the self from the shamanistic view was identified "by holding communion with the other world"

(Na, p. 23). Although there was confusion in understanding of the existential view of self-awakening, the changes of the social and economic system and the awareness of individualized property in the formation of ancient states allowed people to adopt the Buddhist view and apply it to their lives.

The introduction of Buddhism also provided a new governing ideology for the ruling power. In tribal communities, the ruling power was identified with supernatural power, which represented the influence of the shamanistic view of the world (B. O. Ahn, p. 6). The ruler of the communities was believed to be a mediator between the supernatural and the natural world; that is, the status of shaman was closely associated with that of the tribal ruler. However, with the social and economic changes and individual self-awakening, the ruling power needed to function as an administrator who could manage the centralized governing system rather than as shaman mediating between this world and the other world. For this reason, Buddhism based on "rigorous self-discipline and a single leadership without any connection to any particular local ritual" (Na, p. 25) attracted the ruling class. With these characteristics of self-awakening and self-discipline, Buddhism introduced the notion of citizenship (Na, p. 25).

According to Harvey (1990), the Buddhist doctrine introduced to Korea was from the Mahayana tradition, a late movement that differed from the early Buddhist tradition of the Theravada. While the Theravada focused on self-salvation by destructing the appearance of self, the Mahayana attempted to save as many living beings as possible instead of striving toward self-salvation. Such a benevolent attitude was adopted by the ruling class and used to strengthen their power. The notion of benevolence, or care for others beyond the self, was interpreted as universality, the

embrace of others beyond the self; therefore, it was functional to maintain the extended territories of the ancient states (Na, p. 26).

The introduction of Buddhism gave rise to the consolidation of the ruling power on the people of the ancient states. The control of people's lives based on Buddhist ethics is another representation of the strengthened power of the ruling class. However, the emergence of the new political system and the introduction of Buddhism did not mean the complete replacement of the previous culture and tradition. Rather, the new political system in the ancient states allowed Buddhism to become "Koreanized" with the amalgamation of the shamanistic tradition (B. O. Ahn, 2003, p. 6). For instance, direct influences of shamanism are present in such characteristics as the invocation of blessing and various symbols embedded in the Korean Buddhist tradition; indirect influence of shamanism can be seen in the Confucianism of the Joseon dynasty in the late fourteenth century and in the Christianity in modernity (Cho, 1999, p. 60). Such a distinction allows us to explore the degrees to which political powers in the different historical periods adopted the doctrines of imported religions or philosophies as its ruling ideology, marginalizing indigenous beliefs.

As Cho suggests the direct influence of shamanism on Buddhism in the ancient states, it can be inferred that the shamanic view on life and death also influenced the establishment of the Korean Buddhist funerary tradition. One of these influences concerns disposal of the body. Buddhism considered life and death as the process of incessant changing: the body is the temporary cohesion of four elements such as earth, water, fire and wind. Thus, in the Buddhist funerary tradition, cremation was a suitable process for disintegrating the provisional unity of these elements.

However, ground burials were still common among the Korean populace even after the introduction of Buddhism (Ham, 1988; H. S. Lee, 1996; Y. G. An, 2002); this shows that the influence of shamanism remained strong. Even some Buddhist monks preferred ground burials to cremation (Y. G. An, 2002, p. 70).

From the shamanic view, preserving the body was important, and ground burial was the most appropriate way to accomplish preservation. When death occurred, the harmony that had existed between the other world and this world shattered. Buried and preserved in the ground, the dead could be safely sent away to the other world, and the harmony between the two worlds could also be restored (Hogarth, 1996, p. 38). In this view, cremation, which burns the dead body into ashes, was seen as too abrupt and unsafe for the dead to move on to the other world. Although cremation was adopted by the ruling class in the Korean ancient states, ground burial was prevalent among the ordinary populace. Because the ruling class did not compel the populace to espouse cremation as a way of disposing of the body, both cremation and ground burial lasted until the establishment of the Joseon dynasty in the late fourteenth century.

Another influence of shamanism on the Korean Buddhist funerary tradition was the recognition of a soul, which led to the worship of ancestors and the invocation of blessing. Buddhism does not emphasize the belief in a soul and the afterlife; life and death are considered in a state of flux. However, the "Koreanized" Buddhism acknowledges the existence of a soul, which was clear evidence of combining with Korean shamanism. To better understand the acknowledgement of a soul in the Koreanized Buddhism, more explication from the cross-cultural perspective is required (Parry & Ryan, 1995).

When Buddhism was introduced to other countries, it required the adjustment of its original doctrine to indigenous cultural contexts. Although the early Buddhist doctrine did not stress the existence of a soul, if the indigenous culture had a belief in its existence, Buddhism assimilated its doctrine to the native belief or other cultural elements. Thus, Buddhism as introduced to Korea via China also contains Chinese characteristics. One example is ancestor worship. In the Confucian tradition, established in the first century in China, ancestor worship was considered to be one of the most important religious rituals.

The Chinese believe in "the continued existence of the dead in the form of the soul and mutual dependence between the soul and the living" (P. C. Lee, 1995, p. 174). Although the Korean Buddhist tradition shared a belief in the soul, Chinese Buddhist funerary rites were less connected with shamanism than with Confucianism; therefore, the funerary ritual in this tradition was more closely connected to ancestor worship. In contrast, a stronger shamanic tradition remained in Korea than in China even after the introduction of Buddhism, and subsequently, the aspect of "the continued existence of the soul" is more emphasized than that of the "mutual dependence of the soul and the living."

From the perspective of Korean shamanism, the features of a soul included "the ability to escape from the body, shapelessness (without special form), omnipresence and immortality" (T. K. Kim, & S.K. Chang, 1998, pp. 110-111). A soul was regarded to have personality and the soul of the dead was treated the same as that of the living (Y. G. An, 2002, p.75). Furthermore, Na (2003) argues that ancient Koreans believed the soul of the dead to be "a material entity in need of all the necessities of life--food, clothing and shelter" (p. 13). From this standpoint, it was not

strange that the Korean Buddhist funerary tradition allowed offering food to dead ancestors in memorial rituals. Offering food to the dead was considered the same as offering it to the living, because a soul was not treated differently than a living being. Even today, food is usually presented in memorial rituals for ancestors, which proves how deeply the shamanic tradition penetrated the Korean funeral culture.

The belief in a soul and the influence of shamanism on Korean Buddhism is represented in the consideration of the transitional state of the soul between death and reincarnation. The status of the soul is called *bardo* in Tibetan, which refers to a "state of being between the former life and the next incarnation" (Davies, 2002, p.89). The Tibetan Buddhist tradition created a distinct death rite and extended this rite to the awareness of death through the practice of meditation (Mullin, 1986). In contrast, the ritual for the dead in the Korean Buddhist tradition is mainly performed to instruct the soul of the dead on how to make wise decisions in the intermediate state. When someone dies or is dying, monks chant mantras that tell the dead how to undergo the intermediate state. The ritual for the dead continues periodically, everyday or every seven days, until the forty-ninth day after the death. The reincarnation of the soul of the dead was believed to occur between days seven and forty-nine.

The belief in a soul in the Korean Buddhist ritual is also influenced by the Yogacara school, a philosophical school of the Mahayana. Known as Consciousness school, the Yogacara school emerged in the third century in India and regarded the world as the representation of consciousness (Harvey, 1990, p.106). The Yogacara emphasized a type of consciousness called *alaya* that refers to a container in the consciousness that stores the traces of human actions, or *karma* (Harvey, p. 107). These stored actions form personality "through death and periods of unconsciousness"

(Harvey, p. 107). Because the Yogacara was a philosophical school of the Mahayana, its view was also absorbed into Koreanized Buddhism; this emphasis on consciousness also affects the Korean Buddhist funerary tradition.

The ritual for the dead in Korean Buddhism shows how the concept of *alaya* intermixed with the shamanic view of a soul. Given that the *alaya* stores "seeds of future karmic effects" (Harvey, p. 107), continuous chanting of the mantra in the ritual was underscored for leading the *alaya* of the dead in a right direction for the next incarnation. In this sense, the intermediate state in the funerary ritual in Korean Buddhism is similar to that of *Mangja-ch'ondo-gut,* which calls upon the dead to release *han*, the multi-layered complex of deep resentment, regret, spite, and grievance. Because Korean shamanism regarded death as the rupture of the harmony between the other world and this world, the shamanistic ritual for the dead focused on the restoration of the ruptured harmony while attempting the release of *han* of the deceased.

The Dissimilation of Neo–Confucianism and Shamanism

Buddhism became more dominant during the Shilla and Goryeo dynasties, as did the assimilation of shamanism and Buddhism in the funeral culture. Although some argue that cremation became widespread among the people of these dynasties (W. H. Ahn, 2004, p. 51), the scholarly view emphasizes preference for ground burials (Y. G. An, 2003). The influence of *feng shui*, an ancient Chinese system of thought, was introduced to Korea in the tenth century. Literally translated as "wind and water," *Feng shui* refers to "a way of life that helps us live in harmony with the environment," (Hilts, 2004) with a focus on the positive and negative energy of the cosmos. The merger of shamanism and *feng shui* during the Joseon dynasty resulted

in the ground burial as the central means of body disposal with its anti-Buddhism policy.

The Joseon dynasty was established after a military revolt led by Gen. Yi Sung-gye, a general in the Goryeo dynasty who later became the first king of the Joseon dynasty. Because it began with a military rebellion, the ruling power desperately needed to justify the new dynasty. One of the causes for the revolt was the abusive power of Buddhism shielded by the ruling class of the Goryeo dynasty (B. O. Ahn, 2003, p. 7). This is why the new dynasty took an anti-Buddhism policy. Neo-Confucianism, which had been introduced to Korea via China in the middle of the Goryeo dynasty, was adopted as the new ideology for the early Joseon dynasty. Mainly focusing on human ethics, traditional Confucianism, brought to Korea along with Buddhism in the fourth century, remained less influential than Buddhism in political decision-making. Neo-Confucianism differed from Confucian classics by emphasizing metaphysical approaches.

With the growing popularity of Buddhism and Taoism, Confucian classics seemed too this-world oriented, lacking appeal for ordinary people (Choi, 1998, p. 176). Neo-Confucianism, developed in response to widespread Buddhism and Taoism, focused on both principles (*li*) and material forces (*ki*) (Choi, p. 177). When Neo-Confucianism was accepted as the ruling ideology of the Joseon dynasty, the metaphysics of *li* and *ki* believed to replace the previous frame of Buddhism. The implementation of these imported metaphysics suppressed Buddhism. High-ranking officials in the Joseon dynasty were concerned by the excessive involvement of Buddhism in political decision-making and its abuse of power in the late Goryeo dynasty. With this new policy, the number of Buddhist temples and sects were

considerably reduced (Yun, Cho, Jeong, Keum, Joo, Choi, & Kim, 1994, p. 95), and the temples were not allowed to own their own property.

In addition to the anti-Buddhism policy, shamanism was completely rejected and alienated by the ruling power. Shamans were prohibited from living in the capital city and they were downgraded to the slave status. If a family member became a shaman, it was considered the sign of the familial tragedy (Yun, I. H., et al, p.55). In addition, various shaman rituals (*Kut*) were strictly prohibited by law (Choi, 1998, p. 21). According to Choi, the Joseon oppression of shamanism was based on the Neo-Confucian principles of reason and rationality. From this view, the ability of shamans to hold communion with supernatural power was both irrational and unacceptable. Consequently, shamanism was regarded as wicked and therefore should be eradicated (Choi, 1998, pp. 21-22). Despite the oppression, shamanism survived and even flourished at times during the dynasty. Pettid (2003) explains:

> First, it [shamanism] represented an important part of the people's life. Whether consciously or not, it was the tradition of the people. They learned it from their mothers and fathers, and passed it on to their children; as such, it was intricately bound to their lives. Second, it provided entertainment and relaxation. Listening to an oral narrative or watching a shaman ritual was a communal and joyful event. Third, this culture allowed for the venting of frustrations and, at least vicariously, the overturning of unjust and repressive aspects of society. Fourth, shamanism also provided for the religious needs of the people (p. 117).

Pettid's claim supports the argument that shamanism remained popular among the populace and even among queens in the royal house through the Joseon dynasty (Choi, 1998, pp 22-23; Yun, I.H., et al., 1994, p. 55). The queens in the royal house had a high level of social status, but they were marginalized as women and forced to live by restrictive social norms. The popularity of shamanism among queens shows that shamanism functioned as a way to relieve pressure among the marginalized populace.

Anti-Buddhism and anti-shamanism policies greatly influenced the funeral culture of the Joseon dynasty. Unlike previous eras, the ruling power vigorously controlled the culture based on the principles of Neo-Confucianism. Cremation and ground burial, which had lasted more than 800 hundred years since the introduction of Buddhism, could no longer coexist. Neo-Confucianism believed that cremation was unacceptable and unforgivable. Emphasizing filial piety, one of the main principles of Neo-Confucianism, the deceased body should be preserved because it was given from the parents (DeBary et al, 1960, p. 469; Fairbanks, 1992, p. 175; P. H. Lee, 1993, pp. 606-607). Preservation was believed to continue the link between the dead and the living and to guarantee the prosperity of both (Deuchler, 1992, p. 197).

Scholars in the early Joseon dynasty supported ground burials and criticized cremation, explaining how the link between the dead and the living were relevant to the prosperity of descendents with the elaboration of *ki* material forces. Kwon Kun (1352-1409) contended that "this *ki*, though it belongs to heaven and earth, is also entirely founded upon the bodies of my ancestors and passed on to me; so although my ancestors have already passed away, their *ki* is in me and has never ceased" (P. H. Lee, 1993, pp. 606-607). According to Kwon, the bodies of ancestors and descendants respond to each other with the same quality of *ki*; the *ki* of ancestors exists forever, which helps descendents in the future. From this perspective, cremation destroys the intimate links of *ki* between ancestors and descendants. Subsequently, living descendents would be unable to flourish if their ancestors were cremated.

For Neo-Confucianism, which values ancestor worship, destructing the link to one's ancestors spells disaster in the family. Such an argument is based on the active interpretation of *ki*, which is unstoppable and omnipresent throughout the

universe. Seo Kyong-dok (1489-1546) explains the concept of *ki*.: "although there is coagulation and disintegration, there is no being and nonbeing—such is the fundamental substance of material force….a large scale coagulation forms heaven and earth; small scale coagulations form all creatures and things" (P. H. Lee, p. 609). Seo is more specific about the operation of *ki*: "it all depends on the relative strength, duration, and speed of the energy of the coagulation or disintegration" (P. H. Lee, pp. 609). Thus, life and death are continuous processes of coagulation and disintegration of *ki*, not the dualistic separation of being and non-being. This perspective on the afterlife provided the Joseon dynasty with theoretical ground to implement its own funeral policy.

Several commonalities exist between the views of Neo-Confucianism and shamanism in terms of the afterlife. In the Neo-Confucian view, the living and the dead are linked through the medium of *ki*. As Kwon described, *ki* allows this world and the other world to be connected. Shamanism stresses the harmony between this world and the other world; the balance between these two worlds depends on the operation of strength, duration, or speed of coagulation or disintegration of *ki*. If the operations of forming or deforming of *ki* occurr cordially, then the two worlds remain balanced. Both shamanism and Neo-Confucianism prefer ground burials and consider it essential to ancestor worship, although the ways of worship differ. Although there were similarities in the view of the afterlife, method of body disposal, and practice of ancestor worship between shamanism and Neo-Confucianism, the Joseon dynasty consistently oppressed shamanism. From the perspective of Neo-Confucians who underscored a rational and reasonable ruling, it is irrational and unacceptable for

shamans to hold communion with supernatural powers. Such powers of shamanism could be regarded as a great threat to the ruling power.

As seen in the discussion above, the Joseon dynasty assertively intervened in the formation of the funeral culture through the implementation of Neo-Confucianism in order to underpin the political ideology of the ruling power. Subsequently, the previous funeral culture, in which the influence of shamanism and Buddhism coexisted, was suppressed and alienated. The enactment of funeral policy legislation was underscored for maintaining the power structure; that is, the funeral culture, controlled by the enforcement of law in the Joseon dynasty, represented the consolidation of the ruling power. Before the Joseon dynasty was forced to open the door to the foreign colonial powers, ground burials had been institutionalized and routinized as the main way to dispose of the bodies for more than five hundred years.

In the Era of Colonial Modernity

When Japan colonized Korea in the early twentieth century, the funeral culture was controlled as a means of efficiently ironing out the colonial rule. The colonial power attempted to change the method of body disposal from ground burial to cremation. Japan persuaded Koreans that cremation was the most hygienic and appropriate way; however, during the 35-year colonial period, most Koreans were not interested in adopting cremation (M.H. Kim, 2003, pp.44-48; W. H. Ahn, 2004, pp58-59). During the Japanese Occupation, Japan feared that shamanism would encourage a nationalist spirit and inspire collective political consciousness of resistance. Thus, Japan utilized the new funeral policy to attempt to secure its power in colonial Korea. The Joseon dynasty and the Japanese occupation era both enforced changes in the funeral culture, which facilitated the implementation of their political intentions (M.

H. Kim, 2003, p. 6). Kim argues that the formation of the Korean funeral culture in modernity should be differentiated from those of the Joseon dynasty and the colonial era because the ruling power structure in Korean modernity was not as centralized as in the previous eras; therefore, the ways of controlling the funeral culture in modernity were more complex (M. H. Kim, p. 6). However, Japanese occupation should also be considered alongside the rise of Korean modernity because they share methods of controlling the funeral culture.

Although there are various accounts on the beginning of modernity in Korea, for the purpose of this paper we will contend that modernity rose in Korea around the time of the Japanese occupation (Shin & Robinson, 1999, pp. 9-10). Although modernity in the colonial period, "colonial modernity possessed liberating forces and a raw, and transformative power, and it affected the more nuanced forms of domination and repression in the colony" (p. 11). In other words, the period of colonial modernity embraces the dynamic energy with which Koreans made efforts to overcome the Occupation. The power structure in colonial modernity became more complex than that of the previous era. The ruling structure in the Joseon dynasty was the centralization of administrative power, and its main goal was to protect the "power of sovereignty" (Foucault, 2000). In contrast, Japanese colonial power used the technologies of government. Colonial modernity regarded "the constitution of population as the ultimate target of government," and conceived that "demography, territory, and material resources are to be observed, accounted for, and acted on as a totality" (C. W. Lee, 1999, p. 38).

Japan restrained the Korean funeral culture with "more nuanced forms of domination and repression." Although the Joseon dynasty and the Japanese colonial

power both intervened in the funeral culture to enforce change, they differed in their approaches to governing the funeral culture. The colonial power set up a public cemetery for the first time in Korea in the name of creating hygienic conditions and efficient management of the body. Such ruling techniques can be better understood from the Foucauldian view of "the art of government" (Foucault, 2000).

<div align="center">Governmentality on the Korean Funeral Culture in Modernity</div>

Colonial modernity was the period when new techniques to control culture, both the funeral culture and in general, began to take shape. Considering that the funeral policies created under colonial modernity have continued to influence the formation of Korean funeral culture in recent years, it is essential to examine the regulation of the funeral culture in Korean modernity from the perspective of governmentality, which is a Foucauldian interpretation of power relations in modernity.

The Art of Government

The notion of governmentality is the result of Foucault's view of new power relations between the ruler and the ruled in modernity. In contrast to the Machiavellian view of state power, Foucault (2000) discusses the more complex mode of the art of government between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth century, when modernity in Western Europe rose. For Foucault, government "is the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead the convenient end" (de la Perriere, 1567, p.22, cited in Foucault, 2000, p. 208). Foucault interprets "things" in this sense as "a sort of complex composed of men and things" (Foucault, p. 208). Government's involvement with men and their relation to things includes "means of subsistence" such as wealth, resources, territory as well as "ways of acting and thinking" and

"accidents and misfortunes such as feminine, epidemics, death, and so on" (Foucault, 2000, p. 209). The significance of territory, the main concern of the ruling power before modernity, is reduced to only part of the complex relations of men and things.

Foucault focuses on three types of government that manage population of a territory: "the art of self-government, connected with morality; the art of properly governing a family, which belongs to economy; and the science of ruling the state, which concerns politics" (p. 206). Foucault pays special attention to the integration of economy and morality as well as economy and politics. Economy plays a significant role in building "continuity" between the ruler and the ruled (pp. 206-207). In the art of government, the ruler maintains influence over the population of a territory through economy and politics; individuals in the territory conduct themselves as they should through economy and morality. Therefore, governing a state is:

> to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behavior of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods (Foucault, 2000, p. 207).

Although Foucault (1982) views power relations in governmentality as "a structure of actions upon the actions of others," he does not seem too pessimistic. He addresses the rise of multifaceted power relations between the governing and the governed. In contrast to state power before the rise of modernity, the objective of which was to protect power of sovereignty, power relations in the art of government are intricately intertwined. Individuals who are involved in the relations have difficulty in discerning the complexity of the power relations. This view is based on the belief that power relations in the emergence of modernity are "ordered in a de-centered way and wherein society's members play a particularly active role in their

own self- governance" (Dupont & Pearce, 2001, p. 125). As Dupont and Pearce point out, Foucault focuses on the mutual relations of the de-centered power structure in modernity and the degree of self-governance of individuals.

Topological relations are organically interweaved, and tensions are always present in such power relations. The surveillance power of the state attempts to control individual conduct in the name of the wealth of the population; the active role of self-governance is not overwhelmed by state power. From the view of the governing, self-governance is a matter of policing. Foucault explores how the agency of individuals can empower themselves in topological relations. In the power relations in the art of government, self-governance becomes the multifaceted "technologies of the self," which "permits individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immorality" (Foucault, 1988, p. 18).

Technologies of the self represent the various modes of power through which an individual agency interacts with the power of the governing. These technologies empower individual agencies, and differ from those of the governing power. With this belief, Foucault ponders the possibility of the misuse of the technique of government by saying that "nothing is an evil itself, but everything is dangerous" (Gordon, 1991, p. 46). Subsequently, he does not portray modern Western forms of government as "totalitarian" (Gordon, p. 47). Foucault acknowledges the potential of individuals to correct the abuse, by surveying governing power: "things are always liable to go wrong, but also that there is always the possibility of doing something to prevent this, since disaster is never ineluctable" (Gordon, pp. 46-47). One of the crucial points in

Foucault's explanation of governmentality is the potential power of the individual

agency to counterbalance the abuse by the governing. As power relations, the

technique of governing individuals, and the circumstances around them become

complicated, the power of the individual agency should be highly appreciated as a

counteraction to the intricate technique of governing.

Culture as a Governmentality

Governmentality refers to the art of governing the "complex of men and

things" (Foucault, p.2000, p. 209) in which politics, economy, and self-government

overlap as "a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual" (Williams, 1976,

p. 16). The concept of governmentality can provide a theoretical ground to explore the

complexity of the topological power since the rise of modernity. Bennett (1992)

regards culture as " a particular field of government" (p. 23). He emphasizes the

interventions of government and the relations of men to things in the art of

government. Assuming that culture consists of the composite *relations* of men and

things, Bennett's view of culture as governmentality is comprehensible:

> Culture is figured forth as both the *object* and the *instrument* of
> government: its object or target insofar as the term refers to the morals,
> manners, and ways of life of subordinate social strata; its instrument
> insofar as it is culture in its more restricted sense- the domain of
> artistic and intellectual activities- that is to supply the means of a
> governmental intervention in and regulation of culture as the domain of
> morals, manners, codes of conduct, etc. (p. 26)

For Bennett, the power structures in the art of government change from

hierarchal to multi-layered and multi-contextual, thereby internally exercised on the

actions of others. In these power relations, culture becomes "a governmental practice

for transforming both mental and physical behavior" (Storey, 1997, p. 3). In Bennett's

view, the assumption that public space can provide commoners with a place of

empowerment is naïve. Public spaces such as museums, which were established for

the education of ordinary people, became the place for those with vested interests,

such as the ruling class, to spread their ideology to the rest of a society.

Public spaces as government instruments in modernity provide important reasons for

circumspect and circumstantial calculations of power relations in the art of

government.

The art of government "govern[s] not by the law, but by a specific, a

permanent, and a positive intervention in the behavior of individuals" (Foucault, 1988,

145). Therefore, circumspect and circumstantial calculations provide a lucid method

for articulating the power relationships in numerous domains of populations in the de-

centered power structure. Power in the de-centered structure is constructed

specifically, permanently, and even pervasively in the numerous domains of men and

their relations to cultural contexts, i.e., "means of subsistence," "ways of acting and

thinking," or "accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, and so on"

(Foucault, 2000, p. 209).

Technologies of Government Domination on Korean Funeral Culture in Modernity I

When the Japanese occupied Korea, they changed the traditional system of

land ownership as a preliminary step toward colonization. To accomplish this, the

Land and Building Certification Regulations were enacted in 1906 (Shin & Robinson,

1999, p. 25). Japanese interests in the reformation of Korean funeral culture,

particularly disposal of the body, began with this plan (Takamura, 2000, p. 135).

Private graveyards that were scattered across the country obstructed basic steps for

colonization, such as building railways, developing mines, and using land for military

purposes (Takamura, p. 137). In 1912, the Graveyard, Crematorium, Interment, and Cremation Regulations were enacted to facilitate colonization.

This was the first time that graveyards became objects of governing by the state. Regulations were enacted so that bodies would be buried in public cemeteries; government officials were authorized to manage neglected or illegal graves (Takamura, p. 139). The Regulations also encouraged cremation. Japanese colonial policymakers rationalized the enactment of funeral regulations as eliminating conventional bad habits and superstitious acts as well as preventing disease caused by decomposition (W. H. Ahn, 2004, p. 58). However, as Takamura indicates, the main concern of Japanese colonialists was accelerating the process of colonization through the alteration of traditional land ownership system. In this sense, the justification of the funeral policy testifies that the formation of discourse on sanitation and superstitions became an instrument in the art of modern Korean colonial government.

The main goal of the funeral culture under Japanese Occupation was to govern populations more efficiently. For this purpose, the concept of sanitation and the function of medicine were considered significant factors in the technologies of government. From Foucault's (1980) perspective, it is "noso-politics" (p. 168). In relation to the rise of modernity in the West, Foucault explains that the traits of noso-politics comprise not only the concept of sanitation and the function of medicine but also "the economico-political effects of the accumulation of men" (p. 171). That is, "[t]he program of hygiene as a regime of health for a population entails a certain number of authoritarian medical interventions and control" (p. 175). Foucault's view of noso-politics can be applied to colonial modernity in Korea: Japanese colonialists

created a hygiene discourse around public cemeteries, which allowed them to carry
out colonization more efficiently.

Discourse on public sanitation also encouraged cremation, a main trait of the
funeral culture in colonial modernity. Public cemeteries, although not the same as the
traditional graveyards, were to some extent with a reflection of public feeling that
bodies could be buried in the ground and preserved. Despite the attempt to transform
public cemeteries, this policy still encountered harsh criticism. Strong ties with
ancestors, expressed through ground burials, were formulated and transmitted through
the shamanist belief system. These ties expanded to become a national identity against
colonial rule. Subsequently, cremation was regarded as a colonial tool to devastate the
Korean tradition. Aries (1974) expresses his view on cremation:

> Cremation is the most radical means of getting rid of the body and of
> forgetting it, of nullifying it, of being too final. Despite the efforts of
> cemetery offices, people rarely visit the urns today, though they may
> still visit gravesides. Cremation excludes a pilgrimage (p. 91).

Aries confirms that cremation is a reliable means of reducing visitation to and
worship at graveyards (M. H. Kim, 2003, p. 45). Japanese colonialists oppressed
Korean shamanism in an attempt to deny Koreans their cultural identity. The colonial
ruling power oppressed shamanism through military pressure and indirect methods.
From the perspective of governmentality, the encouragement of cremation is an
indirect and disciplinary way of self-governing, which is a another example of noso-
politics.

The hygiene discourse of public cemeteries was constructed to alter
conventional Korean landownership practices in order to smooth the process of
colonization. This hygiene discourse also played a key role in creating an impression
of colonial superiority to Koreans. The discourse of cremation discouraged visits to

graveyards and tributes to ancestors. It allowed the populace to ignore shamanism's

consistent and harmonized relationship between ancestors and descendents, through

which self-governing was performed, and instead to adapt themselves to hygiene,

superiority, and advanced colonial modernity.

This complex power relation reveals two important points. First, colonial

modernity, as Shin and Robinson suggest (1999), should be recognized as a

transitional but significant era for understanding modernity in Korea. This period is

crucial to studying the controlling aspects of the Korean funeral culture because it

produced the art of government, a very different and unique mode of control from the

previous eras. Furthermore, the techniques of government (i.e., hygiene discourse and

oppressive policies toward shamanism) became role models for shaping the modern

funeral culture, particularly funeral policy. Second, the structure of the funeral policy

in colonial modernity requires a cultural approach to governmentality. The history of

the funeral culture as well as the emergence of the new funeral culture through cyber

memorial zones can be explored in political, economic, and cultural contexts. In the

following section, the main characteristics of the funeral culture after colonial

modernity will be briefly described.

Technologies of Government Domination on Korean Funeral Culture in Modernity II

Although Korea was liberated from the colonial power when the Japanese

Occupation ended in 1945, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet

Union forced Korea to remain under a strong American influence. For this reason,

anti-communist ideology and Christianity also influenced post-colonial modernity in

Korea (Grayson, 1995; C. S. Chung, 1996, p. 531). As a result, the funeral culture in

this period should be considered in relation to the assimilation of American culture

into Korean modernity. It was believed that the American modern culture was formed in Korea after the Japanese withdrawal; however, Yoo (2001) argues that the embodiment of American modernity began in colonial Korea. If this is so, the consistency of "culture as a governmentality" between colonial and post-colonial Korean modernity can be explained.

Yoo identifies two characteristics of American modernism in Korean colonial modernity: bodily modernization of the individual and aspiration for Westernization. The former refers to the attitude of "copying and mimicking new 'modern' bodily gestures, ways of speech, facial expressions, languages and outlooks" (2001, p. 424). The latter represents the desire of colonial Koreans who desperately want "the wealth and power of nation" (p. 424). Yoo's view explains why colonial Koreans placed modernization and Westernization, whether on the level of the individual or the social, in the same category: Westernized individual bodies and strong ties with America were seen as the best way to express anti-Japanese sentiments. Such embodiment of American modernity led colonial Koreans to perceive America as "governing fiction," meaning "America in the imaginary and fantastic dimension" (Fanon, 1967, pp.215-216, cited in Yoo, p. 427). Under these circumstances, American Christianity achieved its mission successfully within and after colonial modernity (p. 427).

Christianity in Korea, particularly Protestant Christianity that was introduced in the late nineteenth century, increased influence through complex power relations in Korean colonial modernity. The influence of America on the Korean socio-cultural context spread Christianity in post-colonial modernity. While Christianity gained popularity, shamanism was alienated by a governing power whose views were derived from discourse produced under American influence. With the emphasis of rational

thoughts in American modernity, shamanism was demonized as a superstition or the belief of Satan. In a movement to break down superstition, many shaman shrines were abolished by governing powers (Yun, et al, 1994, pp. 59-60). Shamanism was also suppressed in ways to justify slogans of military regimes (Choi, 1998, p. 31).

With the oppression of shamanism after the colonial period, the technologies of government in colonial modernity were replaced by the technologies of government based on American modernity, whose characteristics comprise "America as…governing fiction… as missionaries…[and] as Hollywood" (Yoo, 2001, p. 427). Although Korea was not an American colony, its socio-cultural context was regulated and maintained by the technologies of government based on American modernity. Yoo contends that:

> [T]he Americanized modernity… was inscribed on the body of colonized Korean during the Japanese rule, with lucid evidence and facts….[I]t was imprinted as a modern *habitus*, as an ambiguous, invisible and collective orientation, and also a desire to be compensated for collective trauma. This is why Koreans felt closer to American culture than to the traditional culture right after the Liberation(1945) (p. 436).

Then how did such culture as a governmentality influence the funeral culture in Korean modernity? One of the features of this period is the domination of ground burials. More than 80% of Koreans adopted ground burials as a way of disposing the bodies (H. D. Song, 2003, p. 294). The Korean government built a few major crematoria and attempted to modernize the Korean funeral culture (W. H. Ahn, 2004), but the rate of cremation remained about 13% until the late 1980s. It is interesting to contemplate this phenomenon in relation to Protestant Christianity in Korean modernity.

The perception of the body in the Christian tradition is closely related to the death of Jesus (Davies, 2002, pp. 125-127). According to Davies, the belief that Jesus was resurrected three days after his death uses the body as a symbolic medium for resurrection. Subsequently, the treatment and the disposal of the body reflect an aspiration for immortality. Despite the decomposition, the body becomes a non-physical channel that can help believers to gain eternal life. The Christian view of death was not contradictory to the Korean view in that both encouraged ground burials. However, Christianity opposed the worship of ancestors, which had been central to Korean tradition. Although this caused serious problems in its assimilation, the Christian preference for ground burials helped integrated it into Koran culture. Assuming that Christianity was a vanguard of American modernity that was inscribed in Korean postcolonial modernity, it makes sense that burial services have not dissipated despite rapid industrialization.

In the process of assimilation, Christianity absorbed various characteristics from Korean shamanism, one of which was to adopt a "shamanic emphasis on fulfillment of material wishes through prayers to or communication with spirits as a belief of its own" (A. E. Kim, 2000, p. 115). Kim further argues that "in South Korea there is no modernization without Christianity and no Christianity without shamanism" (p. 112). In this sense, Korean Christianity can be seen as "shamanized Christianity." However, the introduction of Christianity had a much greater impact on Korean religion than that of Buddhism. With the introduction of Christianity, shamanism was severely and institutionally demonized by the governing power. Because of this, the indigenous belief in shamanism was alienated as a superstition in postcolonial modernity.

The oppression of shamanism in this period was similar to the period of the Joseon dynasty in that despite oppressive policy, shamanic sense remained embedded in the lives of the populace. However, suppression of shamanism in postcolonial Korea needs more attention because this reveals multifaceted power relations embedded in the period under the influence of American Modernity. American modernity as governing fiction allowed Koreans to blindly accept the superiority of Western culture, and more specifically American culture, which included politics, economics, education, and so on. In addition, the governing fiction became even more consolidated in the Cold War era; governing power, particularly military regimes in post colonial Korea, made use of such governing fiction to justify their unjustified taking of power. All of these circumstances made it possible for the technologies of government in American modernity to be effectively implanted and to formulate culture as a postcolonial governmentality in Korea. Thus, institutional oppression of shamanism can be viewed in the context of postcolonial governmentality.

The funeral policy enacted by the Japanese colonial power is another example of this oppression. The Graveyard, Crematorium, Interment, and Cremation Regulations were enacted in 1912 as a technology of colonial governmentality; it remained a role model for policies in postcolonial modernity. The American administration, which governed Korea for three years after the Japanese withdrawal, continued the policy without revision, thus embedding colonial governmentality in the postcolonial cultural context.

During the eighteen-year reign of Park Jung Hee's military regime, the funeral policy was revised several times in the name of "the Standing Rule of Family Ritual." However, with emphasis on rationalization and efficiency under the influence of

American modernity, these revisions failed to preserve the meaning of ritual and equality of death in the funeral culture (H. D. Song, 2002, pp. 213-219). This controlled specific processes of the funeral service, including the number of floral tributes, forms of obituary notices, and so on. Furthermore, those who violated the rule were fined or imprisoned (H. D. Song, p. 220). Song argues that the funeral culture in postcolonial modernity became an object of the art of government under the influence of American modernity.

Until now, I pondered the Korean funeral culture with the consideration of the history of controlling. I wanted to explicate how the indigenous view on death under the influence of shamanism has been adopted or alienated by the ruling class during the different periods of Korea's history. For this purpose, in the first section, I attempted to conceive shamanism as the main source of Korean funeral culture while analyzing the context of the Princess *Pari* myth. In the second section, the control of shamanism in the funeral culture from the ancient states to Japanese Occupation was examined. In the last section, drawing Foucault's notion of governmentality and Bennett's view of culture as a governmentality, I tried to demonstrate that Korean funeral culture became an object of the technologies of postcolonial governmentality. In this inquiry, I observed that the control of the funeral culture reflects the degree of regulations over socio-political and cultural contexts.

Here I want to cite again what Foucault mentions about governing power. "Things are always liable to go wrong, but […] there is always the possibility of doing something to prevent this, since disaster is never ineluctable" (Gordon, pp. 46-47). Foucault's view is important in this study because he certifies that while there is the possibility of power abuse, there is also counter power to prevent the misuse. As

Foucault, I also believe that power and counter power coexist and the real question is how they interact. That is, if there has been control in Korean funeral culture, there has always been an effort to counterbalance the control. In this chapter, marginalized shamanism was the result of such an effort to offset the suppression. What this means is that although the populace could not always win a victory, there was always an effort to prevent the abuse of power against them. From this perspective, in the next chapter, I will explore the relationship of various Korean cultural phenomena, including the stimulation of progressive political movements, the emergence of cybercultures, and more complicated changes of Korean funeral culture.

CHAPTER 3. CYBERCULTURES AND THE CHANGE OF THE FUNERAL CULTURE IN KOREA

Over the last two decades, Korean society has experienced various deviations from the conventional social norms of modernity. Above all, a democratic government has replaced military regimes, which for more than twenty-five years wielded authoritative and hierarchical military power and consolidated the Cold War ideology in what was described as modernization and industrialization. Under these circumstances, Americanized modernity, which prevailed over the period of Korean modernity and was engraved on the body of Korean society, continued to erode. The erosion of this influence meant that Koreans could begin to escape from, in Fanon's (1967) term, a governing fiction based on American modernity that was constructed in the period of colonial modernity.

However, despite the achievement of political democratization, Korean society fell into economic crisis in the late 1990s and was forced to depend on the help of international financial institutions (IFIs) to recover. Following the crisis, the neo-liberal paradigm was formulated in Korean society, which had been pursed by the US government and IFIs since the waning of Cold War Ideology (Hundt, 2005, p. 244). Because the formulation of cybercultures in Korea was initially motivated by the government-driven communications policy as a way to recover from the economic crisis, and because the new funeral culture materialized under the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm, it is necessary to examine the political and economic contexts in order to better understand the emergence of cybercultures and the change of funeral culture in Korea.

The Emergence of Cybercultures in Korea

Cyber Korea 21: Informatization in the Neo-liberal paradigm

When Korean society entered the post-authoritarian era, it still could not be easily freed from the vestiges of military regimes and American modernity. One of the problems in this period was how to adapt the state-controlled economic system, which had previously led industrialization in Korea, to the fast-changing international market structure which was geared toward neo-liberalization and globalization (B. G. Park, 2005, pp. 860-862). In fact, the state-controlled economic system resulted in the consolidation of an authoritarian political-bureaucratic economy, or *gwanchi gyongje,* and a close affinity between business and governments, or *jungkung yuchak*. Big industrial conglomerates, or *chaebols*, have been the central axis of the economy through close ties with military regimes. While fully realizing the urgent reformation of the state-controlled economic system in the post-authoritarian era, the Korean government attempted to introduce the policy of *segyehwa*, a Korean version of globalization.

The *segyehwa* policy, which was pushed by the Kim Yung-sam government in the mid-1990s, intended to "eliminate the inefficiency and malpractice stemming from protectionism and regulation and improve and upgrade institutional systems and practices to a world level" (Y. S. Kim, 1996). The primary emphasis for this policy was to increase the "efforts to liberalize trade and investment" (Y. S. Kim, 1996). However, despite the intention of reforming the economic structure toward the advanced model, the *segyehwa* policy was attributed to the economic crisis of the late 1990s. Above all, the Kim Yung-sam government rushed to implement the policy without pondering the fundamental structural weakness of the Korean economy. The

failure of the *segyehwa* policy allowed the Kim Dae-jung government, newly elected

after President Kim Yung-sam, to actively adopt the neo-liberalist paradigm.

The newly elected government ascribed the economic crisis to "a faulty

globalization policy, which had opened financial markets but not introduced the

market principles of responsibility and punishment," and in which big industrial

conglomerates, or *chaebols*, failed to reform themselves in correspondence to the

globalized environment; therefore, the reformation of *chaebols* became the primary

concern for this government to correctly "introduce the market principals of

responsibility and punishment" (Hundt, 2005, p. 249). In the press conference, then

President-elect Kim Dae-jung made it clear that he wanted to effect the reformation of

chaebols: his government would "totally rescue all firms from the chains of power

and from the protection of power….only firms that adapt to the market economy and

are victorious in global competition will survive" (D. J. Kim, 1997, cited in Hundt,

2005, p. 248). That is, he considered the introduction of the neo-liberal policy, which

was the mandatory option for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan package

(Hundt, p. 242), as the most pertinent remedy for overcoming the crisis.

Neo-liberalism is understood as "a political term used to identify a particular

political philosophy and policy prescription centering around the objectives of the

'self-limiting' state, unregulated investment capital and the 'free-trading' open global

economy" (Peters, 2001, pp. 207-208). John Williams, who coined the term "the

Washington Consensus" now known as a synonym of neo-liberalism, insists that the

term was "geographically and historically specific, a lowest common denominator of

the reforms that…'Washington' could agree were needed in Latin America as of

1989" (William, 1999). He suggests "fiscal discipline, tax reform, interest rate

liberalization, a competitive exchange rate, trade liberalization, liberalization FDI inflows, privatization, deregulation, [and] security of property rights" (William, 1999). However, William cautions that his term should not be confused with that of market fundamentalism, in which liberalization of the market is considered as a universal remedy. So why would the newly elected government implement the neo-liberal paradigm, even though it was originally designed as a solution for the economic situation of Latin America?

A political economic view on neo-liberalism and globalization can give an answer to this question. Peters (2001) pays close attention to the neo-liberal paradigm in the globalization context and explicates the relationship as follows:

> [A] particular world policy paradigm of globalisation, especially since the late 1970s, has been promoted by advocates of an international `free trade' neo-liberalism. We might happily call this *the neo-liberal paradigm of globalisation*. Such a label signifies that the form that globalisation has taken to date is not simply a matter of haphazard development but rather the product of strong advocacy by the US, Britain, global corporations and other managers of the world economy, on the one hand, and by the design and mandate of international institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, on the other (p. 208).

Peters maintains that the neo-liberal policy has been the main vehicle for the enhancement of globalization. This helps to explain why the neo-liberal paradigm attracted the Korean government as an option to handle the economic crisis. The wave of democratization in the 1990s allowed *chaebol*s to gear toward liberalized marketing without the direct intervention of the state, and it entailed the weakening of state power in controlling policy-making agenda (Hundt, 2005, pp. 242-245). However, the economic crisis of 1997 provided momentum for the government to regain the controlling power of the policy-making agenda. By carrying out the neo-liberal policy, the government could have support from people who were both

outraged by the *chaebols*' poor management as well as from the U.S. government and IFIs (Hundt, p. 257). For this reason, gaining the support from the U.S. government and IFIs seemed desperate for the Korean government because of the compulsory option for IMF's loan package. The newly elected Korean government took on this policy with the goal of reshaping the nation in the context of globalization. In this view, the process of neo-liberalization in Korea resulted from "political struggles and negotiations among various social and political forces" in the global context (B. G. Park, 2005, p. 871).

While successful in recovering economic stability by implementing the neo-liberal policy, the Kim Dae-jung government also realized the need to employ a "knowledge-based economy" in order to build up national competitiveness and to avoid the recurrence of the economic crisis (M. J. Kim, 2003, p. 343). For this purpose, the project of Cyber Korea 21 was launched in 1999. Cyber Korea 21 intended to "increase the GDP share of domestic knowledge-based industries to the level of advanced nations, and to become one of the most advanced informatization nations in the world by 2002" (M. J. Kim, p. 343). Informatization in Korea emerged in these political and economic contexts.

In the beginning of Cyber 21, the Korean government paid attention to the potential of e-commerce and e-business with nationwide computerization. With the adoption and use of information communication technology, the government hoped that business processes and practices could be enlivened. The following view of President Kim Dae-jung on globalization and information insinuates what would be the theoretical foundation of Cyber Korea 21:

> Globalization is a historically inevitable path. The entire world will become one market, and nations will cooperate while competing...Any

nation will face defeat if it goes against globalization. The age of globalization is also an age of information. Enormous wealth is being created. However, most benefits are enjoyed by advanced nations. The globalization of information must be linked to the globalization of benefits (D. J. Kim, 2000).

President Kim makes it clear that information technology has power over the nation's future in the globalized and neo-liberalized era. Since Cyber Korea 21 has provided an awareness of the economic potential as well as the cultural dynamics embedded in Korean ethos, informatization in Korea needs an approach to understanding this potential and dynamics. Kluver describes informatization as:

the process primarily by which information technologies, such as the world-wide web and other communication technologies, have transformed economic and social relations to such an extent that cultural and economic barriers are minimized (Kluver, 2003).

From Kluver's view, the project of Cyber Korea 21, which ended in 2002, turned out to be successful in that cultural and economic barriers in Korea were minimized to a certain degree. This project formed the basis of informatization with the active intervention of government. According to the White Paper of Ministry of Information and Communication (White Paper Internet Korea, 2005), 73% of Korean households are wired with broadband connections, making Korea number one in the world as of August 2005. The number of Internet users has surpassed 60%, and 51% of Koreans have personal computers. In terms of the overall national informatization index, Sweden was at the top, followed by the U.S. and Korea. Before launching the Cyber Korea 21 project, Korea was ranked 22nd in the world on this index; this jump can be attributed to the steady growth of Internet users, broadband network subscribers, and cable television users.

Furthermore, more than two thirds of the population are cellular phone users, which indicates the size of the nation's wireless communication capacity. Now, Korea

is gearing toward the next level of informatization. Above all, the Broadband

convergence Network (BcN) is being built so that high quality broadband multi-media

service can be provided for most of the nation. In addition, early construction of the

IPv6 Internet protocol has been added as a part of the new informatization plan in

order to solve the shortage of IP addresses for the next generation.

A Ubiquitous Sensor Network (USN) is also being constructed based on

RFID technology. RFID, or Radio Frequency Identification, refers to the automatic

identification method (What is RFID?, n. d.). It relies on a transponder called an RFID

tag, which can be attached to anyone or anything, theoretically allowing for

communication of anything at anytime and anywhere. Remote control governing is

also possible. In that sense, RFID technology is certainly double-sided: in terms of

efficient control of products, this can be a great project; however, from the

Foucauldian perspective of the paonopticon, RFID technology can be seen as the most

invisible but suppressive tool to govern human beings in the future.

It is clear that the informatization in Korea in the last decade could not have

been accomplished without the government-driven information policy. However, it

would not be appropriate to only attribute the foundation of informatization in Korea

to the active information policy of the government. Although the government built the

framework of the informatization, without the motivation of the public to become

active participants of this emerging culture, the successful establishment of the

informatization basis would never have been achieved. As Ji (2004) points out, the

success of informatization in Korea needs to be evaluated from the view of both

"supply push and demand pull."

Ji maintains that the success of informatization in Korea came from the government-driven policy of "supply push" as well as the social cultural factors of "demand pull." The social cultural factors of the success comprise the urbanized and the apartment-centered housing pattern, the popularity of *PC-Bang*, a Korean version of Internet cafes, and the 386-generation (Ji, pp. 38-44). The 386-generation refers to "those who were in their thirties when the term was coined, attended college in the 1980s and were born in the 1960s" (Double Tongued Word Wrester, n. d.). According to Shin Jiho, it also refers to those who "were involved in pro-democracy activities as university students during the 1980s…are now mostly in their late 30s or early 40s…[and] has effectively become the mainstream of [Korean] society" (2004).

In addition, the Korean tendency toward hastiness, new trends, and new technology are included in the social and cultural factors of the informatization success (Ji, p. 45). Ji makes a clear distinction of "supply push and demand pull" in the phenomena of informatization in Korea. He elaborates on the social and cultural factors in the informatization as preconditions, but this is an insufficient explication of the dynamic forces of the Internet users. These dynamic forces can be viewed from the perspective of "cybercultures" (Bell, 2001). Thus, the policy-driven informatization of Korea needs to be discussed separately from the formation of the discourses in cyberspace because, particularly in the Korean cultural context, cybercultural discourses contain self-motivated and dynamic power against social norm.

Cybercultures and the Rebirth of Shamanism

Cybercultures are formulated through political, social, and cultural discourses of active participants in cyberspace (Bell, 2000). Bell regards cyberspace as a

"cultural artifact…a lived culture, made from people, machines and stories in everyday life" (p.2). From this view, the boundary of cyberspace and real space is blurred. Cultures constructed in cyberspace represent real cultures, and vice versa. Therefore, the ways in which cultural discourses are constructed between cyber and real and their relations to the power relations in political, economic, and socio-cultural contexts must be explored. Because it resulted from the government driven policy, informatization cannot explain what motivated the dynamic forces embedded under the formulation of cybercultural discourses .

The dynamic forces in Korean cybercultures need to be viewed in the context of shamanism to understand this new cultural phenomenon. In the shamanic view, the human interaction with the supernatural world is regarded as central to life; thus, there are strong aspirations of relationality with supernatural power. Emphasis should be placed on aspirations rather than supernatural power because such aspirations were never extinguished during the long history of suppression on shamanism. Informatization in Korea provided the populace with the wired or wireless framework through which the aspirations of relationality of the marginalized populace could erupt as dynamic forces that formulate political, economic, and socio-cultural discourses. Open but connected, interactive characteristics of cybercultures made it possible for the Korean populace to exhibit their potential dynamic forces with an active participation. One example that exhibited the forces of the populace in the cybercultures was the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

The most popular cultural phenomenon in the World Cup was the Red Devils. This term originally referred to the name of an online fan club for the Korean national football team. During the World Cup, millions of Koreans became Red Devils as they

wore red shirts with the slogan "Be the reds" and chanted *dae-han-min-kuk* (great

Korea); the fan club could not be differentiated from others in such gatherings (G. C.

Jeon, & T. J. Yoon, 2004, p. 87). Whenever the Korean team played a match,

hundreds of thousands of people in red shirts gathered in front of the screens set up in

almost all parts of the country to cheer on their national team; this revealed the

"capacity of self organization" built on "organic dynamism" (W. Choi, H. J. Kim, & J.

Y. Kim, 2003, p. 172).

This symbol of an online fan club became the symbol of the Korean people.

The Red Devils phenomenon is "a cultural, communicational process, which is

complex, undetermined and non-predictable in its nature" (G. C. Jeon, & T. J. Yoon,

p. 86). Similarly, Korean cybercultures are not limited to online boundaries. "The

mutual circulation between offline and online mode is extremely strong" in

cybercultures (Choi, W. et al, 2003, p. 172). Discourse formed online and offline can

influence one another. Moreover, dynamic forces derived from aspirations of

relationality as part of shamanic inheritance enhance the mutual circulation between

on- and offline. Aspirations of relationality that are bound on- and offline (or to be

exact, inside of cyberspace and outside of cyberspace) become blurred. The

phenomenon of the Red Devils demonstrates the resurrection of the shamanic

inheritance through cybercultural discourses.

Embedded in the Korean ethos for thousands of years, these aspirations of

relationality that played a key role in the relationship between ancient Koreans and

supernatural power now play a catalytic role among thriving cybercultural discourses.

Although cyberspace does not provide the same space of ritual for interacting with

supernatural powers, cyberspace and the ancient ritual space share an openness, a

connectedness, and a capacity of communication. From the ancient shamanic view, all beings in the ritual space, particularly living beings, have their own deity that allows them to hold communion with each other. Although patterns of communion in the ancient ritual space were different from those of cyberspace, these were believed to be interactive communications. Cyberspace is linked with unlimited wired or wireless connections that allow for interactive communication. In the Korean cultural context, these two extremely different spaces—ancient ritual spaces and cutting edge cyberspace—share the same shamanic cultural component.

Kim Seong-Nae (2000) explores how Korean shamanism adapts itself to the new environment in the digital technology era, examining the fact that traditional Korean shamanism becomes prolific in the form of neo-shamanism through "virtualization and deterritorialization." She finds that neo-shamans do not count on *Kut*, the traditional and main ritual in Korean shamanism; instead, cyber talismans and cyber consultation become the preference for neo-shamans. Although neo-shamans do follow traditional shaman patterns, Kim predicts that neo-shamanism could contribute to the construction of a new spirituality in Korean cybercultures.

The biased Korean view of shamanism has dominated for a long time. Kim's study reflects the current trend among younger generations to take an interest in the Korean cultural heritage, including the values of shamanism. Neo-shamanism can be further developed from the perspective of aspirations of relationality. Although Kim describes the transition of patterns, she fails to take notice of the dynamic forces of shamanic inheritance that have been embedded in the Korean ethos and ignited by cybercultures.

Kim Ji-Ha (2003) insists that this new dimension needs to further elaborate cybercultures from the view of a shamanic resurrection. For Kim Ji-Ha, interactivity in digital communication signifies a new humanitarianism, the keynote of which is non-duality of the subjective and the objective. The shamanic inheritance, or aspirations of relationality, allows Koreans to apply the notion of non-duality to the cybercultural context. If this is so, then inside and outside of cyberspace constitutes a continuum not separated by dual spaces. The dynamic forces constituted in the continuum explains why Korean cybercultures have a strong "mutual circulation between offline and online mode" (Choi, W. et al, 2003, p. 172).

Decentering of the Self as Cybercultural Identity

Along with the resurrection of shamanic inheritance, the Red Devils phenomenon reflects another characteristic in Korean cybercultures: "decentering of the self." (Bell, 2001, p. 135). Bell explores the issue of identity in the cybercultural context with this term. Elaborating on Stuart Hall's (1995) discussion of "crisis of identity" and "decentered identity," Bell attempts to locate identity in cybercultures different from those of Cartesian essentialism:

> [T]he old identities which stabilized the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject. This so-called 'crisis of identity is seen as part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world (Hall, 1995, p. 596).

Considered Hall's "crisis of identity" in the cybercultural context, cybercultural identity as the decentering of the self disintegrates a "unified subject," which is the modern characterization of individual. Subsequently, cybercultural identity can be seen as a "process" that needs "temporal and spatial locatedness" (Bell, p.114).

The Red Devils phenomenon in Korean cybercultures shows such a transition from the identity of a unified subject to a decentering of the self. This phenomenon is a conspicuous example of overcoming the so-called "red complex" that has haunted modern Koreans. Ever since the American military administration governed Korea, the color red was associated with communism and North Korea, making it the color of the enemy. With the phenomenon of the Red Devils in the 2002 FIFA World Cup, millions of Koreans put on red shirts in a proud gathering and shouted, "Be the reds!" without any signs of the "red complex," which suggests the breakdown of an essentialized identity that had been shaped under the influence of the Cold War ideology.

The Korean people, particularly young generations who are familiar with cybercultures, have stayed away from the American fantasy and awakened to their own identities. Although the vestiges of military regimes and American modernity are still felt in Korean society, the Cold War ideology is no longer influential. Koreans do not blindly support the issues of anti-communism and pro-America; as a result, North Korea is no longer regarded as the sworn enemy and America, previously considered an ally, is not always seen as reliable. Such a difference between the past and the present points out that identity in Korean modernity is an "ideologically composed subject" (Althusser, 1971), where identities were subject to the ideological frame of the state. In contrast, the cybercultural identity in the Red Devils phenomenon is an impulsive and random process with which people can "move in lines into an energetic cultural-political force for social transformations" (G. C. Jeon & T. J. Yoon, 2004, p. 86).

In the beginning, Korean cybercultures were built on the frame of government-driven informatization, but these cultures later became driven by the populace. Aspirations of relationality, which substantiate the Korean shamanic inheritance, made these cultures full of dynamic and energetic forces. Historically marginalized, shamanism represents a hierarchical relationship with the ruling powers. In the cybercultural context, the construction of conflicting powers between the government-driven informatization and the populace-driven cybercultural discourses is no longer hierarchical. Aspirations of relationality allow the populace to consolidate their power in unprecedented ways through cybercultural discourses. In the history of the Korean populace, there has rarely been such a chance for empowerment through discourse. In this sense, Korean cybercultures testify to the resurrection of a shamanic inheritance.

From Foucault's perspective of governmentality (2000), however, the change toward a nonhierarchical relationship also means the complication of governmental techniques. As discussed earlier, the government-driven informatization was closely related to the establishment of the neo liberal paradigm in Korea. The implication of informatization is that the degree of commercialization can deepen by expanding the capacity of the exchange of information, thereby spreading market-driven values. In other words, informatization can be utilized to accelerate the expansion of market-driven forces in the name of globalization.

If this is so, questions arise at this point. How do populace-driven cybercultures deal with such market driven forces? Can the formation of cybercultural discourses as cultural political forces, as seen in the phenomenon of the Red Devils, have the same power against market-driven forces? These questions cannot be

answered immediately because the commercialization of the Korean society built on

the neo-liberal paradigm is on the move, and its degree might not be excessive enough

for the populace to be aware of the problem in order to consolidate their power

against it. The emerging new funeral culture in Korea needs to be considered in these

contexts. The ongoing establishment of the neo-liberal paradigm, government-driven

informatization, and populace-driven cybercultures are intermingled in the surfacing

of the new funeral culture. Given this, the attempt to articulate such political

economic and socio-cultural contexts in this new funeral culture provides some

answers for these questions.

<div align="center">The New Funeral Culture and Cyber Memorial Zones</div>

The New Funeral Culture in the Neo-liberal Paradigm

On Nov. 3, 2005, the headline in the Korean news spoke of the dispute

between the Korean government and the Philadelphia International Medicine (PIM),

one of the bidders of the international hospital project in Korea:

> The Free Economic Zone (FEZ) Planning Office has designated New York-Presbyterian Hospital (NYP) as the preferred bidder to be a foreign partner in setting up and operating an international hospital in Songdo International City. However, NYP's rival bidder, the Philadelphia International Medicine (PIM), strongly appealed against the FEZ Planning Office's decision, threatening to take the matter to the court… The MOFE [The Ministry of Finance and Economy], which earlier in the day said NYP was selected over PIM for the Songdo project, denied PIM's assertion, saying that the assessment committee consisted of 10 officials from both government and private professionals. It said NYP won by winning six votes. Songdo is part of Inchon, west of Seoul, which is home to one of Korea's FEZs (S.J. Kim, 2005).

The Free Economic Zone (FEZ) indicates the establishment of the new liberal

paradigm in Korea. As a part of the project called "Northeast Asian Business Hub,"

the Korean government appointed three regions including Incheon, Busan, Jinhae, and

Gwangyangman as the FEZs. In 2002, the Korean National Assembly enacted a law

so that foreign firms in the FEZs could have "various incentives and benefits" (B. G.

Park, 2005, p. 856). Needless to say, FEZs are the consequence of the economic crisis

in 1997 and the government policy to recover the collapsed economy in a way to

count on the new liberal paradigm. Pointing out FEZs as the main trait in the neo-

liberal paradigm in Korea, B.G. Park argues that FEZs were designed as a mode of

"spatially selective liberalization" so that the government could get around the

criticism from the opposition to the neo-liberal paradigm (p. 870).

Although the government intended to minimize the impact of neo

liberalization, the effect of the paradigm shakes the Korean socio-economic basis

beyond the boundary of the FEZs because public education and medical sectors are

included in the plan. In this sense, whoever wins the dispute will be the vanguard in

the liberalization of the medical sector in Korea. Opponents of neo-liberalism argue

that medical service centers have traditionally been considered as the place "for public

benefits" and not "for profits" (S. M. Choi & M. Y. Yoon, 2002). The current

regulation reflects these views. However, Choi & Yoon indicate that the

establishment of a foreign medical center in the FEZs is a sign of liberalizing medical

sectors and that neo-liberalization will exploit the tendency of the richer to be

healthier than the poor.

Then how is the neo-liberalization of the medical sector relevant to the

emergence of the new funeral culture? Most Korean medical centers currently run or

subcontract funeral parlors simultaneously, which means that hospitals or medical

centers have become the main places for funeral ceremonies. When hospital patients

fail to survive, their bodies are sent to mortuaries that belong to the funeral parlors run

by these hospitals. Even when someone dies at home, the body is usually moved into a funeral home located in a hospital. In this context, if medical centers, which were regarded to exist for public benefits, turn toward profits under the direct influence of the neo-liberal paradigm, then the commercialization of the funeral parlors in these medical centers will be accelerated undoubtedly.

Additionally, when commercial specialists become the subject of the funeral process, the bereaved become alienated. The specialists and the bereaved have a commercially-oriented relationship. H.D. Song (2003) points out that funeral parlors at medical centers attempt to simplify the funeral ceremony; however, they preserve the part of *yomsup* and *ipkwan*, which refers to "dressing and placing the dead body in a coffin" (H. S. Lee, 1996, p. 53). As in the case of the viewing ceremony in the commercialized funeral of America, the funeral parlors at medical centers make the most of *yomsup* and *ipkwan* for their profits while preserving the traditional funeral ceremony (H. D. Song, p. 309). Korea has not fully opened its medical sector yet, but the current trends allow us to predict the commercialization of Korean funeral culture.

Before the 1980s, according to H.S. Lee (1996), people considered dying away from home as a so-called "bad death" (Bradbury, 1999) that should be avoided. For this reason, mortuaries in medical centers were mostly used for handling cases of "accidental deaths, deaths at hospitals, and deaths on the road" (H. S. Lee, p. 55). However, the trend of running funeral parlors by medical centers, whether directly or indirectly, has proliferated since the mid-1980s (H. S. Lee, p. 55) when the process of state-driven industrialization came to a climax. Industrialization changed the traditional Korean family structure from extended to nuclear families; therefore, when a death occurred, the traditional, communal way of help for the funeral process could

not be expected. Furthermore, urbanization forced people to adapt themselves to small, high-density housing, which entails the "restriction of spatiality" (H. D. Song, 2003, p.299) for performing funerals. As a result, funeral specialists replaced the work of the community, and dying at the hospital was now regarded as convenient and hygienic.

In 1982, the Korean government made it mandatory that medical centers with more than 100 patients should establish mortuaries within the center (H. D. Song, 2003, p. 302). According to Song, funerals for those who died in medical centers were frequently held in these mortuaries, although this was illegal at the time. In 1993, based on the revision of the "Standing Rule of Family Ritual," enacted under the rein of Park Jung Hee, mortuaries could legally provide funeral ceremonies. Song argues that active government interventions and the cooperation with the hospital industry enabled the proliferation of funeral parlors run by medical centers. Few have attempted to articulate how the mortuaries in hospitals became popular places for funeral ceremonies and how connection between the hospital industry and government policy made it possible to create the unique Korean phenomenon of funeral parlors run by medical centers.

An analysis of government intervention in the Korean funeral culture needs to focus not on the intervention itself but on the context that is now under the circumstance of liberalizing medical sectors. Song (2003) discovers that the government enacted the decree to allow the hospital industry to run funeral parlors, assuming that there might be invisible secret connections between the two (p. 303). However, this view does not explain how or why this invisible connection could be established. By doing so, the unique cultural phenomenon of funeral parlors run by

medical centers can be calculated circumstantially and circumspectly. To examine this,

I will briefly revisit the history of the controlling Korean funeral culture.

New Funeral Culture and Culture as a Governmentality

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Korean funeral culture has historically been

controlled by the political intentions of ruling powers. Hierarchical and direct

suppression was the main means of control. However, since the rise of colonial

modernity, the ruling power attempted to implement various funeral policies for

"transforming both mental and physical behavior" (Storey, 1997, p. 3). Such

techniques of government intervention intended to discipline conduct have become

more complicated through modernity. Bennett (1992) regards these techniques to be

culture as a governmentality. Bennett insists that culture as governmentality provides

the "means of a governmental intervention in and regulation of culture" (p. 26). The

object of government such as "morals, manners, codes of conduct, etc." becomes the

domain of controlling culture (p. 26).

Bennett's view of culture as a governmentality is pertinent for understanding

the proliferation of funeral parlors at medical centers and the government intervention

in this process. Above all, discourse on hygiene and sanitation formulated since the

colonial modernity consolidated the technique of "noso-politics" (Foucault, 1980),

becoming a means of regulating culture. The noso-politics expanded its influence

because the discourse of hygiene created a culture where the universe is ordered

through "selective perception and labeling" (Bradbury, 1999, p. 119). In this cultural

discourse, living is considered to be an order; death a disorder. Moreover, the

decomposition of the body causes pollution, which become a threat to living as an

order (Bradbury, pp.119-120). In this clear-cut division, the discourse of hygiene

becomes "a regime of health for a population" (Foucault, 1980, p. 175). The

formulated discourse of hygiene was taken for granted, thereby facilitating

government and the hospital industry to establish funeral parlors at medical centers.

Americanized modernity can also be considered a culture as governmentality

(Yoo, 2001). Americanized modernity was burned on the body of Koreans during the

Japanese Occupation and has exercised its influence with the continuation of Cold

War ideology. Its imprint is "a modern *habitus*, as an ambiguous, invisible and

collective orientation" (Yoo, p. 426). Habitus refers to:

> a position in the social and a historical trajectory through it: it is the
> practice of hiring within that position and trajectory, and the social
> identity, the habits of thoughts, tastes and dispositions that are formed
> in and by those practices (Fiske, 1992, p. 155).

From this view, the modern habitus can be interpreted as a habitual inclination that is

constructed through practicing modern discourses. In Korean modernity, under the

influence of Americanized modernity, the modern habitus for hygiene and sanitation

has been cultivated in everyday life. The cultivation of the modern habitus, although

ambiguous and invisible, was accelerated through the main axes of the social order

such as "economic capital, cultural capital, education, class, and historical

trajectories" (Fiske, p. 155). People observed hygienic codes of conduct and provided

government with an instrument of noso-politics. The abundance of funeral parlors

managed by medical centers was derived from culture as a governmentality built on

noso-politics, the interactive forces of which include the formation of hygiene

discourses and the cultivation of the modern habitus in Korean modernity.

Although there may be external pressure to widen the range of the neo-liberal

paradigm, the Korean government inclination toward the opening of the entire

medical sector was most likely caused by its inner condition, which is the habitual

inclination of modern discourse in the government. That is, the modern habitus of

government officials, which was cultivated with large cultural capital and higher

education degrees, allowed them to employ the policy based on the formation of

hygiene discourses and Americanized modernity. An interview with one of the high-

ranking Korean government officials reflects the modern habitus of hygiene and

sanitation. While explaining the introduction of the embalming culture to Korea, he

insisted that embalming is much more hygienic compared to the traditional way of

preparing the body for burial:

> When embalming, blood is drained out and the solution of
> formaldehyde is pumped up through blood vessels, and all the
> perishable contents are removed from abdomen of the body. This is so
> hygienic that condolers can even kiss the embalmed body in the
> viewing ceremony. In contrast, in Korea, morticians stop up all the
> holes of the body with wads of cotton. Nevertheless, the body starts
> decomposing within 24 hours, which does not seem to be sanitary.

The official also maintained that, given the emergence of globalization, the

introduction of embalming culture is unavoidable:

> In the past, few foreigners lived and worked in Korea. Now many
> foreigners stay here, including not only foreign visitors but also
> migration workers. When a foreigner dies here, the body needs to be
> either embalmed or cremated for air transport to the native country. It
> is an international aviation regulation. For this reason, more morticians
> with embalming techniques are needed….In addition, a lot of foreign
> born Koreans…the second generation or the third generation...live here
> now. And a lot of Koreans frequently experience long stays abroad.
> These Koreans are familiar with embalming culture and want
> embalming when someone in their family dies.

This testimony confirms that the new Korean funeral culture is emerging in the

context of complicated power relations; the forces of hygiene discourse and the

modern habitus are intermingled in this context. Adding to these forces, discourses of

globalization based on the neo-liberal paradigm structure another domain of forces

and construct more intricate power relations. The official's view on embalming reflects the habitual inclination of hygiene discourse as well as discourses of globalization based on the neo-liberal paradigm.

A drastic increase in cremation is another characteristic of the new Korean funeral culture. In the 1980s, the cremation rate was less than 15%, which shows only a 10% increase in the last three decades (H. D. Song, 2003, p. 294). It seems that industrialization did not influence the change of ground burial culture or the traditional way of disposing of bodies. However, since the late 1990s, the rate of cremation has showed a sharp increase: almost half of the deceased across the country were cremated in 2003 (D. S. Kim, 2004). In large cities such as Seoul or Busan, the cremation rate in the same year was more than 60%, which is much higher than in rural areas. Furthermore, nearly 70% of people now prefer cremation to ground burials (Hankyoreh, 2004). The ostensible reason for this sudden change can be attributed to being cheap and convenient to use as well as a shortage of burial space, which would make it difficult to consign a body to the grave in the near future.

However, with funeral parlors at medical centers, the habitual inclination of hygiene discourse can be ascribed as one of main reasons behind the increase in cremation. The hygiene discourse, for instance, states that cremation promises "the instant removal of the decaying, polluting, flesh" and is "cleaner and more advantageous" (Bradbury, 1999, p. 132). The modern habitus of hygiene and sanitization encouraged Koreans to stay away from the traditional funeral culture and adapt themselves to a simplified and practical way (H. S. Lee, 1996, p.54). From this practical consideration, Koreans presently do not have as many meaningful connections to the traditional funeral process (including ground burials) than they did

in the past. That is, "emotional and rational distinctions between burial and cremation" have become obscured (H. S. Lee, p. 54), thus the preference for cremation has increased.

In this context, the traditional shamanic view on the body, which was an important medium to maintain balance and harmony between this world and the other world, does not attract the attention of people in the present. Changing the funeral tradition of *imjong* reflects such a tendency. As a part of Korean funeral ceremony, *imjong* refers to "keeping watch with the dying person" (H. S. Lee, p. 53). In the traditional funeral culture, it was considered a filial duty that descendants and other family members perform *imjong* for the last moment of a dying person when death occurs. Although *imjong* is the ceremony that was influenced by the Confucian principle, it also echoes the shamanic view on the body. Performing *imjong* means caring for a body in the threshold of order and disorder, representing hope for a safe journey to the other world and the recovery of the broken balance caused by death.

H. S. Lee argues that in the current funeral culture *imjong* is now carried out by funeral parlors and therefore "all symbolic meaning has, of necessity, vanished" (p. 54). Koreans' habitual inclination of hygiene and sanitization along with practical considerations can be ascribed to the disappearance of symbolic meaning. Considering that the loss of meaningful connections tends to treat a matter lightly, the disappearance of symbolic meaning entails making light of the meaning of the body. The government-driven funeral policy also becomes a catalyst for the increase of cremations (H. D. Song, 2003; K. D. Kim, 2003; S. Y. Chun, 2003).

In the 1990s, the Korean government attempted to fully revise its funeral policy, the root of which could be traced back to the Japanese Occupation. In the

revision, the government eased the policy on cremation and the establishment of

charnel houses but made it difficult to consign the body to the ground. While the

approval of the government is required for ground burials, cremation only needs to be

reported. In the beginning, government attempts to implement this policy faced

strong opposition, but the revised policy was finally enacted in 2001. Its main purpose

was to utilize land efficiently. In particular, Korean graveyards encroachment on the

land had become problematic. To alleviate this problem, the government employed a

policy to encourage cremation and expand the establishment of public charnel houses

as well as family vaults.

   An interesting point in this process is the role of the mass media. Most media,

print or electronic, reported the problem of burial and the benefits of cremation with

one voice (Chun, 2003, p. 152). Whether progressive or conservative, the media

supported the government-driven policy of cremation. The main subject of the reports

was the problem of graveyards. The formation of cremation discourse gained power

as time progressed. Such a media tendency faces criticism that the discourse on

cremation preference prevented people from recognizing more fundamental problems

of ground burial aside from the encroachment on lands. Chun argues that the main

problem in ground burials lies more in illegal graveyards that account for 70% of the

total, graveyards for the unknown that comprise 40%, and luxurious graveyards for

the prestigious. If these problems could be resolved, the burial system would not be a

problem. K. D. Kim (2003) concurs that while the media condemned the graveyard

problem, it remained silent to the problem of golf courses, which are more

problematic in terms of encroachment of land space. Thus, media discourse

functioned as an instrument of governing techniques, allowing people to form the

cremation preference through media practice.

Cyber Memorial Zones

Cyber memorial zones, the third characteristic of the new Korean funeral

culture, began as an instrument of governing techniques. In the cyber memorial zones,

people memorialize their late loved ones by writing memorial letters and posting

photos or movies. Those who are familiar with web technologies can also set up cyber

altars for remembering the deceased, making visits available anywhere and anytime.

The term cyber memorial zones is not limited to cyber cemeteries; there are many

different types of cyber memorial zones besides cyber cemeteries.

The successful cyber memorial zones of today were not the what the

government intended when they created these zones. According to the Seoul

Metropolitan Facilities Management Corporation (SFMC), Post Office in Heaven, one

of the oldest cyber memorial writing zones, started with memorial books for the

purpose of providing bereaved family members of those who had been cremated with

comfort:

> Cremation is becoming a common practice in Korean society and
> different ways to revere the dead have been introduced. Funeral homes
> have provided memorial books since July 1997, and some memorials
> that were written in these books were published in a book called
> Tearful Letters. Due to the growing number of Internet users, SFMC
> operates the Cyber Funeral Home (Seoul Metropolitan Facilities
> Management Corporation).

SFMC is a public corporation that is in charge of operating the public facility in Seoul,

including various columbarium and cemeteries in the Seoul area, as well as managing

the oldest cyber memorial zone in Korea. SFMC started these memorial book services

in order to promote cremation, and the blossoming cybercultures led to the popularity of the cyber memorial zone.

According to one government official, the attempt to computerize the outdated funeral management system motivated the creation of cyber memorial zones. In the process of computerizing the system, the government recognized that the power of computerization not only could organize the outmoded internal system but could also be the most appropriate instrument to spread the formation of cremation preference discourse. The situation of computerization and the government-driven informatization present a commonality in that based on strong government interventions that intend to formulate the disposition of people by passing an order down from top to bottom; however, the dynamic forces contextually constructed in the populace driven cybercultures were not predicted in the beginning of informatization.

The Post Office in Heaven was created by the government to increase the cremation rate. The government official told me that like a grave the memorial zone could provide comfortable space for the bereaved to connect themselves to the deceased. By doing so, cremation discourse could be diffused through the public mind. The main concept of memorial writing zones, which use cyberspace as a medium to communicate with late family members or friends, was smartly adopted and developed by Internet users as a different type of cyber memorial zone.

Some are politically driven, where the discourses of death formulate those of politics to confirm the solidarity of the populace. Others are used for commercial purposes, reflecting the trends of commercialization in the funeral culture. One feature of these commercialized cyber memorial zones is that they encourage users to

perform a type of cyber ritual by creating a movie of the deceased. When the government started computerizing its funeral system, it did not expect cyber memorial zones to become this popular, just as when the government pursued the informatization, it did not seem to expect such a dynamic force from the construction of cybercultures.

According to Bell (2001), cybercultural identity is a process (p. 114) and a "decentering of the self" (p. 135). This provides an important point for articulating the increase of cremation rate and the emergence of Internet culture, particularly cyber memorial zones. With the premise that "the body can be used to express any aspect of the society," and "[j]ust as the live body can be used as a metaphor for the state of society, the corpse can also be brought into a metaphorical discourse" (Bradbury, 1999, p. 117), the sharp increase in the cremation rate reflects recent tendencies to deviate from the conventional social norms. Although cremation was driven by government policy, thereby being habitually inclined by the populace, the phenomenon reflects the cybercultural identity as a "decentering of the self".

From the perspective of cyber cultural identity, the increase of the cremation rate, the degrees of deviation from social norms, and the emergence of cyber memorial zones are simultaneously intertwined. Christie Davies (1996) compares the degree of secularization with the increase of cremation, arguing that more secularized people prefer cremation to ground burials. Beyond its religious connotation, secularization should be considered in degrees to understand the degree of deviation from traditional social norms. As the degree of deviation from conventional social norms is represented by the increased cremation rate, the proliferation of cyber memorial zones has relevance to the sharp rise of the cremation rate. Blossoming

cybercultural discourses can also be considered in relation to recent tendencies to move away from conventional norms. These socio-cultural phenomena share the commonality of, as David Bell argues, "decentering of the self."

      In this chapter, I have explored characteristics of Korean cybercultures and the new Korean funeral culture to examine how these two contexts are interconnected. As the driving force of Korean cybercultures, the dynamics of shamanic inheritance were presented. And the establishment of the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea was examined. I have also considered the relevance of the new funeral culture in Korea and the emergence of various cyber memorial zones. These changes in the Korean funeral cultures occur not individually but interconnectedly. Additionally, if these changes result from the tension of power between socio-cultural contexts, then the power relations in the rhizomatic collection of the contexts in motion need to be articulated.

CHAPTER 4. KOREAN CYBER MEMORIAL ZONES AND DYNAMICS OF

SHAMANIC INHERITANCE

Different Categories Various Dynamics

While exploring the changes of funeral culture and the emergence of

cybercultures in Korea in the previous two chapters, I realized that the shamanic

inheritance, which has run in the ethos of Korean populace since the beginning of the

state, has created distinctive dynamics in Korean cybercultures. In addition, the

emergence of cyber memorial zones in Korea reflects the distinctive dynamics

derived from the shamanic inheritance on different levels. The various levels of

dynamics have resulted in different cyber memorial zones, which, basically, fall into

four categories: individually-oriented zones, socio-politically-oriented zones,

commercially-driven zones, and celebrity-driven zones. Although each category has

one or more distinguishing characteristics, they are intermingled. For this reason, I

looked at cyber memorial zones under the modified categories such as individually-

oriented and commercially- driven, celebrity-driven and commercially-driven, socio-

politically-oriented and celebrity-driven, and so on.

Embedded within the various levels of inherited shamanic dynamics, cyber

memorial zones now partly substitute for the roles of traditional shamans, who helped

the Korean populace to appease their *han,* or the multi-layered complex of deep

sorrows and pain intermingled with resentment, regret, spite, or grief. In the

individually oriented cyber memorial zones, visitors attempt to relieve their *han* by

writing memorial letters to their loved ones -- particularly late family members.

These letters address individual sorrows and pains that accompany the separation and

loneliness brought about by the death of loved ones.

Cyber memorial zones do not limit their functional ranges to appeasing an individual's *han*; they also seek to relieve the collective *han* of the down-trodden populace, accumulated through political, social and cultural marginalization. As Seo define in Ch. 2, the collective *han* of the populace, or *minjung*, is the "suppressed, amassed, and condensed experience of oppression" and " the sense of unresolved resentment against injustice suffered" which "forms a kind of lump in one's spirit" (Seo, N. D. 1981). The venting process of the collective *han* occurs in socio-politically oriented cyber memorial zones. Whenever socially unacceptable, tragic events result from the mismanagement of the government or its related authorities, these cyber memorial zones become the forum where the populace publicly mourns those tragedies and denounces the intolerable mishandlings.

I learned that since the establishment of Korean cybercultures, these memorial zones have extended to various controversial socio-political issues. Even if the venting experiences of the populace in the memorial zones lack a strong, immediate influence for socio-political and cultural change, the zones remain noteworthy for their potential to empower the populace with dynamics of their shamanic inheritance. In other words, inherited shamanic power in Korean cybercultures, a symbol of overcoming the long-enduring marginalization of the Korean populace, or *minjung*, provides it with chances to dissolve openly their collective *han* and helps them to confirm the consolidation of their power.

Because *han* grows from the accumulated experiences of unexpected or unjust situations, or those beyond one's control, the individual needs a rite to appease the sorrows and pains from *han*- ridden death. Traditionally in Korea, shamanic rituals have played a role of soothing the *han* of the deceased and the bereaved; now

memorial writings in the cyber memorial zones have arisen as an unconventional but alternative form of the shamanic rituals. The experience of appeasing *han* in the memorial writings in cyber memorial zones, whether individual or collective, can be explained using the concept of "words against death" (Davies, 2002).

Davies contends that people can cope with unacceptable situations in life, such as the death of loved ones, by forming words against death "in a wide variety of ways from asserting belief in an immortal soul to emphasizing the continuity of identity through heirs and successors" (2002, p.5). Considering memorial writings as a type of words against death, these writings can help people to appease their *han* and overcome pains and sorrows. The notion of "words against death" provides this research with an instrumental tool to understand the construction of inherited shamanic dynamics in cyber memorial zones. In the following section, I will explore memorial writings in each category and analyze how the writings in each zone play a role for the writers to release their *han* and how the memorial writings in different categories are interrelated.

<div align="center">Individually-Oriented Zones</div>

To examine the individually oriented cyber memorial zone category, I looked at four sites: *The Post Office in Heaven*, *Ocean Funeral Café*, *I.Missing.U, and C Park Café*. *The Post Office in Heaven* is the memorial-writing site of *Cyber Memorial-Zone,* which the Seoul city government created for the purpose of promoting cremation culture, as discussed in the previous chapter. As of January 2006, visitors have posted 53,000 writings in the zone. *Ocean Funeral Café* is also a memorial-writing zone for the bereaved who used the cruiser company that owns this site to scatter the remains of their late families into the ocean. This cruiser company

utilizes the web presence to advertise their ash-scattering service and have placed it in *Daum*, one of the biggest web portals in Korea. *I.Missing.U* is an individual memorial-writing zone for *D Sangjo,* a pre-paid funeral service. As a private and commercial cinerarium, *C Park* provides its memorial-writing zone, *C Park Café,* for the survivors whose late family members' remains were interred in its ossuaries. As *Ocean Funeral Café* does, the company uses the *Daum* web portal to set up the café. In addition, *C Park* creates one more individual writing zone, named *Letters to Heaven*, which is linked to its main home page.

I contacted three writers who posted memorial writings in these individually oriented memorial zones: Mun-kyu, a man in his 60s, from *The Post Office in Heaven*, Jung-sun, a women at her 20s, from *Ocean Funeral Café*, and Ji-kyung, an eighteen-year-old girl, from *I.Missing.U*. The fourth café, *C Park,* applied a more rigorous privacy protection policy to prevent others from contacting its customers, although memorial letters can be seen by the non-bereaved in its zone. Each of the sites imposed rigorous rules to ensure their users' privacy, making it difficult to get sample posters to interview for this research. *C Park* did not respond to requests to gain access to their users.

An official who manages The Post Office in Heaven said the Privacy Act made it more difficult for the non-bereaved to acquire contact information. Before this act most memorial letters included contact information of the bereaved such as email, but now it is concealed. According to the official, some visitors to the site read memorial letters written by bereaved women, contacted them and made unwanted advances. He even reported that in some cases they were raped. In my field research, I could reach respondents for personal or email interviews with the help of officials in

the zones or through direct contact through which the site members revealed their information. In order to protect the privacy of my interview subjects, I have used pseudonyms and have redacted other identifying information.

Mun-kyu and his wife

Mun-kyu lost his wife to cancer five years ago. He found *The Post Office in Heaven* when he cremated his wife and placed her remains in the enshrinement park established and managed by the Seoul city government. Since the funeral, he has written almost 600 letters to his wife, which amounts to a letter every 5 to 7 days. A former businessman, he has now retired to a rural area. He also set up family cyber memorial zone for the rest of his family who are scattered across the world. Mostly the family cyber memorial zone gives Mun-kyu a place to remember times with his wife, but his family members also visit the memorial zone to put digital flowers on their mother's picture particularly on *Sul,* the first day of the first lunar month, and *Chu-suk*, the Korean Harvest Moon Day.

Noticeable in Mun-kyu's memorial letters is his remorse that he should have departed this world earlier than his wife but did not. He told me that all the memorial letters reflect memories about his wife that he wanted to write to her. The letters include his various feelings of regret, remorse, longing, nostalgia, and so on. For this reason, the cyber memorial zone offers him the space to vent his *han*. On a winter day with a heavy snowfall, the longing for his wife becomes sorrow.

> The snow can be romantic with you,
> but it is only sorrow to me without you.
> They [children] don't know how much I love you.
> If they get old, they may understand the half of it.
> On this windy and cold day, I am thinking of you playing with angels
> in a garden. I have loved you, am still loving you, and I miss you.
> Am I strange to say, "love you and miss you"?
> Is the old man not qualified even to say that to the one that he loved?

I was young at sometime in my life… So sad…

When Mun-kyu writes, "They [children] don't know how much I love you," it suggests his desperate yearning for his late wife. The line "Is the old man not qualified even to say that to the one that he loved?" reflects the feeling of impermanence that he has in the twilight of his life. This expression can be seen as not only his individual *han* but also a collective *han* of the many elderly people in Korea, whose welfare has become alienated from the public interests. Seemingly the more he yearns, the more the feeling of impermanence grows and the more angry he becomes. One day his anger explodes and he blames God and the church in a very critical manner.

> As a human being, I cannot see your soul now.
> When I die, can my soul recognize your soul? Can soul see soul?
> Is it because they hatefully captivate people and make a story that you and I can recognize each other and meet again in heaven?
> Anger swells in me and is about to flare up. Saving soul?
> Then how come they have more than 100 sects?
> Does that mean that more than 100 gods can save a soul?
> Then how can we as the foolish find the right god?
> How fraudulent they are…

Reading this letter, I wondered what made him turn so against the Christian community. I later found an answer. Mun-kyu's wife was a dedicated Christian. When she was alive, she wanted him to believe in God as sincerely as she did. When she learned of her cancer, she relied more on her belief in God than on treatment with medicine. Although he insisted that she needed medical treatment, she refused. Mun-kyu explained his anger about his wife's faith by discussing his views on her beliefs.

> You confused belief in God with superstition.
> As you say, medicine and medical skills are given by God.
> If so, you could receive the treatment as well as believe in God.
> However, you crossed the bridge of no return without yielding to my wish. How come such a reasonable person like you had such

superstitious belief? That's why it is said that religion is a necessary
evil that was created by bad eggs.

This letter helped me understand Mun-kyu's anger against Christianity. In addition, as

he expresses his frustration about his wife's refusal to receive medical treatment, his

sorrow, regret, and spite increase. In that sense, writing letters in a cyber-memorial

zone can be an instrumental tool for Mun-kyu to vent the forlorn air of anguished

despair. However, this zone does not only offer him sorrow and pain; after venting his

anguished despair, sometimes he seems enlivened. As the family celebrated the lunar

New Year without his wife, he wrote:

> The lunar New Year is closing.
> I am so anxious about the family gathering this year.
> How can I spend the day without you?
> Can I take care of the family even half of what you did last time?
> As a widower, I don't know what to do.
> I miss you and I need you. Help me… Help me…

Mun-kyu said that writing a letter to his wife affords him some consolation. As he

ends his letter, calling for help from his wife, one sees her as a source of his comfort.

Different from other letters, here he tries to understand that his wife is not in this

world anymore and seeks to create a positive connection with her. By doing so, he

asks her to help him to take care of his family.

> Dear Sweetheart,
> This morning I feel much less depressed and much more refreshed.
> Is it because of bright and warm weather?
> Or are you caring for me?
> Well… tears blur my vision again.
> I need to go. I do not want to show my red eyes to you.
> See you again.

Although he bursts into tears in this entry, his tears this time seem not to come from

sorrow and pain with the anguished despair of *han*. Equating bright weather with his

wife's care for him, his tears play a role of catharsis. The consolation that Mun-kyu

feels in this zone may come from this catharsis. But this catharsis does not last long, and his striving for consolation may be one of the reasons that he has posted letters in the zones almost 600 hundred times.

Jung-sun & her father

Jung-sun's father passed away from liver cancer a few months before she went to college. He left his wife, Jung-sun, and her 8-year-old sister. After the funeral, she learned that the funeral company that had helped her family scatter her father's remains offshore had established an online bereavement site called *Ocean Funeral Café*. A few days later, she decided to post her memorial letters in the zone. Her first memorial letter starts with sorrow and regret:

> It's been a week since you left me, dad.
> How have you been?
> It wrings my heart to think of how you suffered from
> pain and loneliness after you knew you had liver cancer.
> Although I knew about it, I could not fathom how much
> your pain would be.
> I was always sorry about that.

Jung-sun later said that she and her father had a very close relationship. He was considerate, quick to understand, and above all, loved her very much. As her confidant, she felt free to vent her anguish and sorrows to her father, as a result he knew almost everything about her. That's why, she said, losing her father created such terrible sorrow for her.

As the eldest daughter, Jung-sun also feels that she carries the weight of supporting her mom and younger sister. Substituting for her late father, she must care for her family now. Because of this sense of responsibility, she keeps any of her difficulties and worries from her mom and younger sister.

> When I write a letter to my dad in the (cyber memorial) zone, although
> I am not able to see him, I can feel him and talk to him about whatever

> I need just as I did when he was alive. I feel like I write it to myself, but it helps me calm down. I don't know if I can say that the writing "helps" my life or not, but at least I feel that my inner anguish is being released.

Seemingly, Jung-sun becomes happier by writing a letter to her father in the cyber memorial zone. In order to determine how these memorial writings helped relieve her anguish and appease her *han* I asked her to specify their role in her grieving process. She said that when her father was alive, she was childish and immature, though the eldest. However, her father passed away, and then suddenly she realized that she had a responsibility to support her family. But she initially had difficulties putting herself in her father's position. Even though things went wrong, however, she did not ask for others' help. Instead, she wrote a letter to her father because she believed that by writing the letter, her anguish could be released.

> It depends on the individual, but it works for me. When problems are entangled, I am under a lot of stress but have no one to talk with, and then I try to calm down myself while writing a letter to father. By doing this, I figure out what made them tangled and how I can deal with them.

However, memorial writings do not always work for Jung-sun. Sometimes, she is depressed and writes a letter to her father, but she remains sad throughout her writing.

> Suddenly, today, you are so hateful to me?
> Why did you have to go to heaven so suddenly?
> I know it is useless complaining but…
> You make me mad… You could have lived with me longer than this…
> Then why… why…why…why…please come back…please…

In spite of her varied emotions in this letter, her memorial letters primarily show balanced emotional flow, which means that although she starts a letter with sorrow and pain, as she writes, she becomes relaxed. One of the features of her memorial letter is that she ends the letter by calling for the help of her father, saying, "Dad,

please help mom, my younger sister, Jung-su, grandma and me not to get hurt anymore. As the eldest one, I'll do my best for my family." Or she says to her father, "I pretend that everything is ok without you and try to help mom not to think of you, but it seems difficult for her to accept your absence. Help us from the heavens!!! OK? Bye~" Once she had a stomachache and she leaves a message for her father, " I think I caught enteritis…so painful. I have to go to Daejun tomorrow… Dad, please pray for me to get well soon!!"

I asked Jung-sun if she felt like her father was giving her help when she asked for it. As a Catholic, she believes that her father was incorporated with God after going to his rest, and therefore her father can help her.

> We believe that God listens to us and fulfills our wishes. In this difficult time, I also want to count on such a religious belief that my father, who became one with God, responds to my call for the help. However, thinking realistically, I don't think it works. It is I, myself, who encourages me to overcome the situation while reading the memorial letters that I wrote.

Jung-sun strongly believes that upon his death, her father became unified with God. Although she acknowledged the difference between the religious belief and realistic thinking, what comforted her in the web zone stems from her religious beliefs. In addition, the fact that many of her letters to her father end with a request for help shows her belief that her father possesses the same powers as an omniscient and omnipotent God to help and protect her.

Ji-kyung and her uncle

I found Ji-kyung's memorial letter in *I Missing U* zone, a space which is offered by a pre-paid funeral company. She was a high-school student when I contacted her and her letter was written to her uncle, who had passed away four years ago. Ji-kyung told me that she has written memorial letters to her uncle in other online

web spaces since his death. But one day the space she had been using suddenly

disappeared, taking her memorial writings with it. Using Internet search engines, Ji-

kyung found *I Missing U* zone, which allows every visitor to write a letter to their

family.

According to her letter, Ji-kyung's father now suffers from tuberculosis and

pleurisy. In the letter, she asks her late uncle to help her father to get well soon.

> Really difficult, Uncle. No… I would rather say that I am scared.
> To be honest, Uncle, I am looking to you to help my dad to recover his
> health. After you were gone, the one thing that I tried to remember is
> that it is most important to remain healthy. Uncle, please listen to my
> prayer while you are in heaven. If you can read this letter, no… you
> should read it!! Please don't let anything serious happen to my dad; let
> him smile and say, "I forestall a disaster with a lesser sacrifice this year,
> so I can live for a long time."

In this letter, Ji-kyung expresses her desperation to take care of her father's

health. In an interview, I asked her how writing a letter helped her release this anxiety.

After writing a memorial letter in this zone, she feels involuntarily relaxed.

> Writing a letter to uncle, I feel like he reads it in heaven, and that he is
> still around me. Uncle and I seem to talk together through the writing.
> Like this, writing creates a very different feeling from even praying,
> good though it is.

Before her uncle suddenly died, Ji-kyung and her uncle had lived in the

neighborhood for more than 10 years. She talked with him many times, and at times

he served as a friend, or a brother, and often cared for her just like a father. Because

they were so close, she sometimes talks with her late uncle before she goes to sleep.

Holding her uncle on the same level as her real father, she knew she could ask her

uncle to help her father get well soon.

> While writing a letter, I came to think that uncle does not die. This
> writing has me feel that he is always with me, and within my mind.
> You know, you write a letter, believing that the other party will read it.
> The belief has me keep writing letters and helps me live animatedly.

Since my interview with her, however, Ji-kyung has not posted any more memorial writings. I contacted her after waiting for a few months and received an unexpected response. One day, Ji-kyung's cousins found the letters that Ji-kyung had written to her uncle, this cousin's father. Since then the cousin has been in deep grief, leading Ji-kyung to conclude that she should stop posting the letters. She added that although the cyber memorial zone provides the best place for her to communicate personally with her late uncle, if it causes pain and sorrow for others, then she will stop. Instead, she uses a diary for the conversation. I could not follow up on why and how the letters caused her cousin grief, or how Ji-kyung's experiences in online and offline memorial letters were different.

The above interviews with Jung-sun and Ji-kyung depict how these two young women used cyber memorial zones as space to release the difficulties they encounter in their lives and redeem themselves. Like these two women, many Korean women use cyber memorial zones for the same purpose, creating one of the unique features of cyber memorial zones. Given Korean women's marginal role in the traditional funeral culture, the level to which memorial zones serve as an open space for women to grieve deserves attention.

Individually-Oriented Zones as Spaces for Women

Individual memorial space in cyber memorial zones means something special for Korean women because in the traditional Korean funeral culture, women rarely had any space to offer these memorials. Men stood in the center of the funeral process, and a woman's normal role was simply as a marginalized supporters or witness at the funeral ceremony. Although women worked hard for preparing the ceremony, they

became almost invisible in the main funeral ceremony. But the gender inequality of the funeral culture did not end at the funeral event.

Conventional norms prevented married women from involving themselves in the affairs of their maiden homes. Married women, therefore, often encountered resistance if they wanted to visit their maiden family to express their condolence at a death, even it was the death of a parent. When she married a man, a woman became no better than a stranger to her maiden family. Once married, a woman was expected to live and die in the home of her husband. This marginalization of women grew from the allocation of power. The possession of domestic space was considered as a primary male power, and therefore the space for women in domesticity was rarely provided (B. J. Park, 2001). These special inequalities of men and women evolved from the dominant social ideology, Confucianism.

Industrialization and modernization brought social change and accelerated the decline of patriarchal power. The cybercultures in Korea exhibit various signs of the changing dynamics of gender inequality. According to B. J. Park (2001), with industrialization and modernization the abridgement of the male space has continued, and eventually, the emergence of the information society entails even the reduction of the perceptual space of the patriarch in the family. Although the patriarchy in Korean society still influences the Korean family in general, the emergence of the digital era may suggest a shift in the Korean perception about space.

From a glance at the history of Korean women's social status and cultural space, I can infer that the high rate of women participants in writing memorial letters represent the betterment of women's social standing. In the case of The Post Office in Heaven, which is managed by the Seoul city government, women participants wrote

about 85% of memorial letters posted on the zone from 2002 to 2005. Only 15% of

the letters were written by men. As the cases of Jung-sun and Ji-kyung, I found out

that many Korean women have their own memorial space in cyber memorial zones

and used it for the purpose of releasing *han* and managing the difficulties in their lives.

Women creating this private grieving space is a new cultural phenomenon

unimaginable in the traditional funeral culture. With cybercultures, men no longer

have exclusive possession of memorial space, but women now have access to

boundless memorial space in cyber memorial zones.

A poster with the nickname "Your Daughter Beauty" (YDB) has been writing

memorial letters to her mother in The Post Office in Heaven since 2002. As of

January 2006, she wrote about 330 letters, and her memorial writing includes a

distinctive quality which deserves some attention. Most of YDB's letters include

personal episodes from her daily life. One interesting story involved a time that YDB

went to a public bathhouse with her mother.

In contrast to the Western culture, Korea has a tradition of public bathing,

both indoors and out, and bathing together is not uncommon, so YDB bathing with

her mother in a public bathhouse and helping each other to rub off dirt would not be

strange. The public bathhouse story showed up a few times in her memorial letters.

One day in late winter, she wrote:

> Whenever I have a bath, I remember you, mom.
> Before you got ill, you would rub off the dirt on my back and said "my daughter's skin is the texture of *sundubu* [uncurdled bean-curd]. Very beautiful." I was so angry to hear that…do you remember? Then, you became ill, so I had to give you a bath, which sometimes made me tired and vexed. But mom… now I desperately miss the time.

In addition, when YDB was tired and exhausted, she had great yearning for the time

when she had a bath with her mother together.

> Recently, I had not got enough sleep. So tired. Because of being tired, I tended to show a temper with ease. At such a moment, I want to take a bath with you. If I could not, I would just be with you. That's all I want.

These two excerpts about YDB's longing for the public bath with her mother suggest that she had, in particular, "body memory" of her mother. According to Casey (2000), body memory refers to "memory that is intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the body" (p. 147). In this view, YDB remember her mother "in and by and through the body" washing her or being washed by her.

Considering Casey's proposition that "the body is of centralmost concern in any adequate assessment of the range of remembering's power" (p. 147), YDB's recalling her mother through body memory seemed to make her experience in the cyber memorial zone more intensive and complete. The following letter supports this conclusion.

> Mom, I want to plead my difficult situation today. I think you will allow me to do that. Why is it so difficult? I think you know already about my situation…When can I throw off this yoke? I also want to come near you….hold me in your bosom please.

As most people have memories of how comfortable it was in their mother's embraces, YDB expressed her desperate need for her mother's consolation while encountering a difficult situation in her life. In her memory, her mother represents not only the person who raised her but is also the origin of energy to fight against difficulty. When YDB said, "I think you know already about my situation," the strength of her body memory of her mother filled the void between this world and the other world.

In the following letter, another body memory is shared between this world and the other world. This time, a woman, nicknamed "Ms. Unknown" wrote her late father about an abortion that left a traumatic and indelible memory in her psyche. But

during this very difficult time in her life, Ms. Unkown's father greatly helped her overcome this problem and recover. This traumatic memory provided the catalyst for establishing an immanent connection to her late father in the other world.

> Dad, whenever I think of you, I can remember your bright smile. When I let you know my premarital pregnancy, you comforted me instead of scolding me. I was too young to realize how much you cared for me then…Daddy, while you are there, please take care of my baby who I aborted because of my immature mistake…Daddy, now take a comfortable sleep. Don't worry about me because I am now grown up. I love you with my heart.

The delicacy of the subject in this letter makes disclosing this memory to the public very difficult, especially considering that Korea remains under the influence of a male-dominant sexual ideology in which virginal purity is considered a necessary virtue for a woman. In that sense, I wonder how her body memory encouraged to share her story with the public at large, albeit anonymously. I will discuss this in relation to the concepts of cyber confession and digital spirituality more thoroughly in the next chapter.

The next letter from "Wife," a bereaved woman to her late husband, presents a slightly different scenario from the previous two examples. While the two letters of YDB and Ms. Unknown showed strong longing for the immanent connection with their late family in the other world, Wife's posting shows a weak attitude and does not show confidence based on sharing the memory with the late husband.

> My dear, how are you? We are so-so. Sometimes happy, sometimes sad…Although my life always looks bare without you, time is just flying. Today while I listened to your favorite songs, my eyes swam with tears. Miss you so much. Kids have grown up remarkably. I think you are watching us. It's been just one year since you left me…When can I be with you again?

This letter shows that after her husband's death, she felt a sense of emptiness all the time. The letter also shows that her husband's favorite music reminds her of the happy

hours shared with him. The rhythm of the music became lodged in her body as a good feeling. In the case of Wife, music was the main element of body memory, linking Wife and her late husband.

At the end of the letter, Wife asked her husband when she could be with him again. Her feelings of emptiness without her husband appear to influence her negatively and make her think about life in the other world instead of living here in this world. Wife's attitude is quite opposite to those of YDB and Ms. Unknown, who use their body memories with late family to work positively on their lives in this world. Wife likely relied a great deal on her husband when he was alive and her dependence on him was not strange given the social structure. Wife's case, however, makes me reluctant to jump to the conclusion that this new phenomenon of cyber memorial zone insinuates the emancipation of Korean women from conventional social norms built on male centered social system. Granting that women could acquire their own personal memorial space in cyber memorial zones, when memorial letters are sent to their late husbands, the letters mainly show women struggling to survive under the influence of the social norms.

Nevertheless, the discussion of cyber memorial zones as a space for women confirms the initial assumption that cyber memorial zones provide Korean women with the opportunity of abolishing some conventional funeral practices. Online Korean women can perform memorial services on behalf of whomever they want to without the restrictions of time and space. This applies to the case of a poster nicknamed "The Youngest One!" (TYO!).

TYO! lost her brother a few years ago. Like Jung-sun, TYO! contacted the funeral company that helped scatter his ashes at sea and found out that there was a

cyber memorial zone that the company maintained. Since her brother's death, she has

written more than 1,100 letters in this memorial zone. Because she wrote a letter

almost every day, and even three or four letters on some days, the entries serve as

memorial diaries. In an email interview, she told me how she feels when she writes a

memorial letter to her brother.

> This kind of Internet memorial culture helps me to soothe the sorrows
> of my mourning. [While writing,] I feel like talking to him, and he
> appears to be with me. Whenever and wherever Internet is connected, I
> can see him.

Because her memorial site was like a diary, it included the mundanities of her life and

other personal episodes. And she wrote the letters with colloquial style, which seemed

to reduce the estrangement between this world and the other world.

TYO! added that her brother, who died in a traffic accident, was young

and single. Because he died unmarried, TYO! thought that no one would plan and

oversee his memorial service. In addition, he died away from home, something that

should be avoided according to the Korean tradition. The circumstances surrounding

her brother's death made it a bad and more lamentable. As an office clerk, TYO! can

access the memorial zone and care for her late brother everyday, giving her some

release from the grief she feels. Without this opportunity to care for her brother, she

would continue in her life of *han*.

As the cases shown above, cyber memorial zones, as space for women, are

significant because women in Korean funeral culture are no longer marginalized

objects but have become active participants. Although the memorial zones are not a

perfect utopia that women can achieve complete emancipation, they certainly give a

woman a space to release her personal *han* and redeem herself. The next section

addresses how commercialization in Korea has influenced the individually oriented cyber memorial zone.

Individually-Oriented & Commercially-Driven Zones

The above examples of individually-oriented cyber memorial zones demonstrate that although the memorial zones in this category have distinctive characteristics, i.e., written to late family, or continually updated for a comparatively long time, few memorial zones that fall in a single category. As seen in the examples above, the four memorial zones of the individually oriented category are managed by a local government affiliate or by funeral companies for their own purposes. Although the memorial writings are individually oriented, individuals did not create the memorial zones, and if they did, they are very few now. While cyber memorial zones can provide people with space to release their individual *han,* the zones also offer space for commercial enterprises to promote their businesses or for the government to guide people in a certain direction. Therefore, memorial zones cannot be classified merely as oriented to the individual.

These findings -- particularly in the memorial zones that were managed by funeral companies -- illustrate that the contemporary shamanic inheritance, which allows individuals to release their *han* through memorial writings, has attracted funeral professionals and made these memorial writings become marketable. A funeral professional named Ki-sung told me that he utilized memorial writings as an "event" to promote a private cinerarium a few years ago. He said that before he joined the funeral industry, he was a wedding photographer and sometimes produced funeral ceremony videos. Ki-sung said that he realized when doing these videos that since the early 1990s, Korean funeral culture has changed into an event-driven culture.

Under these circumstances, he added, writing memorial letters offered an important vehicle through which the company can generate revenue.

> For the private cinerarium business, how to increase the numbers of charnel reservation is the key to the success of the business. When I suggested the event, I considered the usages of memorial writing zones as the potential source for promoting the company as well as generating profit. In other words, the main purpose of creating cyber memorial zones is to gain profit. The prospect and efficiency were considered at the same time.

The event of writing memorial letters became successful and many bereaved family members participated in the event particularly because until then, the idea of writing a memorial letter and posting it online was new, thereby attracting more attention from the bereaved. Ki-sung said that following his initial success many other private cineraria have sponsored similar events for other grieving family members. Ki-sung also confirmed that the individually-driven category of cyber memorial zones does not exist in isolation from the commercially-driven category.

Ki-sung's reflections about the event-driven aspect of the new funeral culture in Korea broadens this discussion to funeral companies' aggressive marketing strategies, which adorn commercially-driven cyber memorial zones. In addition to creating individual memorial writing zones, some funeral companies create memorial zones with fancy decorations designed to evoke a sense of reality so the bereaved feel more intimacy with their late family members. These cyber memorial zones often use cutting-edge web technologies, such as audio-visual effects, more than other memorial zones.

Pre-paid funeral companies, called *sangjo hoesa* in Korean, most frequently use such decorated and beautified cyber memorial zones to promote their businesses. The Korean term *sangjo* refers to interdependence or mutual aid and reflects the

communal ethos of the traditional Korean community. When village members encountered ceremonial occasions such as a coming of age ceremony, marriage, funeral, or ancestor worship, other members in the village cooperated with them in observing the milestones without difficulties. Based on the communal ethos, helpers from one day became the helped on another day, and vice versa. This traditional communal ethos waned, however, with industrialization and urbanization, but it remains vibrant in the rural areas. Now, the term *sangjo* has returned as a synonym for a prepaid funeral service company.

Drawing upon the traditional notion that *sangjo* implies village cooperation in the occasions of marriage and funeral, *sangjo hoesa* has developed various service products for marriage, funeral, and other occasions of life all together. In the case of funerals, the creation of cyber memorial zones represents one product of this funeral company. But of most interest was the marketing strategy of *sangjo hoesa*. Weddings and funerals typify two extremely different life ceremonies -- the former one of the happiest moments of life and the latter one of the saddest. However, for *sangjo hoesa*, these dramatic moments of life become the main sources for which it can offer its service. Furthermore, customers of *sangjo hoesa* can use their prepayments for any life event. For example, although customers may have originally started prepayments for the parents' impending funerals, they can divert the money they have paid for the wedding of their relatives, or the celebration of a baby's first birthday, and so on.

How can the service products of *sangjo hoesa* be so varied as to cover all the ceremonial occasions of life? Doesn't such an omnidirectional marketing strategy offend the customers of *sangjo hoesa*? A funeral specialist of a *sangjo hoesa* named Sun-chul offered an interesting response to the preceding questions.

> About 10 years ago, there were customers who complained that they disliked such a one-stop-shopping style of *sangjo hoesa.* But now, there are few. You know why? It is because of betterment of women's status in Korea. In other words, in the past, household affairs were what women should take care of no matter how laborious the work was. Particularly, catering for the party of ceremonial occasions in life, such as marriage, funeral, and ancestor worship, was the main responsibility of women. Now, with their improved status, they want to deal with these domestic tasks with ease and enjoy more free and comfortable time for their own sake. The omnidirectional marketing strategy of *sangjo hoesa* works extremely well for their purposes.

Sun-chul's account for *sangjo hoesa*'s marketing strategy as a direct outcome from the improved social status of women reflects the current of "eventizing" funeral culture in Korea, as Ki-sung insisted earlier. The term "eventize" here is marketing jargon used in Hollywood, meaning "to make an occurrence, such as the release of a book, movie, or video game" seemingly "momentous or exciting" (The IZE Have It, 2006). In the "eventized" funeral culture, the significance of meaning in the rituals surrounding death has decreased, while more attention and interest have focused on the ritual's marketing values. Furthermore, the observation that women's status has improved arises from women regaining rights, but rather from making life more convenient. Under these circumstances, the traditional notion of *sangjo*, which as communal ethos in Korea emphasized values of interdependence and mutual cooperation, and coped with the difficulties in various occasions of life, turns it into a marketing brand for funeral companies that eventize various occasions of life.

B *sangjo hoesa* offers the most decorated and beautified cyber memorial zone and wedding ceremony zones compared to other *sangjo*. B *sangjo hoesa* points out specifically that a cyber memorial zone includes a digital photo album and video of funeral services, a memorial letter section, and a family history photo zone for the survivors. B *sangjo hoesa*'s service, lavish though it is, demonstrates that the cyber

memorial zone is ready-made instead of uniquely tailored. For example in the case of funeral service videos, videographers generally follow a sample format for the production. Therefore, other than the portrait of the deceased and the photos of the bereaved, each video cannot help but have similar angles, transitions, digital effects. Additionally, several piano pieces performed by popular musicians provided background music in these ready-made cyber memorial zones. But these pieces of music have little relevance to Korean funeral culture. They are neither religious hymns nor traditional funeral tunes. Mainly these tunes create a romantic mood for young people as they meet in urban cafes or restaurants. Even though the company promoted this cyber memorial zone as a customer tailored space for the bereaved, it is in actuality a mass production of death ritual.

Interestingly, these cyber memorial zones offer little evidence that mourners regularly use these memorial zones. Each zone has a "chief mourner" to serve as an administrator, but few of these zones show any entries from visitors, either the bereaved or mere cyber mourners. Most of these zones' memorial letter section contains only one letter, written by a B *sangjo hoesa* representative not the bereaved. The individually-oriented memorial zones discussed above undergo periodic updates, although infrequent, by mourners. From this finding, one can infer that cyber memorial zones offered as part of a funeral service product do not draw the attention of cyber mourners, no matter how much they are decorated and beautified.

Jung-suk, a funeral industry professional and a cyber memorial zone expert in Korea, said that such ornamental appearance but poor usage of commercially driven cyber memorial zones results from the funeral companies' shallow understanding of the Korean ethos about funeral and memorial culture.

For now, writing a memorial letter is the best deal in a cyber memorial zone. Adding to memorial writings, I think that users are fine at the level of uploading photos and application of basic digital effects. But in spite of decoration and beautification of the memorial zones, altars inside cyberspace cannot be substituted for those outside cyber space for now. The Confucian tradition is still deeply rooted in our life. It would take at least 50 years for altars inside cyberspace to become acceptable.

My field research in Korea supported Jung-suk's argument. At the beginning of my research into cyber memorial writing zones first, especially commercially-driven zones, I assumed that these zones were very popular with the consideration of dynamics constructed in Korean cybercultures. Adding to that, I thought that decoration and beautification of the zones reflected popularity among people. But the field research in Korea shows that memorial writing is, for now, the most common and popular format that the survivors use in cyber memorial zones for their releasing sorrow and pain.

Such decorated memorial zones remind me of the notions of "high touch" and "high tech" (Naisbitt, J, Naisbitt, N & Philips, D., 1999). While creating problems for the high tech world, the Naisbitts and Philips turn their attention to the discord of inhuman and consumption-motivated characteristics of "high tech" and the yearning for "high touch" of human beings who are alienated from human touch by high tech. The yearning for "high touch" extends beyond the mere retrospective desire for "human touch," but refers to human beings' more subjective engagement in the choosing and using of high tech, thereby producing adaptable touch in a high tech world. Korean funeral companies apparently recognize the importance of creating a high touch environment in cyber memorial zones and expect to achieve their goal of more profit from the usages of web based digital technology. My research, however,

shows that to date the attempts of Korean funeral companies to capitalize on this cyber culture have yet to generate a pleasing result.

<div align="center">Celebrity- & Commercially-Driven Zones</div>

Celebrity-driven cyber memorial zones were established for those who want to memorialize late popular celebrities, such as late singers, actors, broadcasters, and so forth. Given the influence of media and celebrities in Korea now, the proliferation of celebrity driven cyber memorial zones comes as no surprise. Like sites in the individually-oriented category, celebrity-driven zones evade classification into a single category. Although these zones seek to remember the late celebrities, they share the characteristics of individually-oriented or commercially-driven categories. Moreover, the distinctive mark of the socio-politically oriented category, namely the venting process of the collective *han*, exist as well in these memorial zones.

Kil Eun-jung Memorial Zone

Kil Eun-jung, once a famous singer and a host of various TV/radio programs in Korea, died of cancer January, 2005. To the last moment, her fight against cancer was of interest to the public because she stayed on the air until just 2 days before she died. Kil Eun-jung kept her chin up to the last minute, enduring the horrible pain of cancer without losing hope and in the course touching the heart of the public. Even though she passed away more than a year ago, memorial letters from cyber mourners have kept updating her cyber memorial zone. Her life for the 10 years before she died seemed a stream of suffering, including divorce and the fight against cancer, but she turned her eyes to the bright aspects of her life to the last moment, which encouraged the public to visit her memorial zones.

The following is an excerpt of a diary entry that Eun-jung wrote a few days before she died.

> Recently, I had more difficulties in reading and writing.
> Doctors told me that cancerous cells moved to disturb a part of my optic nerve, but I don't care. Everything now depends on my power of mind and spiritual strength over body. What they can do for me is only to inject morphine and give me a similar kind of pain-killing drugs.

In this diary entry, she certainly knew that the last moment was near but tried not to lose hope. In her cyber memorial zone, a fan nicknamed "raindrops" wrote, "I remember this time a year ago when you suffered severe pain. But I also remember what you said despite those pains." In addition, as a longtime singer and radio show host for a long time, many memorial letters in this zone include the laments of fans longing to hear her voice again.

Above all, an interesting characteristic of this memorial zone is that it has been created and maintained to promote a private cinerarium. *C Park*, where Eun-jung's zone is located, is well known for its use of active marketing strategies to lure celebrity remains. In fact, the more famous the late celebrities are, the better they are placed in the front page of the company's website. As of January, 2006, the web portal of the company included links to Kil Eun-jung's zone and that of Lee Eun-ju, a popular Korean actress who killed herself in early 2005. The remains of these two celebrities were placed in *C Park*. In addition to these two women, *C Park*'s front page contains links to other celebrities, including parents or grandparents of famous actors, the wife of a famous singer, the wife of a former congressman, and so on, on the top of which a consolation banner is posted, saying "we pray for the souls of the celebrities and their families here in *C Park*, where mourners continue to visit."

Kil Eun-jung's memorial zone in *C Park*'s portal offers a link to her fan page created while she was still alive by her management company. The management company's fan page includes her hit songs, her diary, photos, and so on, where her fans could feel her breathe. Ostensibly this site is a fan café for the late Kil Eun-jung, but more likely it is a promotion site where the production company can continue to sell her albums. "Oceanangel," a nickname of one of Eun-jung's fans, deplored the tendency to commercialize her memorial zone. Oceanangel wrote the following letter one day.

> Last night I was woken up by a loud sound.
> A thunderstorm was hitting the window of my house.
> Though it did not take a long time, I was so anguished to the heavy shower. When can we human beings be detached from desire and remain aloof?

This impressive letter encompasses many stories surrounding the establishment of the memorial zone. The phrases "detached from desire" and "remain aloof" in particular drew my attention. Once contacted, Oceanangel elaborated on the meaning of her letter. As I expected, the letter reflected her anguish about the memorial zone. She said:

> When Eun-jung was alive, she got a lot of heartache from those around her. She was involved in some scandals and her name was on the news. Because of this, as her dying wish, she asked not to make anything under her name. But in the name of memory, people satisfied their desire…and became too greedy… Seeing this, I was so frustrated. Eun-jung wanted to live and die in peace. Why couldn't they leave her as she pleased? When I heard the thunderstorm that night, I thought of it as Eun-jung's heartbreaking tears.

In spite of my cajoling, Oceanangel declined to elaborate any more. She asked me to understand, noting that if she gave me more details, it would hurt Eun-jung again. In the face of Oceanangel's considerate behavior, I stopped asking for more information. From her comments, it was clear that Kil Eun-jung's memorial zone did not represent

what she or other fans wanted. As Oceanangel pointed out, it was used to gratify some people who are alive.

<div align="center">Celebrity Driven- & Individually-Oriented Zones</div>

Kim Hwan-sung's Memorial Zone

While I classified Kil Eun-jung's memorial zone as celebrity- and commercially-driven, Kim Hwan-sung's memorial zone, one of the oldest zones on the web, falls more easily into the individually-driven category. Kim Hwan-sung made his first stage appearance in 1997 as a member of *NRG*, a male vocal & dance group and became a teen idol. In June of 2000, at the zenith of *NRG*'s popularity, Kim died unexpectedly of an acute respiratory infection.

Kim Hwan-sung's many fans were dumfounded and grief stricken by his sudden death. After his body was cremated and his remains were laid to rest in the Seoul public memorial house, thousands of memorial letters lamenting his death arrived in his cyber memorial zone, located in The Post Office in Heaven. Two years later, a separate and independent cyber memorial zone named Kimhwansung.com was established, linked to his original memorial zone in The Post Office in Heaven.

I was able to contact several fans of Kim Hwan-sung, who posted memorial letters. All of them were women, and some were high school students. Young celebrities like Hwan-sung often become an idol to teenagers, so memorial writings to Hwan-sung from his fans might not be surprising. The fans' continued writing since his death, however, presented a different situation. "Liar," the nickname of a college student in her 20s, has idolized Hwan-sung since junior high school when she would write him a letter before taking an exam, promising to get a good grade with "I'll do my best in order to see you smile after the exam." Liar continued, "Strangely enough,

by doing this, I could get a good grade. That is, in order to keep the promise to him, I studied hard."

Liar continued to visit the memorial zone whenever she encountered difficulties in her life. She wrote him a letter, "Hwan-sung brother, please help me in heaven." If everything went well, she logged into the zone again and left him a thank you note. Liar added that she used to keep a diary, which allowed her to have regular interaction with Hwan-sung. In cyberspace, including the memorial zone, she can relax when facing difficulties. Liar's experience in the cyber memorial zone bears similarities to those of Jung-sun, Ji-kyung, and Mun-kyu in the individually-oriented memorial zones. Liar's interaction partner was a celebrity, not a family member, but her interaction with Hwan-sung shared similarities with those directed at family members in that she asked her discourse partner for help from heaven to deal with her real, earthly problems. Turnoff, another teenage Hwan-sung fan, related a somewhat similar but still different experience in a cyber memorial zone. One day she wrote the following line to Hwan-sung.

> It's been a long time. So busy. But I thought of you every day. The busier I was, the more desperately I thought of you. The more difficulties I had, the more so.

I wondered why the busier she was, the more she thought of him. Turnoff, a dedicated Catholic, told me that Hwan-sung became her alternative object of worship, replacing God. When faced with troubles, she called for help from Hwan-sung, not from God. She added that the replacement of God with Hwan-sung was possible because of her belief in the soul as a Catholic.

> While writing a memorial letter, I feel him watching me. Yes…feeling…Although I did not seek for a soul, I have believed in it since I was young…maybe that's why…

As shown in the experiences of both Liar and Turnoff, Kim Hwan-sung's memorial zones are very personal even though the object of conversation is a celebrity. Fans created and managed these sites, not funeral companies. In that sense, the zones differ from those of Kil Eun-jung. While positing this, Hwan-sung's memorial zones appear celebrity-driven and individually-oriented. Although Hwan-sung has been dead for five years, his fans continue to post memorial letters to these two zones.

<div align="center">Socio-Politically-Oriented Zones</div>

Socio-politically-oriented and individually-oriented cyber memorial zones differ primarily in the respect that the former has no association with commercially-driven zones. Because socio-politically oriented zones derive from participants' free will, seek no financial profit, and deal directly with socio-political issues, the zones lack the fancy facades and decoration that mark the individually-oriented zones sponsored by funeral companies. Instead, in the socio-politically oriented zones, declaring issues clearly takes precedence. In addition, most memorial letters in these zones are written to the deceased involved in tragic occurrences while persons writing letters in individual-oriented zones address them to their late family members.

Another interesting difference between these two categories is the continuance of memorial writings. More often than not, socio-political zones become vigorously activated on the occurrence of an incident. Hundreds or thousands of memorial writings appear in these zones over a very short time period, which indicates the intensity of the public's response to the event. This intensity does not last, however, and as time goes by, these intense reactions and heightened attention drop drastically. Years after the event, few visit these memorial zones, most of which

appear deserted. On the contrary, individually-oriented zones continue to receive new memorial letters for a long time. Like commercially-driven memorial zones, some of the socio-political memorial zones rely on audio-visual materials, but they focus on delivering the reality that happened in the occurrences. I explored three socio-political cyber memorial zones in this research, which include Hyo-soon & Mi-sun memorial zones, Kim Sun-il memorial zones, and Dague subway disaster memorial zone.

Hyo-soon & Mi-sun Memorial Zones

Hyo-soon & Mi-sun , two 14-year girls, were hit and killed by a U.S. armored car in June 2002. The memorial zones established after their deaths sought to mobilize prayers for their repose after their tragic death. Their miserable death and the Korean government's lukewarm attitude to the death infuriated the Korean people. With the creation of many cyber memorial zones for the two girls, memorial letters flooded these sites. One memorial zone named *Memorial Gathering for Hyo-soon & Mi-sun* in the Daum web portal bears portraits of Hyo-soon & Mi-sun on its front page.

In December 2005, this zone included about 1400 memorial letters, most written between June 2002 and May 2003. The missives reflect the tension and increased attentiveness of the Korean people to these deaths at that time. In the letters posted in Hyo-soon & Mi-sun memorial zones around June 2002, the collective *han* of feeling sorry for their tragic death was poured into the zones. Many young mourners were especially sorry for Hyo-soon & Mi-sun because when they were brutally killed, young Koreans were too excited by the Korean soccer team's advancement in the 2002 FIFA World Cup to notice their deaths. A young woman, nicknamed "Rain & Snow," wrote:

> So sorry...so sorry… cannot but be sorry… The day you were killed…I
> really did not know you trudged along the way where you could not be

> returned, with your hope brutally shattered by a US armored car. At that time, I just enjoyed watching people who chanted "*dae-han-min-kuk* (great Korea)." Yes… I did not pay attention to the story about you. So sorry… forgive me my apathy. I will never forget the meaning of your death.

As the incident developed, the zone mirrors the grief of people in a small and weak country that has no jurisdiction over the U.S. soldiers stationed in their territory. The mourners ranged from teenage students to middle aged housewives and businessmen, which suggested that Hyo-soon & Mi-sun's death became the collective *han* of most Koreans. A nickname "Yanki," slang for the Westerners in Korea, sent them the following letter.

> Because we are powerless, the superpowers despise us.
> We have to build up our national strength, not to be ignored.
> This kind of tragedy should not happen again….
> Dear Hyo-soon & Mi-sun,
> If you are born again in this country, we should be a superpower.
> And no American Forces anymore.

In November 2002, national anger reached its peak when a U.S. military court acquitted the two soldiers involved in this tragic incident of negligent homicide charges. The web zones swelled with memorial letters pouring out resentment about the injustice of the acquittal. In addition, these memorial letters showed the broad consensus that the Korea-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) unfairly advantaged the U.S., making an acquittal unavoidable. A writer nicknamed "Loveangel" noted:

> We hardly say anything. When the two girls were killed, we only chanted the shameful term of *dae-han-min-kuk* in vain. When the mass media gaggled that Korea is the pillar of Asia and the hope of the region, the two lambs of God were sacrificed. Under SOFA, we allowed the two soldiers to live, who deserve to die. Shame on us.

From this reasoning, the Hyo-soon & Mi-sun memorial zones became the public forum to discuss the unequal relationship between Korea and the U.S., and

furthermore, to criticize the reckless foreign policy of the U.S. Finally, the efforts to release the collective *han* of people went beyond the boundaries of cyber memorial zones and allowed a million Koreans to hold a massive rally in December 2002, where they mourned the death of the two young girls and demanded the revision of the unfair SOFA. This represented a clear moment that the discursive formation of death grew into a political discourse through the will of the people.

Kim Sun-Il's Memorial Zones

Another socio-political cyber memorial zone centered around Kim Sun-Il. Kim Sun-il was a Korean worker who went to Iraq, dreaming of missionary work in Arab nations, but in June 2004 an Iraqi rebel group abducted and killed him. The rebels targeted Kim Sun-il in an effort to obstruct the Korean troop dispatch to Iraq. Hoping to intensify pressure on the Korean government, the rebels videotaped Kim's statement and released it to the public along with the threat to kill him if the Korean government insisted on dispatching troops to Iraq. Kim's heartbreaking, televised appeal shocked Koreans. Kim cried and screamed that he did not want to die and the Korean government should not send its troops to Iraq. In spite of the public's demand to reconsider dispatching troops to save Kim's life, the government refused to abandon the planned deployment. One day after President Roh officially rejected the rebel's demands, Kim's body was found beheaded.

Koreans were outraged again and denounced the irresponsibility and inability of their government to protect its nationals in danger. In a way to release another collective *han* of the Korean populace, cyber memorial zones appeared, lamenting Kim Sun-il's death. After Sun-il's death, thousands of memorial letters for him

arrived in the memorial zones. In the zone named *Kim Sun-Il*, a writer nicknamed "I am Sorry" dropped a line.

> So Sorry for not being able to protect your life. So anguished to hear that you were killed. I've never seen you, but I was so sorry and sorrowful that I cried bitterly.

In another memorial zone entitled *People's Alliance against Dispatching Troops*, a young man nicknamed "Shamed," noted that it was the most shameful day in his life.

> Today is the most dishonorable day since I was born.
> I pray for the repose of your soul. We have to protect our young men with our hands so that such incidents don't happen again.

While posting memorial letters, Koreans again complained that the Korean government had no choice but to send off the troops under the pressure of the U.S. government. As with the incident of Hyo-soon & Mi-sun , people blamed the unfair relationship between Korea and the U.S. for the death of Sun-il. As the people's linkage of the unfair U.S.-Korea relationship to the deaths of Hyo-soon & Mi-sun and Kim Sun-il as well as the title of the zone *People's Alliance against Dispatching Troops* suggest, Sun-il's death catalyzed an expansion of the discourse "against war" or "against dispatching troops." Even with the criticism from the public, the Korean government executed the planned deployment of troops to Iraq, and in December 2005, the National Assembly approved the plan to extend the stay of the troops one more year. When the mass media reported the government intended to extend the stay of the troops, a mourner visited the *Kim Sun-Il* zone and left a memo: "It seems that we start forgetting you. The government will not withdraw our troops. I don't want to make your death worthless."

Adding to this, the memorial zones for Kim Sun-il include a more religious feature, specifically showing a Christian characteristic in comparison to sites for Hyo-

soon & Mi-sun . Sun-il was described as a dedicated Christian who went to Iraq with a dream of preaching the Gospel in the Arab world. Many Christians were among the cyber mourners at his site, accounting for the Christian feelings in the zones. "Onemind," who is a dedicated Christian in her 50s, recalled her experience in Kim Sun-il's cyber memorial zone. When she heard the news of Kim Sun-il's death, she could not believe it -- particularly because Sun-il went to Iraq on a mission for God. Onemind wanted to know why he had to die, so she prayed every night after work. While writing a memorial letter, she continued praying. One day she prayed to God for an answer, started crying, and then could not keep back her tears. After crying for a while, she could hear God's voice telling her:

> Sun-il died for me. Everyone eventually dies in various ways. He was beheaded and received attention from the world, through which my will could be known to more people. Who else could achieve a better missionary work than he did? Sun-il was used for me. Don't be so sad. Dying for mission work was not bad.

Through this experience, Onemind overcame her sorrow and pain and understood God's will better than before. Onemind's experience is not typical among other cyber mourners, but given the Christian bent of this memorial zone, it comes as no surprise.

Dague Subway Disaster Memorial Zones

The two previous cyber memorial zones focused on the collective *han* of people caused by the unfair relationship between Korea and the U.S., the site devoted to the Dague subway disaster, by contrast, helped sooth the collective *han* of the victims of a tragedy that could have been prevented if the government had exercised more caution when managing the social safety system. In February 2003, almost 200 people were killed when a mentally retarded man set fire to a subway car in Dague. According to the police investigation, the serious malfunction of the emergency

evacuation facilities and the irresponsibility of administrative officials cost many innocent people their lives. Shocked by the number of victims, Koreans were further frustrated and outraged by the many losses that the government's failure to institute a risk management system had caused.

After the incident, in individually-oriented zones like The Post Office in Heaven, mourners left memorial letters to soothe the souls of the innocent victims. But this means of mourning proved dissatisfied for the bereaved, so separate cyber memorial zones were established for the bereaved to grieve. In these memorial zones, not only survivors of the victims but also other cyber mourners gathered to offer their condolences to the deceased and the grieving. The official memorial zone created by the victims' commission is still updated by cyber mourners.

Mi-kyung, a college student in Dague, where the incident happened, said that she wrote a letter because she did not want people to forget the tragedy.

> The candle light seems to burn out.
> I am afraid that our attention and awareness are burning out like a candle.

Mi-kyung added that whenever a tragedy occurs, the media gave it too much attention in the beginning but eventually lost interest in the event. Intense media coverage had never helped to solve the fundamental problems that we had experienced in the past. For Mi-kyung, the cyber memorial zone is a good place to raise such questions because it does not involve face-to-face communication. She also pointed out that although cyber memorial zones could provide cyber mourners with a forum to discuss timely issues and confirm the dynamics of the people's power, it could not last long.

A graduate school student in her 30s nicknamed "Moonriver" wrote only three words, "Please, leave peacefully." I asked her what she meant. She answered,

> There is nothing more painful than burning to death. Indeed, it is said that the hell has a flame hollow.
> To those who left this world full of *han,*
> I could not say anything but "leave peacefully*,*" because dying in that way is so painful.

Although the note was very short, Moonriver acknowledged the *han* of the innocent victims who left this world in such a tragic incident. Like Mi-kyung and Moonriver, cyber mourners in this zone expressed their anger about the lack of a risk management system. In addition, a high school student sent a letter to console those whose bodies were not found because the fire totally consumed their bodies. The girl, "Silver Beads," told me that seeing survivors desperately hoping to find the bodies of their relatives was heartbreaking. She said:

> A few years ago, there was another tragedy in which many preschool children were burnt to death. I remember a scene of the news that the parents of the children cried, shouting that they could not find the bodies of the children. It was such a shocking and unforgettable scene to me.

Silver Beads was not sure whether the souls of the victims whose bodies were lost in the fire could hear her wishes to console them, but at least she could give voice to her feelings through a memorial letter for the victims. Writing a letter to them, which was sometimes accompanied by crying, helped her gain emotional control, she said.

From the discussion above, the Dague subway disaster memorial zones became the space for releasing not only the *han* of the victims, but also of the survivors who do not know how many times they will have to tolerate the grave aftermath of rapid modernization and industrialization.

Socio-Politically-Oriented- & Celebrity-Driven Zones

Jung Eun-im Memorial Zones

Jung Eun-im was a famous radio/television show host who died in a traffic

accident at the age of 36. She started her career in 1992 hosting a radio show called

"FM Film Music", which made her popular. In that sense, she was a celebrity.

However, Eun-im differed from other celebrities. She broke from the practices of

previous hosts, who had remained mostly apolitical and indifferent to various political

and social issues. She became actively engaged in controversial socio-political issues.

Eun-im would begin the show with controversial statements, i.e., that the

government's house demolition order of the destitute should be stopped, or that she

would pray for the repose of innocent Koreans in Cheju Island, who were massacred

by our army under the name of ideology. She also played a famous *minjoong gayo*, or

resistance song, entitled "A March for Comrades." The more she rebelled against

social norms, the more her popularity grew.

However, Eun-im had to leave the show for no known reason. Many

suspected that she could not continue her show under the pressure from authoritative

powers. Although brutal military regimes lost their power at that time, Korean society

still suffered in the aftermath of tyrannical regimes. The fans of the show demanded

the radio station bring her come back, but their request was ignored. From this view,

her departure from the show could be seen as a result of power tension in the

transitional period from military-led autocracy to people-led democracy. Jung Eun-im

finally came back as the host of the show, a midnight program, in fall 2003. The

show ended the following year because of budget cuts.

When she started the show again, she created and maintained her personal

blog in the Cyworld web portal. There she interacted with her fans, discussing and

sharing political and social issues. In this blog, named *Eun-im's Attic*, she made

comments on controversial social issues, like the following:

> As soon as I came to the office, a shocking comment from a colleague
> waited for me. "How foolish the Assemblymen are in speaking up
> against dispatching troops to Iraq!!" The term, "national interest"
> seems to have a strong power. In front of the national interest, the act
> against dispatching troops becomes foolish.

Eun-im implies that national interests should not align themselves with

supporters of the unjustified war. The alignment may provide Korea with an

economic advantage in the short term, but eventually Korea will face the criticism that

it volunteered as a puppet of the U.S. in the name of national economic interests. Eun-

im wrote this comment three weeks before the fatal accident in June 2004. After her

death, many of her fans replied to this comment. Among the replies, one woman said,

"What you left behind made me miss you more and more. Please have peace in

heaven." A man replied, "Why did God need to take such a righteous woman with

him so early?" A young woman dropped a line, " I do not want to cry anymore, Sis.

There are so many people who love you. Cheers!!" As seen here, one unique quality

of Eun-im's zone lies in her fans' perfect sympathy with her aspirations for social

justice or better treatment for the helpless, the weak, and the abandoned.

Another distinguishing feature of this zone is that in the wake of her death,

her personal blog and her other cyber fan cafes became cyber memorial zones as her

fans continued to post memorial letters on the sites. After the accident, Eun-im was in

a coma for three months before she died. When the accident was reported, fans

flocked to her homepage, praying for her fast recovery. A fan nicknamed Brian, who

listened to her film music show as a high school student and is now a doctor, also

wished her a full recovery. He wrote that he learned empathy and passion for the

world from her. Like Brian, many letters show that Eun-im's pure sensitivity and aspiration for social justice with music touched them and made them miss earnestly her.

In addition, Eun-im personally cared for the blog when she was alive. Fans consider the zone as the other Eun-im or the incarnation of Eun-im. While visiting the blog, they can hear songs like "Chokin' Kind" by Joss Stone and "The Closest Thing to Craze" by Katie Melua. And fans posted Eun-im's photos or the compressed files of her programs so that they can see and feel her in the zone although she is no longer in this world. Hey-kyung, a dedicated fan of Eun-im, said to me:

> This is the space where Eun-im and I can be together.
> Whenever I missed her insanely or faced difficulties, I logged into her blog, as I seek for God when I need him. I don't think that my relationship with her is over due to her death. I can still see and feel her. Although she's gone, she's still alive in me.

Because Jung Eun-im genuinely dealt with various controversial issues in Korean society during her broadcasts, fans do not seek for her the plausible image as a famous person, even though she was a celebrity, but they attempt to share in her love for the world. Given this, although her cyber memorial zone appears a celebrity-driven one, it certainly incorporates socio-politically oriented characteristics.

So far, I have outlined the characteristics of different categories of cyber memorial zones and classified them into four basic categories: the individual-oriented zone, socio-politically-oriented zone, commercially-driven zone, and celebrity-driven zone. More often than not, each memorial zone shares some characteristics with other memorial zones, and the discussion in this chapter has focused on the modified categories of the memorial zones. In examining these zones, I have looked the two ways that we construct inherited shamanic dynamics. First, when individual *han* is

released through writing a memorial letter, the dynamics of shamanic inheritance are constructed. Second, they are also constructed when the collective *han* is released in socio-political oriented zones. An interesting corollary is that commercial interests attempt to make the best use of such dynamics of cyber memorial zones to increase profits.

Ostensibly there seems to be little relevance between dynamics of shamanic inheritance and commercial forces constructed in cyber memorial zones. In the Korean cybercultures, however, the populace participated in cyber cultural practices based on dynamics derived from shamanic inheritance, and such active involvement helped them, in some degree, to be aware of recent commercialization trends in cyberspace built on a neo-liberal paradigm. Following this reasoning, one can posit the tensions that exist between the two dynamics. The former is derived from the earnest desire that the downtrodden populace has aspired to for a long time, and the latter is market driven commercialized forces, which are in accordance with the recent emergence of the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea.

As memorial letters in socio-political zones demonstrated, dynamics of shamanic inheritance influenced the participants' aspirations of a communal relationship. Hyo-soon & Mi-sun memorial zones, Kim Sun-Il's memorial zones, and Dague Subway Disaster memorial zones evidently contained the dynamics of these zones that allowed the participants to release the collective *han* of the public, inspired the aspirations of communal relationship, and provided a forum to defy unjust and inappropriate government policies. When cyber mourners in Hyo-soon & Mi-sun memorial zones gathered outside cyberspace and demanded the revision of the unfair SOFA, it was apparent that the discourse that had been isolated within cyberspace had

spread and created a wider and more powerful form of public discourse through the dynamics of shamanic inheritance.

The discourse of anti-neo liberal paradigm had not yet taken root among the Korean populace. A small number of intellectuals have raised questions about the government policy to adopt the paradigm without wavering, but neo-liberal paradigm remains too intricate and complicated for the public to comprehend it with ease. However, if Koreans realized the problems with the neo-liberal paradigm, which affects recent commercialization trends in Korean cybercultures, and recognized how the paradigm could threaten the foundation of their lives, the tension of struggle between these forces in cybercultures -- dynamics of shamanic inheritance and commercialization forces -- would become evident.

Here I need to pay full attention to the distinctive dynamics of shamanic inheritance as well as the commercialized forces constructed in cyber memorial zones. In doing so, I must articulate various dynamics not only in cyber memorial zones but also in cybercultures in Korea as a whole appropriately. With that said, in the following chapter I will explore the notion of digital spirituality and its characteristics, while discussing various constructions of digital spirituality in cyber memorial zones, and pondering power tensions between constructed digital spirituality and governmentality.

CHAPTER 5. EXPLORING CONSTRUCTION OF DIGITAL SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality and Digital Spirituality

For a better understanding of the various dynamics and power tensions in the Korean cyber memorial zones, more elaboration on the dynamics of shamanic inheritance in relation to conventional understanding of spirituality is needed. The term "digital spirituality" refers to a new dimension of spiritual dynamics that is constructed when people are engaged in cyber memorial zones. Considering that a cyber memorial zone is an apparatus of Korean cybercultures, the notion of digital spirituality can provide an instrumental tool to explore new dimensions of spiritual dynamics constructed not only in cyber memorial zones but also in the Korean cybercultural context as a whole.

The dynamics of shamanic inheritance constructed in cyber memorial zones go beyond the boundary of conventional understanding of spirituality. The dynamics in cyber memorial zones are constructed nonlinearly, immanently, contextually, and relationally. Conventional understanding of spirituality in the West, in contrast, has focused on the lineal and hierarchical relationship of higher beings and human beings, limited strictly to religious usage and to Christianity in particular. From this view, spirituality is described as "how people relate their beliefs about God in Jesus Christ to their core values and then express these beliefs and values in spiritual practices and also in how they form social and religious communities and relate to social and cultural realities" (Sheldrake, 2001, p.53). This view does not differentiate religious faith from spirituality.

However, in the mid-twentieth century, new religious trends emerged in which people attempted to seek the meaning of spirituality and to perform spiritual

practices outside of the institutionalized religious context. Wuthnow (1998) calls this new trend the "spirituality of seeking," describing the conventional view of spirituality as the "spirituality of dwelling." The former implies that spirituality could be constructed beyond such sacred places as church, but the latter does not accept such a deviated interpretation of spirituality.

The trend of "spirituality of seeking" resulted from the inclination to reinterpret of the concept of spirit in a way that separates it from the faith of systemized religions. Foucault's (1972) concept of spirit represents the trend of pursuing multiple meanings of spirituality. For Foucault, the concept of spirit:

> enables us to establish between the simultaneous or successive phenomena of a given period a community of meanings, symbolic links, an interplay of resemblance and reflexion…[it] allows the sovereignty of collective consciousness to emerge as the principal of unity and explanation (Foucault, 1972, p. 22).

In this passage, Foucault insists that the discursive formations of spirit allowed people to purse "the principle of unity and explanation." When the notion of spirit was systemized as a universalized principle through discursive practices, it became a disciplinary system of knowledge that was considered to be the everlasting truth.

At this point, Griffin's (1988) explanation of spirituality attracts my attention because, from his view, the distance between higher beings and human beings appears closer, thereby being immanent. Griffin refers to spirituality in the present society as a "naturalistic panentheism…[in which] the world is present in deity and deity is present in the world" (1988, p. 17). In addition, he deemed that it is possible to interpret transcendental beings from the view of panentheism when human beings are aware of the capability of the self. That is, as people are aware of self, the sense of distance between human beings and deity becomes faint. Griffin's postulation appears

to be that, in contemporary life, people recognize their potential to associate with higher beings so that they can find sacredness and spirituality in their normal and secular lives.

Griffin's interpretation of spirituality can be considered in relation to the notion of "practice-oriented spirituality" (Wuthnow, 1998). According to Wuthnow (1998a), the concept of spirituality of seeking "[provides a] more orderly, disciplined and focused approach to the sacred," while practice-oriented spirituality "emphasiz[es] the importance of making a deliberate attempt to relate to the sacred" (p. 854). With spiritual practice, people can "cultivate a deep spirituality rather than being influenced by their moods, circumstances, or exposure to constantly changing ideas" (Wuthnow, 1998a, p. 854). Traditionally, the attempt to associate with sacredness was considered impossible; therefore, practicing spirituality was unfeasible. These two realms—the spiritual realm in which higher beings reside and the secular realm in which human beings live—were deemed as completely separate and unable to coexist. At this point, the question is what motivates people to associate with the sacred and how they cultivate spirituality.

Griffin's exposition about the self hints at the answer. When people are aware of the capability of the self to associate with the sacred, spirituality can be practiced. Awareness of the potential of the self comes from understanding the view of naturalistic panentheism, according to which the divine being is in all beings and all beings are in the divine being. In this view, the divine being and all beings are integrated and cannot be considered discretely. The divine being is no more considered to exist hierarchically in a different realm but can be sought after in everyday life.

In the context of computer-mediated ritual (CMR), the views of Griffin and Wuthnow can help to explain the notion of digital spirituality and its relevance to the dynamics of shamanic inheritance in cyber memorial zones and in Korean cybercultures as a whole. As Fernback (2002) observes, CMR, based on computer-mediated communication (CMC) technology, is a "contemporary, technological ritual where users seek a communal experience in the placeless realm of cyberspace" (p. 260). In defining CMR, Fernback regards cyberspace as "the placeless realm. This view of cyberspace can be further developed with Benedikt's (1991) elaboration.

While counting on Karl Popper's framework of *World 1, World2*, and *World 3*, Benedikt considers cyberspace as "nothing more, or less, than the latest sign in the evolution of *World 3* [that] is the world of objective, real, and public structures which are the not-necessarily-intentional products of the minds of living creatures, [and] are purely informational" (pp. 3-4). That is, *World 3* provides structural continuity for *World 1*, the material world, and *World 2*,the world of consciousness. However, Benedikt insists that cyberspace will not "replace the earlier elements of *World 3* [but] displace them." (p. 4). By arguing this, Benedikt attempts to show that cyberspace is not a realm completely separated from real world. Cyberspace is the realm of structural continuity, which is the placeless realm. Like this, cyberspace as the placeless realm can be interpreted as spaceless-space with obscured inside and outside boundaries. The conventional division of cyberspace and real space is inappropriate to explain continuous flow and flux; instead it will be referred to as "inside and outside of cyberspace."

Inside and outside of cyberspace becomes the "Body without Organs (BwO)" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest that the BwO is

"made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only by intensities [and] is matter that occupies space to a given degree…corresponding to the intensities produced" (p. 153). The notion of intensities of the BwO provides another look for understanding the characteristics of inside and outside cyber space. Built on the notion of intensities in the BwO, these two spaces become the plane of consistency, where they have the same attributes of intensities.

Additionally, the BwO does not refer to "an empty body stripped of organs, but a body upon which that which serves as organs...is distributed according to crowd phenomena…in the form of molecular multiplicities" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 30). The BwO is seen as nothingness, on the one hand but as a body full of molecular multiplicities on the other hand. The process of formation and decay of intensities on plane of consistency occur in irregular, alternate, but consistent ways. In this sense, the territory of inside and outside cyberspace is obscured. They are either fixed, territorialized, or based on flexible and constant alteration of "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization"; neither can easily confirm the real territory.

Deleuze and Guattari identify such reiterations of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the BwO as *Tao*, or "a field of immanence" (1987, p. 157). These concepts of Deleuze and Guattari help us to understand different aspects of digital spirituality construction and therefore need more elaborations. Above all, the concept of the *Tao* describes operative forces of *yin* and *yang*. Given that the BwO and *Tao* are regarded as the same, inside and outside of cyber space remain the continuum of operative forces of yin and yang. The characteristic of the continuum is:

> the formation of a circuit of intensities between female and male
> energy, with the woman playing the role of the innate or instinctive
> force (Yin) stolen by or transmitted to the man in such a way that the
> transmitted force of the man (Yang) in turn becomes innate, all the

more innate: an augmentation of powers (Deleuze and Guattari, p. 1987, 157).

Taoism is one of the Eastern religious and philosophical systems. Bowker's (1997) description of the *Tao* is understood as "the flow of streams through valley into a river into the sea" (pp. 952-953). Deleuze and Guattari used the term *Tao* cosmologically and metaphysically to find an alternative description of God. The *Tao* as discussed here is based on the illustration of the concept of immanent cause in Spinoza's philosophy. From the view of Spinoza, when a cause is immanent, "effect remains in its cause no less than cause remains in itself" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 172). If God is the cause of all beings, then God remains in all beings as the cause not transcendently but immanently.

Similarly, the *Tao* as an immanent cause of all beings, remains an effect in the all beings. When the *Tao* denotes continuous changes in the universe based on yin and yang, the immanent cause of all beings is the operative force of yin and yang. Like flowing streams, the operative force of *yin* and *yang* remains in effect in all beings and is present everywhere throughout the universe. In this context, the *Tao* is not only immanent but also univocal. Univocal being is another important concept of Spinoza's philosophy. For Spinoza, "the concept of univocal being is perfectly determinate, as what is predicated in one and the same sense of substance in itself, and of modes that are in something in itself." Subsequently, "univocity becomes the object of a pure affirmation" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 67). From the view of univocal being, the *Tao* is perfectly determinate as is the operative force of *yin* and *yang* as an immanent cause. Moreover, all beings are also perfectly determinate because the effect of the operative force of *yin* and *yang* remains in them. From this, the *Tao*, the operative force of *yin* and *yang*, and all beings are univocal.

Likewise, inside and outside of cyberspace, the BwO is a field of immanence and univocity. In the BwO, the constant alteration of deterritorialization and reterritorialization occurs in a way that the BwO becomes the immanent cause of intensities and its effect remains in the intensities; similarly, the process of de- and reterritorialization is the immanent cause of intensities and its effect remains in the intensities. For better understanding of the territorialization process, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) identify the process of de- and reterritorializing intensities with the notion of desire; therefore, the BwO becomes the field of immanence of desire. The concept of desire refers to "a process of production without reference to any exterior agency [that] lacks nothing and therefore cannot be linked to any external or transcendent criterion" (Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 154, 157).

The term "desire" does not contain the negative connotation seen in traditional religious discourses. Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire was understood contemptuously as "the negative law of lack, the external rule of pleasure, and the transcendent ideal of phantasy" (p. 155). Regarding desire as such, the discourse focused on the longing to have lack filled up with something different, i.e., external or transcendent. According to this view, the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane or of the spiritual and the secular realm was a discursive formation constructed from the yearnings to make up for lack of desire. When desire is understood as a process of production not linked to any transcendental criteria, however, the cause and effect of the production are immanent in the process. In this way, desire as the process of production constitutes the field of immanence and univocity. This confirms that the process of de-and reterritorialization of intensities, the BwO, becomes the field of

immanence of desire. From this reasoning, inside and outside of cyberspace, the BwO, can be identified with a field of immanence.

This affirms that CMR, based on CMC technology, performs on the field of immanence. CMR, the ritual on the field of immanence, provides participants with the experience of immanent relationality, in which the process of production does not need something transcendental. As Griffin (1988) explicated as naturalistic panentheism, CMR participants go through the coexistence of the spiritual realm and the secular realm inside and outside cyberspace, which reiterates constantly the process of de- and reterritorialization of intensities. CMR participants do not feel any differences in the distance between the two realms; digital spirituality is constructed in this context.

CMR includes various kinds of cybercultural practices and cyber religious rituals such as Internet prayer, Internet meditation, participation in cyber religions, and other cybercultural activities that include anonymous online practices or networking. Memorial writing in cyber memorial zones is another cybercultural practice; therefore, memorial writing is also a performance of CMR. While performing CMR, participants are inspired by immanent relationality, whether at the level of individuals or communities. CMR is performed in spaceless space where the spiritual realm and the secular realm are concurrent; the divine being is in all beings and all beings are in the divine being. In this sense, CMR represents multiple realities and obscures the barrier of the sacred and the profane constructed in conventional spirituality. While the traditional construction of spirituality valued transcendental relationship between human beings and higher beings, CMR allows people to be aware of relationality with all beings, regardless of higher beings or human beings,

that immanently reside inside and outside of cyberspace. With this reasoning, digital

spirituality can be defined as individual or community aspirations and practices for

immanent relationality constructed while performing CMR.

By examining how digital spirituality is constructed in CMR, the cyber

mourners' experience and the degree of dynamics of shamanic inheritance in cyber

memorial zones can be better articulated. This approach can provide insight into the

question of whether constructed digital spirituality can empower cyber mourners in

order to coup with difficulties in reality. The notion of digital spirituality and CMR

can also provide an appropriate direction for delving into power tensions between

digital spirituality and governmentality in the Korean cultural context. For this

purpose, the following sections will characterize the construction of digital spirituality

in four ways.

Characteristic 1: Digital Spirituality and Dynamics of Shamanic Inheritance

The construction of digital spirituality in cyber memorial zones in Korea becomes explicable with the understanding of dynamics of shamanic inheritance embedded in Korean culture.

Traditionally, shamans in Korea were mediators between human beings and

higher beings in performing *Kut*, meaning shaman ritual in Korean. Sometimes, the

shamans played a role of purging individually-oriented *han* of the bereaved and the

deceased; other times, their role of releasing *han* was broadened to managing the

agony of the entire villagers. Shaman ritual was an important method for Korean

populace to handle the difficulties of life, whether individual or village oriented. In

present-day Korea, memorial letters in cyber memorial zones as a performance of

CMR provide a new mode of shaman ritual for cyber mourners to express their

sorrows or irresistible affection for the deceased. Although CMR in cyber memorial

zones does not mean the entire replacement of traditional shaman rituals, it certainly is a new phenomenon based on dynamics of shamanic inheritance that needs closer attention.

In the CMR performed in cyber memorial zones, mourners become engaged in the characteristics of shaman ritual (i.e., spiritual limbo between this world and the other world) through writing memorial letters. Although there is no shaman who presides over the ritual, the new mode of computer-mediated shaman ritual occurs in the memorial zones. Writing a memorial letter itself becomes a mediator between this world and that world, which is the role that traditional shamans played in the past. While participants in traditional shaman rituals desired shamans to link them with higher beings, CMR in the cyber memorial zones allows participants to enter in spaceless space and experience immanent relationality with the beings coexisted inside and outside cyberspace. Through writing memorial letters in the memorial zones, cyber mourners attempt to associate with these beings and to appease themselves.

Writing a memorial letter itself can substitute the role of traditional shaman from the perspective of digital spirituality. The interrelation of digital spirituality and shamanic inheritance in the Korean cultural context calls for more explanation as well as examination how the latent capacity of constructing digital spirituality embedded in the Korean new religious movements emerged between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. While new religious movements were arising, the Joseon dynasty was disintegrating. Its social system, based on the discrimination of nobles, commoners, men, women, and legitimate and illegitimate children, was also collapsing. The populace was aware of such changes and yearned for the appearance

of a world where life was not marginalized nor alienated. In response, indigenous new

belief systems were born with the discourse of *hu chun gae byuk,* meaning the

"Opening a New Heaven".

      Donghak, meaning Eastern Study, was a leading indigenous religion of these

movements. Je-u Choi, the founder of *Donghak*, claimed that in the New Heaven era,

human beings come to know that they "have an inseparably close inner relationship

with God [and] are connected with all other beings in the universe through connecting

energy," thereby becoming cosmic beings (C. S. Kim, 2002, pp. 162-163). God in

Donghak is not an "absolute transcendental universal being" nor a "metaphysical real

being" but a "being in the process of becoming" that produces all the beings in the

universe (C. S. Kim, p. 169). When God is seen as a being in the process of becoming

and not as a metaphysical real being, then human beings can cultivate themselves to

the same level of God. By bearing and fostering God in their minds, human beings

become the center of the communication between heaven, earth, and humanity.

      Won Buddhism, another indigenous religion of the new religious movements

in Korea, shares the discourse of Opening a New Heaven. Much as Je-u Choi

regarded God as "being in the process of becoming," Chung-bin Park, the founder of

Won Buddhism, argued that all beings have Buddhahood and therefore should be

respected as the real Buddha. Chung-bin Park remarks about the worship to Buddha

from the view of Opening a New Heaven:

> All things that we see in the universe are nothing but Buddhas.
> Therefore, at all times and in all places we must be very respectful and
> cautious toward all things, keeping a pure mind and a pious manner as
> if we were before the real Buddha. You are also to try to practice
> offering worship to Buddha directly in all things with which you are
> involved, thereby creating blessedness and happiness in your real life.
> In a word, this is the way to turn a partial faith to a perfect one, and a

superstitious belief into an actual one. (Won Buddhism of Boston, 2005)

Won Buddhism also recognized the potential for human beings to become higher beings. All beings, including human beings, are already Buddhas because all of them have Buddhahood; the interpretation of Buddhahood is similar to that of God in *Donghak*. From this, it can be deduced that all beings, including human beings, are in the process of becoming Buddhas. This is why Chung-bin Park preached that all beings deserve to be respected like real Buddhas.

The views of *Donghak* and *Won Buddhism* on the potential for human beings to become higher beings recall the views of Griffin (1988) and Wuthnow (1998) on spirituality. For Griffin, the realm of higher being (or the spiritual realm) and the human beings realm in present society coexist in what he calls "naturalistic panentheism." The spiritual realm is not different in substance from the human beings' realm but is expressed differently. Similarly, Je-u Choi deemed that "God, humanity, and all other creatures in the universe are different expressions and outcome of the activities of *jigi* - the Ultimate Energy"(C. S. Kim, 2002, p. 171). With no difference between higher being and human beings, the Ultimate Energy is never stagnant but a continuous flow and flux of energy.

When people are aware of the new mode of spirituality, such as naturalistic panentheism, spiritual practice is rendered more feasible. From Wuthnow's (1998) view, spiritual practice highly values human beings' active interaction with the sacred. In the understanding that all beings are the expression of the continuous flow and flux of energy, the concept of the sacred in spiritual practice becomes focused on non-lineal, non-hierarchical, and immanent relationality. The views of *Donghak* and *Won Buddhism* can be understood in this context. The discourses of spirituality in Opening

a New Heaven share common ground with Western scholarly views, despite more

than a hundred years between them, because the ontology of the East differs radically

from that of the West. The discourses of spirituality in Opening a New Heaven

foretell the empowerment of the populace who have been historically suppressed and

the rebirth of the indigenous belief system.

The discourses in Opening a New Heaven are also relevant to understanding

the dynamics of shamanic inheritance embedded in Korean culture. When Je-u Choi

reached his great enlightenment, he experienced a state of shaman ecstasy, explaining

this moment as follows:

> My body trembled, and there was a feeling of touch externally, and
> there was an instructive voice within. I looked, yet I could not see. I
> listened, yet I could not hear. My mind was baffled, and I calmed my
> self for all while. Then, I asked, "what is this?" It was said, "my mind
> is your mind…even the ghost is I. The eternal truth came to you. If you
> cultivate yourself, and teach men, you shall live forever (Y. C. Kim,
> 1977, p. 42).

A trembling body is a typical sign of ecstasy when a shaman is possessed by a spirit

in shaman ritual. However, the interpretation of spirit in *Donghak* is very different

from that of traditional shamanism. Choi criticized blind worship of spirits in

traditional shaman by saying, "If they do not know that heaven and earth are the

spirits, and that the spirits are *yin* and *yang*, what is the use of studying scripture?" (C.

S. Kim, 2002, p. 167). In other words, the spirits need to be understood as the

operation of the forces of *yin* and *yang*, filled in heaven and earth (C. S. Kim, pp.167-

168). Although Choi was possessed by a spirit while attaining enlightenment, he was

not dominated by the spirit in a passive manner and did not merely remained ecstatic

as did the traditional shaman. Choi was well aware of the descent of a spirit on him,

which allowed him to communicate with God.

Choi's ecstatic shamanic experience is a very different situation from those of traditional shamans, who considered this world and the other world as completely separate realms. From the view of traditional shamans, a spirit descended from the other world is a metaphysical real being with much stronger powers than shamans in this world. Therefore, when a shaman is possessed by a spirit, the shaman is subjected to a hierarchical power relationship in a role that merely channels the spirit into this world. As Choi's experience demonstrated, however, when one can contemplate that the spirit descended and resided in or near oneself without being controlled by it, the spirit allows one to enter the interactive channels of universal forces of *yin* and *yang* and to communicate with other beings. The contemplation of the spirit is possible when one can cultivate oneself to a certain level and can manage the spirit, which is the operation of the forces of *yin* and *yang*, as C. S. Kim (2002) indicates.

From this understanding of spirit, spirituality in the era of Opening a New Heaven means bearing the operative forces of *yin* and *yang* in one's mind and "living with the same energy and mind that penetrates everything in the universe" (C. S. Kim, p. 170). The following is the explication of spirituality from the view of Opening a New Heaven.

> We, humans, are born bearing the sacred spirit of God and live on with God's sacred spirit in us. But how can we say that humans alone bear God? There is not a thing in the universe which does not bear God. The bird's chirping is also God's voice…Every life is born only after it receives this mind and energy. All creation in the universe is penetrated by the same energy and mind (C.S. Kim, p. 170).

Choi's testimony of shamanic experience is significant in the historical consideration of Korean religions. *Donghak*, a leader of new religious movements in the late nineteenth century, acknowledged the main element of shaman ritual, which had been the indigenous belief system but was oppressed since the establishment of Joseon

dynasty in the fourteenth century. Considering that *Donghak* had great influence on the Korean populace at that time, this testimony means the reevaluation of indigenous shamanism by Korean people. The transcendental shaman deity could also be seen as the humanized and attainable being through Choi's shamanic experience. This experience demonstrates that the New Heaven is established "on this earth, not in the transcendental world nor in the world after the death" (Hong, 1968, p.49). This is clear evidence that the Opening a New Heaven era is on the basis of a human-centered worldview.

The dynamics of shamanic inheritance, embedded in Korean culture as driving forces of constructing digital spirituality in cyber memorial zones, have their root in the discourse of Opening a New Heaven. When God is seen as being in the process of becoming, the shaman, who is mediator between this world and the other world, is considered as the process of becoming; this process operates based on the forces of *yin* and *yang* that penetrate all the beings in the universe. Shamanic inheritance in cyber memorial zones exists as the dynamics of a process of becoming. Thus, writing a memorial letter itself can replace the role of traditional shaman.

While writing a memorial letter, cyber mourners are engaged in the process of becoming in the BwO where the process of de-and reterritorialization constantly occurs based on the operative forces of *yin* and *yang*. Cyber mourners are motivated to look for immanent relationality with these operative forces of universe. From this view, writing a memorial letter is a CMR performance. Digital spirituality, individual or community aspirations for immanent relationality through cybercultural practices, is constructed in this context. Writing a memorial letter as a process of becoming sets up a channel of digital spirituality, wherein a higher being in the process of becoming

and a human being in the process of becoming can coexist. The spiritual realm and the secular realm are concurrent; the divine being is in all beings and all beings are in the divine being.

Cyber mourners demonstrate the experience of writing a memorial letter as a process of becoming. Whether they write a letter in individually-oriented zones, celebrity-driven zones, or socio-politically driven zones, most had the feeling that the deceased were likely to exist inside and outside of cyber memorial zones, in the BwO. Some of the mourners said that when they wrote or read their letters, they could feel the deceased near them and could speak to them, although the mourners could not see the deceased. Other mourners believed that the deceased became unified with the higher beings after the death and then resided in the cyber memorial zone to respond to their calls for the help. Cyber mourners' experiences in the cyber memorial zones support the assumption that writing a memorial letter as a process of becoming replaces the role of traditional shamans and establishes the new channel of digital spirituality between this world and the other world. In the following section, the characteristic of digital spirituality will be examined further in relation to the liminal stage of CMR.

Characteristic 2: Digital Spirituality and Liminality in CMR

Digital spirituality is constructed through the liminal stage of CMR, where aspirations of participants for immanent relationality rise corresponding to constant changing process of intensities inside and outside of cyberspace.

When digital spirituality is constructed in cyber memorial zones, CMR participants experience a liminal stage inside and outside of cyberspace. The concept of liminality, which Turner (1974) related to play, drama, and community, refers to the "transition rite that accompanies every change of state or social position, or a

certain age" (p. 231). Whether it occurs in a social context or in an individual's emotional situation, liminality functions as an intermediary period, in which one stage changes into another through confusion and uncertainty. Expanding on Arnold Van Gennep's concept, Turner describes liminality as being comprised of three stages: "separation, margin (or limen), and re-aggregation" (pp. 231-232). Three stages of liminality can visualize how a ritual subject becomes detached from a stable situation, goes through a confused and obscured liminal state, and rejoins a better situation.

From the perspective of liminality, participation in CMC is not only performing online activities but also rituals in which participants can experience a certain kind of changing processes before and after their involvement in CMC. When logging into the environment of CMC, people encounter a completely distinguished situation from outside the CMC environment. As Fernback (2002) observes, the participants in CMC are "suspended 'betwixt and between' the structure of the everyday societas and the antistructure of the autocracy, boundless possibility and the communitas of the CMC environment" (p. 260). In the liminal stage of "betwixt and between" inside and outside of cyberspace, a dimension of participants' spiritual experiences becomes immanent rather than transcendent. When beginning CMR, participants expect to engross themselves in the sea of relationality in cyberspace, which embraces immanent and contextual relationships with other beings. If CMR occurs on the BwO, how can the liminal stage of CMR be explained from the process of de-and reterritorializing intensities?

From Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) view on the process of territorializing intensities, the continual process of de- and reterritorialization of intensities inside and outside of cyberspace occurs. Participants performing CMR are engaged in the liminal

stage where the process of territorialization has them more aware of the dynamics of

intensities.

Threshold of Inside and Outside of Cyberspace

Figure 7: Dimension of Liminality in Computer Mediated Ritual

This figure was drawn for the purpose of facilitating the understanding of

nonlinear and constructive liminal process in CMR. Dotted lines represent the

continual process of territorializing intensities inside and outside of cyberspace.

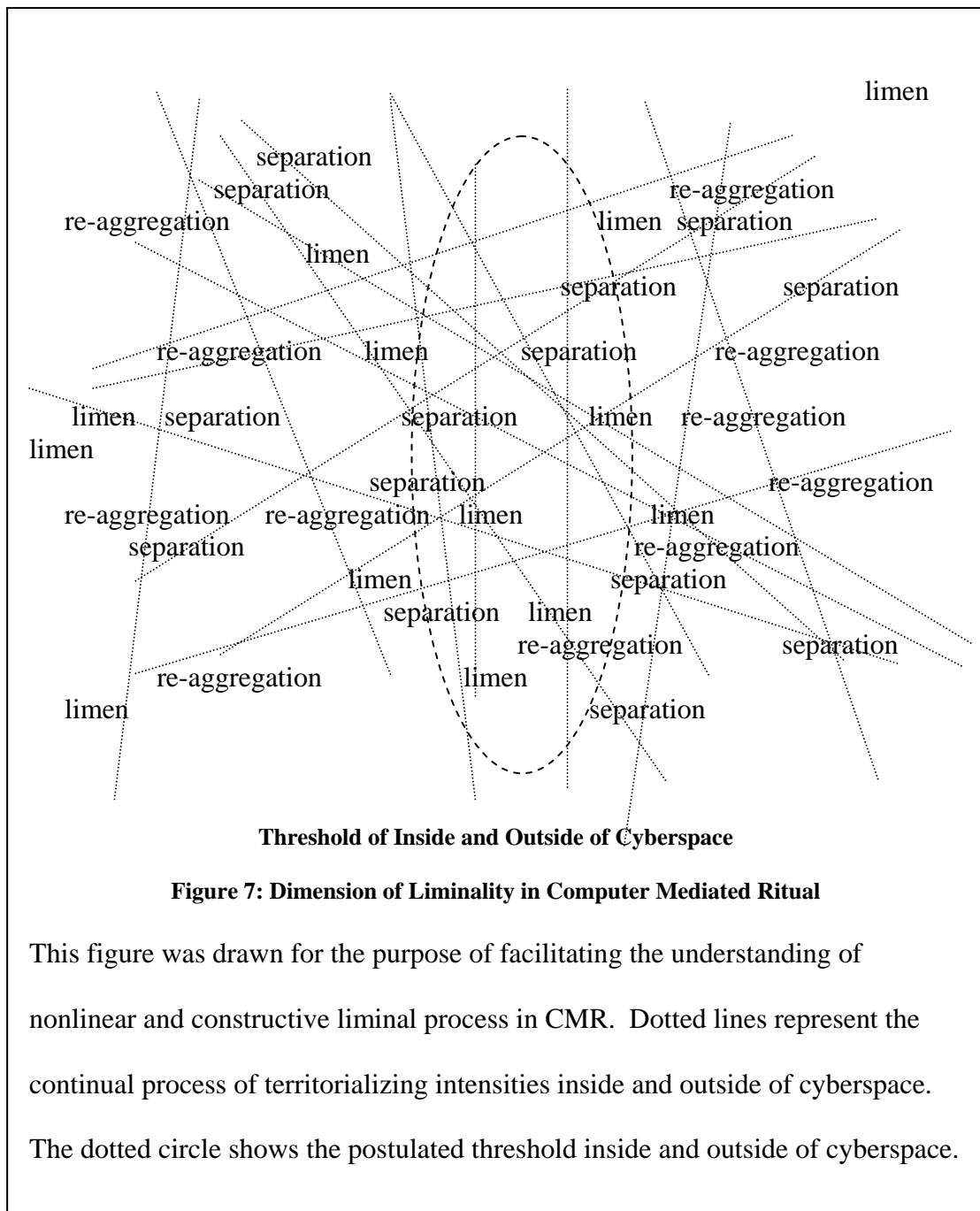The dotted circle shows the postulated threshold inside and outside of cyberspace.

Figure 7 illustrates the dimension of the liminal stage when CMR performs. As shown

in the Figure 7, the deterritorialization process affects the beginning of the liminal

stage, which is the state of separation. In this period, the liminal stage is filled with

intensities of the constantly changing process from formation to nothingness. Also, the identities of CMR participants are newly embodied as being decentered, as David Bell (2001) postulates. The process of reterritorializing intensities influences the liminal stage of re-aggregation. Intensities in this stage tend to become substantialized from nothingness to formation. The de-centered identities restitute to the former status; however, once the identities were decentered, the restitution would not be exactly same as the former. As the Figure 7 suggests, the process of de-and reterritorialization is nonlinear and constructive. The process of reterritorialization does not always follow the occurrence of deterritorialization.

Although CMR participants are in the stage of limen, they would remain separated without reaching the re-aggregation stage. Some participants would reach the re-aggregation stage without passing through the stage of limen. Others who have already reached the re-aggregation stage would experience another separation stage. When Turner elaborated on the structure of liminality, he did not consider the liminal stage of CMR; subsequently, his explanation was based on the linear structure of liminality such as the order of separation, limen, and re-aggregation. Given the nonlinear characteristic of CMC, the expanded interpretation of liminality is more appropriate to understand the dimension of liminality in CMR.

Although the liminal process in CMR is nonlinear and somewhat arbitrary, the process of de-and reterritorializing intensities ceaselessly occurs in CMR performed inside and outside of cyberspace. These two processes of territorialization keep the instensities vital, from which the aspirations for immanent relationality of digital spirituality are inspired. The power of digital spirituality is proportionate to the awareness of the dynamics of intensities. This is why these two processes of

territorializaton need to be considered together in articulating digital spirituality and its power; one process of territorialization cannot appropriately describe the traits of intensities and is not enough to explain how CMR participants experience liminality. This is the reason that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) identify *Tao*, and the operative forces of *yin* and *yang* with the BwO, where the process of de-and reterritorialization constantly occurs. Like the BwO, the *Tao's* different territories of *yin* and *yang* create a kaleidoscopic process of territorialization

Memorial letters posted in cyber memorial zones include various elements of CMRs in which participants experience the liminal stage and regain themselves by communicating with the deceased. Releasing their sorrow and tension, the memorial zones become the space for soothing their *han*, which signifies that the characteristics of Korean traditional shamanism have been revived as a new mode of CMR. For these cyber mourners, the boundary of this world and the other world is indistinct because the liminal stage of separation in CMR has begun. The deterritorialization of intensities inside and outside of cyberspace helps the mourners to enter the liminal stage of separation and enhance the process of deterritorializing their identities. In this stage, the mourners' identities turn into the decentering process of the self, which allows them to have a spiritual experience with the deceased. The process of decentering the self occurs when the boundary of the substantialized identity is deterritorialized.; the spiritual experience at this moment is based on digital spirituality. Inside and outside of cyberspace is the field of immanence where the spiritual realm and the secular realm coexist and the process of de-and reterritorializing them continues. With the construction of digital spirituality, the cybercultural identity as a process is engaged in the field of immanence.

When the notion of digital spirituality is based on the concept of the BwO or the field of immanence, one can argue that digital spirituality does not involve a spiritual quality because these concepts stem from the view of materialism. Goddard (2001) confirms such a tendency toward the works of Deleuze and Guattari, saying that, "even the concepts with a strong spiritual resonance such as virtual are understood in an almost scientific, positivistic way" (p. 61). It is understandable that those with the view of traditional religious discourse are unable to grasp the spiritual resonance of digitual spirituality constructed inside and outside of cyberspace, the BwO. This is mainly because the perception of time and space in the traditional religious discourse differs from those of constructing digital spirituality. Then what are time and space in the context of digital spirituality, and how can its spiritual resonance be explained?

When writing a memorial letter, cyber mourners establish channels of digital spirituality through which they are engaged in the process of becoming. The cyber memorial zone as the BwO is a space in which the process of becoming continues. The process of becoming here refers to the constant de-and reterritorialization of the spiritual or secular realms. When spiritual and secular realms are continually de- and reterritorialized in cyber memorial zones, cyber mourners who are already engaged in the process of becoming experience dynamics that are derived from the processes of territorializing spiritual and secular realms. In this process of becoming, the identities of the cyber mourners are decentered; finally, the mourners become integrated with the process of becoming. The spiritual resonance of digital spirituality lies in this context.

When mourners are integrated with the process of becoming, the dynamics derived from the territorializing process feel more obvious to the mourners. Such an experience of digital spirituality is " an attempt to experience what lies before and beneath language in the deeper body that threatens stable structures of language and social convention" (Goddard, 2001, p. 57). This insinuates that digital spirituality has its spiritual resonance in experiencing body as the process of becoming. It is not transcendental-oriented but immanent-seeking endeavors to feel the dynamics of the territorializing process. For this reason, the spiritual resonance in digital spirituality lies in temporality as well. Digital spirituality is conceived of as:

> virtually inhering in the material world in the form of temporalities, or conversely the material world can be conceived of as existing in the spiritual or in God in the same way that it exists in time. The spiritual and material are simply two distinct yet indiscernible sides of the same fold (Goddard, p. 62).

Goddard's claim that the spiritual experience draws to temporalities demonstrates why another dimension in the understanding the spiritual resonance in digital spirituality is necessary. This dimension could be a field of immanence where de-and reterritorialization of spiritual and secular realms constantly occurs. The experience of digital spirituality is temporal, not perpetual. It is a feeling of "a recollection of the ecstatic experience" (Goddard, p. 56). Thus, if the experiences of cyber mourners are not based on the process of becoming but are "confined to a single moment" (de Certeau, 1992, p. 19), then these experiences cannot be seen as spiritual resonance in digital spirituality. In the following section, cyber memorial zones and digital spirituality are considered as *Yosungjang*, space for women.

Characteristic 3: Cyber Memorial Zone as Yosungjang, Space for Women

Cyber memorial zones become Yosungjang, space for women, where decentered identities are constructed as Yosungjang identities through the de- and reterritorialization process.

Women post more than 80% of memorial writings in cyber memorial zones. These statistics imply that cyber memorial zones have a special meaning for Korean women as spaces for women. The patriarchal social system in Korea has been sustained under the traditional Confucian principle of *yin-yang*. According to M.H. Kim (1993), *yin* was interpreted as "the woman's inner or domestic sphere" and *yang* as "the man's outer or public sphere" (p. 70). The male-centered social system was built on the belief that the inner sphere was intrinsically subordinated to the outer sphere. Such an interpretation of y*in* and y*ang* with an unbalanced amalgamation set down the women's sphere to be subjected to the male-centered discourse. Under these circumstances, funeral and memorial rituals in the Korean tradition were places of oppression and discrimination to women.

To overcome the conventional gender inequality with an alternative discourse for women, So-yung Kim (2003), a Korean feminist, introduces a provocative and powerful term, *Yosungjang*. The Korean term *Yosungjang* combines the words *Yosung* (woman) and *jang* (the public sphere or funeral), which subsequently connotes double codes of "the women's public sphere" or "women's funeral." Kim was inspired to coin this term after a funeral for fourteen female prostitutes who were burned to death in a brothel fire. This was a sad reflection on the status of Korean women and their collective *han*, where the anguish of oppression, discrimination and despair was accumulated. In that sense, *Yosungjang* as cyber memorial zones appears to be the space of emancipation for women.

Cyber memorial zones as *Yosungjang* become spaces for women where the ritual power of cyber confession through memorial writing allows them to recover their true selves. Memorial letters posted in cyber memorial zones appear as "cyber confessions" because these letters reveal candid stories of the bereaved and their lives. Cyber confession allows the memorial zones to function not only as places of catharsis but also as a space that give women the power to cope with their frustrated realities. In this sense, cyber confession differs from Foucault's (1978) notion of confessional discourse, by which Foucault examines the historical context of how the empowered have utilized discipline and punishment for maintaining their security and subjugating the resistance.

Considering confession as a "ritual that unfolds within a power relationship," Foucault contends that the confessor needs an associate, who is not simply "the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile" (pp. 61-62). While physical punishments were exercised and displayed mainly for the effectuality of public discipline from the medieval period, such confessional discourse has been devised as an ethic of subordination, subjection, and ongoing personal introspection in modern Western culture in order to force the public to internalize the disciplinary system. "The disciplined body" through the confessional discourses "is the prerequisite of an efficient gesture" (Foucault, 1995, p. 152).

Crampton (2002) interprets the notion of confession in cybercultures in contrast with Foucault's confessional discourse. Crampton maintains that cyberspace "forms subjectivities between the axes of authenticity-- confession, i.e., that cyberspace is another confessional regime where we can attempt to recover our 'true

selves' outside the reach of power relations" (para. # 1). While Foucauldian confessional discourses were formed in front of authoritative interlocutors, cyber confessions are made by CMR participants inside and outside of cyberspace, the field of immanence that is full of intensities. Cyber confession replaces the role of interlocutors, and a new confessional discourse without an interlocutor can be formed. In this case, cyber confessions are to interlocutors what memorial letters are to traditional shamans.

Crampton's view on cyber confession has a connection with Couldry's notion of "mediated self disclosure" (2003). From Couldry's claim, the consequence of mediated self-disclosure by way of the media differs from "a confession before a priest, doctor, or psychiatrist" (p. 123). When mediated self-disclosure is performed in CMR, it becomes cyber confession; the ritual power of cyber confession is more self-reflective and constructive than confession with authoritative interlocutors such as priests, doctors, or psychiatrists. Crampton and Couldry's arguments on mediated confessions in CMR provide theoretical ground for cyber memorial zones as *Yosungjang* that become the space for emancipating Korean women.

When women write memorial letters, they are integrated in the process becoming. Their identities are turned into decentered selves. Their identities outside of cyber memorial zones, which have been oppressed under the male-centered ideology and marginalized in the traditional funeral culture, were deterritorialized inside of the memorial zones. In the deterritorializing process of oppressed and marginalized identities, the hierarchical power structure was dismantled.

Such a deterritorializing process of the oppressed and the marginalized self is accelerated when they have temporal ecstatic experiences with the deceased. As

illustrated in chapter 4, many women show the experience of "body memory" and "place memory" (Casey, 2000) with the deceased. When women write memorial letters, their memories with the deceased turn into the process of becoming through the channels of digital spirituality. The temporal ecstatic experiences can be evoked when these memories, as the process of becoming, and the deterritorialized self are perfectly integrated. The degrees of integration differ according to the degrees of deterritorializing identities. When memorial writings show stronger integration of memory into decentered selves, the women are more confident in dealing with the difficulties of their lives. Through this process, new identities for women, or *Yosungjang* identities, are reterritorialized in cyber memorial zones.

The reterritorialized *Yosungjang* identity shows the recovery of "true self" through cyber confession, as Crampton (2002) points out. However, despite the reterritorialization of *Yosungjang* identities with the ecstatic experience with the deceased, women were not possessed nor overwhelmed by the experience because it was temporal. It was women themselves who decided how to deal with the difficulties that they might encounter in their everyday lives. This is a clear example of spiritual resonance in digital spirituality.

Characteristic 4: Digital Spirituality and Governmentality

Cybercultural practices built on the construction of digital spirituality allow us to foster digital awareness, with which we can grow to be subjective participants in cybercultures, but without which we are subject to less visible, persuasive, penetrative, and commercialized dynamics built on governmentality.

When cyber memorial zones become *Yosung jang* that provide space for women who have been conventionally alienated, interpretation can be broadened to the extent that cyber memorial zones become the space for the marginalized populace. This interpretation is based on the myth of Princess Pari as discussed in chapter 2. In

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this myth, the life of the princess marked by suffering is dramatically reversed when she is reborn as the shaman of death. Because Princess Pari was an abandoned child that symbolized the marginalized populace by the ruling class, her given power for reviving the dead alludes to the empowerment not only of women but also of the populace.

Similarly, dynamics of shamanic inheritance, which is reborn in the Korean cybercultures and provides the foundation for constructing digital spirituality, allows the marginalized women and the populace to improve their political and social status. This is another reversal equally as dramatic as that of Princess Pari. Korean cybercultures testify that the collective *han* of women and the populace, derived from the gender inequality, the difference of class, and the discrimination of unfair possessive structure, was erupted and released in the form of various discourses. Such an improvement of the power of the marginalized populace can be understood, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, as an occurrence of deterritorializing the realm of oppressive power.

However, the findings of this research show that cyber memorial zones function as the space not only for deterritorializing the repressive power but also for constantly reterritorializing commercial forces. The reterritorialization of commercial forces in cyber memorial zones reflects commercializing Korean funeral culture under the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm. As stated in chapter 3, the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea emerged on a full scale to deal with the economic crisis in 1997; the implementation of the neo-liberal policy was the obligatory for IMF loan package (Hundt, 2005, p. 249). The neo-liberal paradigm is a set of political economic policy that underlies the" 'self-limiting' state, unregulated investment capital and the 'free-

trading' open global economy" (Peters, 2001, pp. 207-208). In this description, Peters stresses the relationship between capital flow and globalization, regarding the neo-liberal paradigm as the promotional source of globalization. Because the frequency of the capital flow in the neo-liberal paradigm increases, a state as territory has less effect. Deleuze and Guattari's view on capitalism as the process of deterritorialization uphold Peter's claim.

Deleuze and Guattari insist that the main characteristic of capitalism is "[t]he decoding of flows and the deterritorialization of the socius" (1972, p. 34). Its power of deterritorialization "consists in taking as its object, not the earth, but 'materialized labor,' the commodity." (1987, p. 454). With the power of deterritorialization, capital as "convertible abstract rights" (p. 454) constantly flows beyond social realms such as nation-state, institution, neighborhood, and so on. The claim of "[t]he neo-liberal paradigm as globalization" (Peters, 2001, p. 208) appears reasonable. With the deterritorializing power of capitalism, neo-liberalism can be seen as "one of the most pervasive, if not, dangerous ideologies of the 21st century" (Giroux, 2004, para. #1). Giroux argues:

> In its capacity to dehistoricize and depoliticize society, as well as in its aggressive attempts to destroy all of the public spheres necessary for the defense of a genuine democracy, neoliberalism reproduces the conditions for unleashing the most brutalizing forces of capitalism (2004, para. #5).

Giroux's argument suggests important points for understanding the commercialization trend in the Korean funeral culture. Giroux calls attention to the capacity of the capital to dehistoricize society. The deterritorializing power allows capital flow to move beyond the territorial boundary of a state as well as to permeate the perceptual boundaries of human existence: life and death.

While capital flows beyond social realms with the power of deterritorialization, capitalism also has a tendency to restore the territorialized social realms in order to facilitate the flows of capital. Considering the contradictory characteristics of capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari (1972) states:

> [T]hrough its process of production, [capitalism] produces an awesome schizophrenic accumulation of energy or charge, against which it brings all its vast powers of repression to bear, but which nonetheless continues to act as capitalism's limit . . . . Capitalism institutes or restores all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territorialities, thereby attempting, as best it can, to recode, to rechannel persons who have been defined in terms of abstract quantity (p. 34).

The deterritorializing power of capitalism allows the flow of capital to penetrate into all possible realms, but capitalism also inclines to restore all the territories, not exactly the same as the originals. While capitalism needs the process of deterritorialization to enhance capital flow, paradoxically capitalism calls for the process of reterritorialization to reestablish territories that can smooth the flow of capital.

However, the process of reterritorialization does not aim to tighten the control of the state because excessive state power cannot make the flow of capital efficient. In capitalism, the schizophrenic processes of de-and reterritorializing social realms occur for the same purpose of maximizing the flow of capital. As deterritorialization of social realms takes place to assure the flow of capital, the process of reterritorialization moves toward increasing profit. These two territorializing processes are contradictory, but they share the same destination. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) sustain this point:

> The more the capitalist machine deterritorializes, decoding and axiomatizing flows in order to extract surplus value from them, the more its ancillary apparatuses, such as government bureaucracies and the forces of low and order, do their utmost to reterritorialize, absorbing in the process a larger and larger share of surplus value. (pp.

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34-35).

The commercialization trend in Korean funeral culture in the neo-liberal paradigm as well as Foucault's notion of governmentality need to be considered in relation to the schizophrenic traits of capitalism.

Governmentality, referring to the "contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" (Foucault, 1988, p. 19), is also the result of contemplating the role of schizophrenic and immanent flow of capital in the technologies of domination. While articulating the art of government in the modern states, Foucault also addresses the concept of economy in maintaining continuity between the rulers and the ruled (2000, pp. 206-207). Since economy for Foucault suggests the flows of capital within a state, the governing techniques in modern states center on how to control "the sort of complex composed of men and things" (p. 208) constructed through the flow of capital. The term "things" includes "means of subsistence," "ways of acting and thinking," and "accidents and misfortunes" (Foucault, p. 209). By "complex", Foucault insinuates that the abstract and immanent but constant flow of capital functions as the technology of domination and influences the relations between men and things. This explains why Bennett (1992) proposes that culture is a governmentality.

As a governmentality, culture is equated with "a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual" (Williams, 1976, p. 16). From Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, culture as a way of life becomes the BwO where de- and reterritorializing social realms constantly occurs, enhancing the flow of capital. With culture as a governmentality, the technologies of domination are internally exercised on the relations of men and things, where technologies of the self are constructed

corresponding to the application of technologies of domination. Tension is always on in the threshold between the technologies of domination and those of the self.

Such technologies of dominance are associated with the process of de- and reterritorialization in capitalism. Technologies of domination are operated on the relations between men and things, under which the flow of capital continues. From this power structure, it can be deemed that technologies of domination are closely interconnected with the flow of capital, both of which exercise immanent power on the relation between men and things. The exercise of power becomes immanent and rarely perceivable because capital is "convertible abstract rights" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.454) and the flow of capital in the territorializing process is rarely recognizable.

When the flows of capital de- or reterritorialize social realms, technologies of domination use the immanent power in de-or reterritorializing the complex constructed between men and things. Thus, as capitalism progresses to the abstract and immanent, so do governmental techniques. Culture as a governmentality becomes less discernible in the neo-liberal paradigm, where the flow of capital is extremely profit-oriented. It becomes an attractive technique of governing because the flow of capital maximizes the creation of profits; the flow of capital is increased without losing the efficiency of governing power. The commercialization trend in the Korean funeral culture can be considered in this context.

Before the neo-liberal paradigm emerged in Korea on a full scale, the rite of death was not considered as an object of commodity. The rite of death was mainly provided as a space for contemplating the meaning of life. However, in the neo-liberal paradigm where the deterritorializing power of capital reaches the peak, even the rite

of death became a commodity. What happened in the funeral industry of America more than a hundred years ago is now happening in Korea. The funeral industry in America influenced the deterritorializing power of capital in the late nineteenth century and established the modern shape of the industry (Mitford, 1963). In contrast, it was not until the late twentieth century that the funeral industry began to take shape in Korea. Traditionally, the rite of death had been an important communal occasion, but not the target of moneymaking. Korean funeral culture has become rapidly commercialized in the last decade, and the funeral industry has demonstrated the power of capital in deterritorializing the meaning of the rite of death.

Although the neo-liberal paradigm is characteristic of maximizing the frequency of the flow of capital, it carries little conviction that the paradigm deterritorialized the inherent meaning of the rite of death and reterritorialized it with commercialized values in such a short period. Before the emergence of the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea, the socio-political and economic environment was already vulnerable to such a rapid commercialization in funeral culture. Then how did the socio-political and economic environment become so susceptible to the deterritorializing power of capital? The various technologies of domination in Korean modernity suggest a direction for exploring this question.

As pointed out in chapter 2, Korean modernity took its form under Japanese Occupation, whose technologies of domination were internally exercised on the Korean people. The unique trait of the technologies in the colonial power was to use the Korean funeral culture as a tool for consolidating colonial control. By implementing the policy of cremation, the colonial power attempted to have Koreans construct their technologies of the self detached from their funeral tradition, which

had been built on shamanism. Colonial governmentality oppressed shamanism in the way that technologies of colonial dominance were exercised on Koreans and their funeral culture.

Even after the Japanese Occupation ended, colonial governmentality lasted through post-colonial modernity. The policies and regulations of the colonial modernity influenced those of the ruling powers in the post-colonial modernity. Subsequently, technologies of post-colonial domination operated on the relations between people and the funeral culture. An example is "The Standing Rule of Family Ritual," implemented by Park Jung Hee's military regime. The Rule was intended to regulate conduct in the funeral and wedding cultures; this was a typical technology of domination used to infuse the legitimacy of the illegitimate regime.

Korean postcolonial modernity was established under the influence of American modernity; therefore, the deterritorializing power of capitalism was positively engrained on the body of Korean society. Illegitimate military regimes have continually stirred people's propensity of capitalism in the name of democracy. Technologies of the Korean self were constructed to identify democracy with American modernity and capitalism. Because of these situations, the Korean social body changed to the extent that many Koreans became impervious to the deterritorializing power of the neo-liberal paradigm. Korean society became vulnerable to the deterritorializing power of capital, and it is not surprising to see that the current funeral culture is under the influence of the capital power.

During the last decade, Koreans have achieved the democratization of a nation free from the control of military regimes that was the immediate problem they faced in post-colonial modernity. The status of the marginalized populace improved, and

their dynamics erupted in the numerous ways. Nevertheless, commercializing trends

in many social realms were aggravated, and the funeral culture was no exception.

Even the Korean government, elected by the people, increased deterritorializing

capital power with commercializing trends, particularly since the economic crisis in

1997. Although some social elites attempted to problematize the policy of the

government, their power seemed feeble compared to the degree of propensity of

capitalism engrained on the Korean social body. Now the deterritorializing power of

the neo-liberal paradigm shapes the new social structure to the extent that even the

medical sector, once considered as the public social division, is giving way to the

deterritorializing power of capital. Funeral parlors, many of which are under the

contract with or owned by medical centers (a unique cultural phenomena in Korea)

are also yielding to the deterritorializing power of capital. As Deleuze and Guattari

(1983, 1987) point out, the flow of capital wields power in dismantling intrinsic

values of these social realms. The extensive campaign to promote cremation, driven

by the Korean government in the late of 1990s, demonstrates the combination of the

deterritorializing capital power and culture as a governmentality.

An example of this campaign was the Korean National Council for Cremation

Promotion (KNCCP) that began in 1998. In its prospectus, KNCCP "seeks to

establish the appropriate funeral culture to correspond to the changing circumstances

by spreading cremation culture as the most efficient option to resolve land shortage

for graveyard caused by the ground burial tradition" (Korean National Council for

Cremation Promotion, n. d.). The prospectus of KNCCP indicates that the efficiency

of land usage was the slogan of the campaign. Along with promoting cremation, the

campaign focused on the spreading of public and private columbaria and family vaults.

This campaign reached its peak when The Law for Funeral Culture was implemented in 1999 to replace The Standing Rule of Family Ritual.

The Law for Funeral Culture suggests more practical approaches to the changing environment of the funeral culture, such as the urgency of land shortage for graveyards and commercialization trends. This law also confirmed that the Korean government had changed its preference from ground burial to cremation oriented. The consideration in policy as shown in this law stirred up the proliferation of public and private columbaria. Commercially-driven cyber memorial zones, as discussed in the previous chapter, are considered in this context. Field interviews with funeral professionals found that, in contrast to the socio-politically oriented zones that were created with voluntary motivation of cyber mourners, most of the commercially-driven cyber memorial zones were established by columbarium companies to increase the deterritorializing power of capital.

This confirms the characteristics of reterritorialization in capitalism in the new funeral policy of Korean government. While the power of capital flows deterritorialized the realm of funeral culture and transferred the meaning of rite of death into commercial products, government policy such as the Law for Funeral Culture and the government apparatus (i.e. KNCCP) reterritorialize the relationship between people and the funeral culture. Private and public columbaria, the family vault business, and the stone industry are main parts of the reterritorializing process, through which the flow of capital is made smoother.

The columbarium-related industry had been in a prosperous condition for the past five years due to the advantage from government policy. However, this prosperity did not last long. Too many commercial columbaria led the industry into a

recession. Government policy now promotes scattering, and the columbaria industry

has reacted against this policy. Funeral professionals insist that the consideration in

policy was temporarily given to the columbarium industry. In other words, scattering

is the mode of the body disposal for which the government had initially intended.

However, the columbarium model was provisionally adopted to buffer the cultural

shock that the change from ground burial to scattering might cause. Chul-min, a sales

person working in a columbarium, elaborated on this:

> Koreans tend to have something tangible for the worship of ancestors.
> In ground burials, graves were regarded as the space where the
> relationship between ancestors and descendents were constructed and
> preserved. But cremation leaves nothing except a handful of ashes. The
> government needed something tangible in introducing the scattering
> model so that people could accept the new model without resistance.
> In that sense, columbaria were deemed to play an intermediate role of
> something tangible.

Chul-min's description testifies that much of the Korean new funeral culture is the

result of the exercise of technologies of government domination. The government

used the columbaria as buffering zones to transform from a grave to scattering culture.

The revised funeral policy announced on April 5, 2006 (Hwang, 2006), confirms

Chul-min's account. In the announcement, the government promotes scattering as a

method of body disposal. Although several Koreans had already used scattering, they

had difficulties because no regulation has supported this method. The revised policy

also restricts the size of family vaults and claims that the government preference has

changed toward scattering.

When this social trend toward cremation and scattering is considered from the

view of culture as a governmentality, it can be interpreted in two ways. From the

view of technologies of the self, this preference reflects the degree of resistance

against conventional social norms. Cremation and scattering represent technologies

of self that are empowered in a persistent attempt to deviate from the control of power. As Aries (1974) suggests, cremation is a method that completely eradicates the connection between past and present. Compared to disposal through ground burials, cremation and scattering are easier ways for the bereaved to stay away from the deceased. From the view of technologies of domination, government policy represents the deterritorializing power of capital that can decode the social meaning of death, transforming it into a commodity. In the Korean funeral culture as a field of immanence, the process of de- and reterritorialization continually occurs. Capital flow dismantles the meaning of the rite of death to change it into a commodity. Government policy reterritorializes the realm of the funeral culture. The Korean funeral culture as a field of immanence discloses the tension lying between technologies of the Korean self and technologies of the government's dominance.

In cyber memorial zones, the tension between digital spirituality and commercializing trends is formed in a similar way. From the view of technologies of the cyber mourner's self, digital spirituality constructed in CMR functions as a catalyst to deterritorialize the hierarchical barrier of spiritual realms and secular realms. As shown in socio-politically oriented zones, digital spirituality helps cyber mourners to turn the cybercultural discourses into political power to demand social changes. Digital spirituality also allows women to change cyber memorial zones into *Yosungjang* where memorial writings reterritorialize the empowering channels between women and the deceased while deterritorializing male-centered ideology. From the view of technologies of government power, deterritorializing power of capital flow and flux inside and outside of cyberspace and in the rite of death is reterritorialized as commercially metamorphosed ritual. The revised regulation of the

funeral culture, based on a government preference for cremation and scattering, reterritorializes various commercializing trends.

However, this study found that the degree of tension formed between technologies of the cyber mourner's self and those of government power in cyber memorial zones was not enough to be noticeable. This was surprising because the discourses formed in socio-culturally oriented cyber memorial zones were so dynamic as to put pressure on the implementation of government policy. The new Korean funeral culture is under the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm, where the deterritorializing power of capital reaches its peak to cause a decline in standard of living, polarizing the haves and have-nots. Considering that the rite of death constitutes the foundation of a nation's culture, commercialization of the funeral culture means the subordination of the cultural foundation to the deterritorializing power of capital flows. Along with the commercialization of the medical sector, this can be a serious problem in the near future.

The findings of this research showed that cyber mourners were insensitive to the commercializing trend of the funeral culture. There are several possibilities for this result. Discourse on cremation and scattering is formed widely through the media; under these circumstances, commercialization trends in cyber memorial zones would have difficulty in attracting the attentions of cyber mourners. Koreans also seem to display tolerance for government policies that enhance the capital flows in the neo-liberal paradigm. The tendency to identify political democracy with the success of capitalism and American modernity, which has been built on the process of Korean post colonial modernity, makes Koreans less aware of the process of turning the rite of death into a commodity. Technologies of government domination function well in

reterritorializing the dismantled social realms while reducing aftermaths of the deterritorializing process.

Most funeral professionals who were interviewed considered opening the medical service industry to the foreign market as unavoidable but felt that it would help the industrializing process of the funeral service industry. They opposed the view that commercializing trends of the funeral service industry would harm the inherent values of traditional funeral culture believing that the involvement of large enterprises would advance the industry. In terms of globalization, some of the funeral specialists insisted that viewing and embalming, which represent American funeral culture, should be adopted in consideration of the globalization trend. It will not take long for many Koreans to adopt viewing and embalming as advanced funeral cultures.

The construction of digital spirituality in cyber memorial zones suggests the potential for a new dimension of spirituality, the discourse of which is not available in the traditional religious realms. Cyber memorial zones become the field of immanence where spiritual and secular realms coexist and cyber mourners can have temporal ecstatic experiences through the channels of digital spirituality. Such experiences help mourners to deal with the difficulties of their lives in a positive way. As seen in the examples of socio-politically oriented zones, cyber memorial zones become the space for the deterritorialization of oppressive power and the reterritorialization of the power of populace; thus, it is not surprising that cyber memorial zones can become *Yosungjang*, or space for women. Digital spirituality can function as an instrumental tool for exploring the degrees of the change within society.

However, this research found that the wave of tension between technologies of governmental dominance based on the neo-liberal paradigm and technologies of the

Korean self is not noticeably rising in cyber memorial zones. Koreans are not yet aware of reterritorialized technologies of government dominance exercised on the funeral culture to enhance the deterritorializing power of capital flow. The deterritorializing power of capital is so vigorous yet insinuating that the commercialization of the rite of death, which forms the foundation of Korean culture, does not trigger an awareness from the people. Technologies of government power certainly contribute to this cultural phenomenon. American modernity, deeply inscribed on the Korean social body, should also be considered.

CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETATION

Now the puzzle playing of contextualizing cyber memorial zones is almost complete. However, the most important question in this journey remains unanswered. As pointed out in the previous chapter, the amalgamation of government technologies, the strong (but not noticeable) power of capital flow, and American modernity have enervated technologies of the empowered Korean populace's self. Considering the gravity of the point, there needs to be more elaboration as to how this was achieved. To better articulate this tricky puzzle, I will examine an incident that shocked Korea as well as the world in winter 2005: the stem cell fabrication scandal.

I have carefully observed and followed the development of this scandal because it revealed that the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in Korea were rhizomatically entangled. As flow of capital power deterritorializes the realm of rite of death, the realm of the life is encroached by the almighty dollar. Technologies of government domination were exercised in the name of national interest and its competitive power. "Fostered nationalism" was diffused into the public mind. The degree of power tension within these contexts is more intense than in cyber memorial zones. Korean response to the scandal appeared to contradict common sense. The Korean view on the scandal provides clues to understand how the technologies of governmental power were exercised on technologies of the Korean self.

Puzzles Articulated: Stem Cell Fabrication Scandal

On December 16, 2005, the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times loudly proclaimed: "Korean Scientist Said to Admit Fabrication in a Cloning Study" and "Top Scientist Accused of Faking Stem Cell Findings." Hwang Woo-suk, a Korean veterinary researcher, made headlines around the world. In *Science*, Hwang

claimed in March 2004 that he had produced the world's first cloned human embryo. In June 2005, Hwang was again in the limelight with his claims of producing genetically tailored human stem cells. In January 2006, however, an investigative panel from Seoul National University (SNU), where Hwang was a professor, found that he had fabricated evidence from both studies. Consequently, *Science* retracted his published reports.

As stated by J. S. Chang (2006), "once the pride of Korea, stem cell researcher Hwang Woo-suk rose fast, fell hard." Hwang Woo-suk was a Korean national hero who became an international celebrity as a world leader in stem cell research. Most of the Korean media shed positive light on his vision of cutting-edge biotechnology and its potential profitability, failing to examine the potential dark side of his research. The Korean government had hoped to transform his success into national competitive power. Hwang had received the full support of the government as a supreme scientist of the nation.

However, Hwang's fever, which seemed to never cool down, did not last long. In November 2005, MBC, a television network in Korea, aired an investigative report called PD Notebook that questioned the authenticity of Hwang's research. The stem cell fabrication scandal drove Koreans into a state of panic. For Koreans who took national pride in Hwang, MBC's question of validity was unpatriotic. PD Notebook was treated "like a Judas who sold off Jesus Christ" (Onish, 2006). The supporters of Hwang could not even believe the conclusions made by the SNU investigative panel.

Supporters created cyber cafes to cheer on Hwang, held numerous candlelight vigils, and demanded the reconsideration by the SNU panel. Their protests went too far when an extreme supporter of Hwang committed suicide in February 2006 in front

of a statue of Yi Sun Shin, a war hero who was a symbol of the country's salvation. Supporters often compared Hwang to Yi Sun Shin, which implies their belief that his achievement (although fabricated) would have saved the future of Korea.

Even those who acknowledged Hwang's misconduct seemed to have sympathy. They deemed that although Hwang made mistakes in his research, his efforts to produce human embryos and stem cells should be recognized and protected; faults should be overlooked so that Korea does not lose its opportunity to become a world leader in the field of biotechnology. One of Hwang's supporters says, "The most important thing for me is hope. I can live without truth but I can't live without hope" (Cookson & Fifield, 2006, para. #33). A 40 year-old woman concurs, "Some part of me still believes in Hwang Woo-suk. He cloned a dog - that's not an easy achievement. It shows a high level of skill" (Khang, 2006, para. #16). A psychologist also considers this incident from the view of hope: "those supporters just can't let their hopes slip away…They are like the people who predict wrongly that the end of the world is coming - and are still hoping it will occur 10 years later" (Khang, 2006).

The extremism of Hwang supporters resulted from fostered nationalism, which can be compared with the nationalistic sentiment constructed in cyber memorial zones. Jin Joong-kwon points out the problem of blind patriotism: "what we should be ashamed of ... is insane patriotism in which the truth is hidden for the sake of national interests" (Jin, 2006). Choi Jang-jip criticizes the Hwang scandal as the byproduct of the science driven policy in which nationalism and patriotism are merged:

> The government policies supporting and financing Hwang's work, based on his scientific achievements, merged with nationalism and patriotism and created a quasi-fascist environment that suppressed criticism and the freedom to search for the truth (T. H. Kim, 2006, para. #4).

In this sense, the democratic government, elected by people, promoted a quasi-fascist environment. What does the government intend to achieve by creating such an environment? Choi Jang-jip (Ahn & Kim, 2005) suggests an answer. Acknowledging that nationalism has been at the center of movements in the process of Korean democratization, Choi insists that leaders in democratic government have utilized the sentiments of nationalism for various political ends. For instance, when the government needed to implement the peace policy between South and North Korea through national cooperation, or when anti-Japanese or Chinese sentiment needed to be promoted from the strategic view, the sentiment of nationalism was mobilized. The government's support for Hwang woo-suk as a supreme scientist can be also placed in this context. In fact, Hwang related his research to national interests before the fabrication scandal, which demonstrates the connection of his research and the promotion of nationalism.

However, Choi argues that this fostered nationalism resulted in a relative underestimation of the problems that the populace encountered. These problems include the growing gap between the rich and the poor, the widening social polarization, and the deepening social destruction. Conglomerates could become the world standard with the increase of profitability and productivity; however, the competitive power of medium and small business would be weakened. The emergence of the neo-liberal paradigm in Korea was blamed on these occurrences. Since the economic crisis of 1997, according to Choi, democratic governments have made every effort to implement an economic policy that he calls the "Korean neo-liberal policy regime." In this policy, the authoritarian model of industrialization is integrated with the neo-liberal paradigm based on the Washington consensus.

However, the authoritarian model of industrialization is characterized as the ideology of growth for the sake of growth, the cooperation of state and conglomerates, and non-unionism; the neo-liberal paradigm is the basis of private ownership and market efficiency. Considering that these two models have completely different origins, such an effort to integrate them is inappropriate.

The problem of the "Korean neo-liberal policy regime" is that fostered nationalism influences the policy geared toward economic growth based on the neo-liberal paradigm, where the sentiment of nationalism accelerates the deterritorializing power of capital flow. Above all, Koreans take pride in outperforming America in terms of stem cell research. They believe that this research will make future national economy more competitive. This fostered national sentiment, however, reveals its fundamental limit: American modernity is inscribed in its body. When the MBC program challenged the genuineness of Hwang's research, outraged Koreans said in unison, "How dare a petty television program confront such a prestigious journal as *Science*?" Based on this view, most of the media would not dare to doubt the result of the stem cell research. Under the influence of American modernity, Koreans perceive *Science* as having absolute authenticity. Hwang's paper, published by *Science,* also has absolute genuineness to Koreans. In this vein, the MBC's challenge defied this absoluteness and therefore betrayed the nation.

This fostered national sentiment leads to a logical contradiction. On the one hand, stem cell research is seen as the competitive tool to outdo America; on the other hand, America is perceived as an absolute power in science and technology that should not be challenged. This reveals the limits of fostered nationalism in contrast with the national sentiment seen in the Red Devils phenomenon and the candlelight

vigil for the teenage girls who were killed. While the former is seen as technologies of governmental domination, the latter is seen as voluntary nationalism derived from the dynamics of shamanic inheritance.

The conspicuous difference between the two national sentiments is that fostered nationalism becomes the driving force of the "Korean neo-liberal policy regime." The fabricated stem cell research was a virulent strain resulting from the "Korean neo-liberal policy regime" under the strong influence of fostered national sentiments. The reasoning of "I can live without truth but I can't live without hope" is made possible in this context. The hope to make Korea the world leader through any means represents how the power of capital flow deterritorialized the morality of the nation. Such ideology validated unjustifiable acts in stem cell research.

Hwang claims that he used only a small number of eggs with the voluntary donation; however, the SNU investigative panel discovered that he had used more than 2000 human eggs donated by more than a hundred women, half of whom were paid for their donations. Nevertheless, Hwang's supporters argue that his act should be considered with his achievement. They also insist that because the ovum is not a living creature, the number of ova used is not problematic. Many women supporters promise to donate their eggs in order to continue the research. Such discourse shows how bodies of women are objectified in the name of national interests. This also insinuates that technologies of governmental domination are exercised on those of the Korean's self in a way that devaluates the meaning of life, objectifying it to comply with national interests.

The commercialization of the rite of death in cyber memorial zones can be considered in a similar context. Technologies of the empowered Korean populace's

self, which are insensitive to commercializing trends in cyber memorial zones, are

also placed in this context. As seen in the stem cell fabrication scandal, the meaning

of life is devaluated as a governmental tool to promote national interest or as a

product with competitive power in the market. Cyber memorial zones began as a

governmental tool to encourage cremation and soothe the sense of loss. Now, as seen

in the commercially driven cyber memorial zones, the meaning of the rite of death has

turned into a commodity. Based on fostered nationalism, the "Korean neo-liberal

policy regime" shows the drastic conversion of the meaning of the life and death into

a governmental tool or commodity. Under these circumstances, technologies of the

Korean populace's self, although empowered through the cyber cultural contexts, do

not seem to be the counter technologies responding to the power of capital flow and

the technologies of government domination.

<div align="center">Further Research</div>

In April 2006, the news headline of *The Korea Times* proclaimed, "US. FTA

to Hit Service Industry Hard" (Yoon, 2006). Reportedly, Free Trade Agreements

(FTA) negotiations between Korea and the United States will start full scale in June

2006. As this headline suggests, the FTA is expected to change the whole spectrum of

the social, economic, and cultural life in Korea. However, most Koreans seem to be

insensitive to FTA negotiations with the US. The drastic conversion of the meaning

of the life and death into a governmental tool or commodity signifies a complete

change.

Technologies of the Korean populace's self, insensitive to the

commercializing trend of cyber memorial zones, can be interpreted as the mirror of

the Korean populace being exposed to the vigorous but insinuating power of capital

flow. This suggests that the pervasive power of capital flow along with the neo liberal paradigm is a new means of government domination divergent from the modern era when political power has been the primary means of government domination. However, just because technologies of the Korean populace's self are insensitive to the pervasive power of capital flow, that does not necessarily mean the complete enervation of the Korean populace. Instead, it would be more appropriate to construe the technologies in relation to the degree of awareness of the power of capital flow.

The notion of digital spirituality in this study is significant in this context because it allows us to better understand in what degree technologies of the Korean populace's self responds to the exercise of the power of capital flow through the governmental techniques. By examining the construction of digital spirituality inside and outside of various cyber memorial zones, it could be articulated that the Korean populace is not well aware of the pervasion of the power of capital flow although this populace is sensitive to political oppression as government technologies. With that said, digital spirituality, as a channel of inherited shamanic dynamics, becomes an instrumental tool for a high degree of empowerment of the Korean populace in response to socio-political situations.

Considering digital spirituality in this way is also important in the Korean cybercultural context. The technologies of government domination become complicated by the rapid intrusion of capital power into Korean cybercultures and they are strong enough to control the longing of the populace for convenience and efficiency, particularly in relation to the values of life and death. Under these circumstances, the power of capital flow is exercised through the technologies of government domination on the daily routine practices of the populace. Significantly,

the power of capital flow as a new technology of government domination aggravates

the circumstances of the consumption culture. In other words, such governmental

technology does not control the body with physical oppression but instead

immanently and invisibly controls the longings of the populace. By observing the

degree of inherited shamanic dynamics of Korean cybercultures in the form of digital

spirituality, it can be articulated how technologies of the Korean populace's self

respond to the immanent and invisible intrusion of capital power flow into Korean

cyber culture.

Looking at the Korean cybercultures from the perspective of digital spirituality

becomes more momentous because future politics are expected to raise the tension

between cyber surveillance as a governmental technique and the growth of a

participatory democratic power as constructed in cybercultural contexts. Specifically,

as the Korean government establishes a Ubiquitous Sensor Network (USN) that

strengthens the technologies of governmental surveillance, the power tension between

governmental techniques and the technologies of the empowered self deserve more

attention from the view of digital spirituality. In this vein, digital spirituality becomes

an essential notion for studying the cybercultural context in Korea. Although this

study is limited to a Korean culturalal context for now, the notion of digital

spirituality can be developed further to contribute to the study of new media,

especially computer-mediated communication from the cultural studies perspective,

thereby broadening the interdisciplinary spectrum of media studies, cultural studies,

and religious studies.

Accordingly, this research suggests a new direction for the study of media

and culture. Power tension as viewed in the contexts of cyber memorial zones and the

new Korean funeral culture overcomes the potential limitations of current media studies. While current studies focus mainly on acknowledging individual action in the process of meaning making and meaning achievement, this project suggests that the power tension between the self and these contexts must also be examined. This research will uncover the potential of cultural studies, which previously concentrated on such topics as subjectivity and hegemony that must now be reconsidered in today's complicated environment. As Bennett (1992) points out, cultural studies need to examine the circumstances of culture as a governmentality. Technologies of government power come from the intertwinement of state and corporate power. Particularly in the CMC environment, governmental techniques are produced inside and outside of cyberspace. Because these techniques exercise the power of penetration, they become circumspect, circumstantial, and metamorphic. In this sense, cultural studies of cybercultures require meticulous articulation to contextualize the penetrative governmental power in cybercultural contexts.

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[1] Here the term Korea refers to South Korea. However, I intentionally used Korea throughout my dissertation because North and South Korea have shared the same cultural heritage before the Cold War ideology divided the Korean nation. I believe that dynamics of shamanic inheritance can be an instrumental tool to confirm that they are one nation beyond the trauma of the ideological war.