

**Fragments and Borders:
(re)constructing Korean womanhood
through patchwork**

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For my mother and my grandmothers

Abstract

This thesis is a decolonial feminist exploration of the representation, materials, and histories of Korean women told through Korean patchwork, theorising patchwork as a radical form to reimagine (material) histories of Korean women and women of the Korean diaspora. As an amalgam of different pieces that unifies once separated fragments, patchwork is identified as a material object, decolonial methodology, and metaphoric and corporeal lens that contributes polyphonic voices to histories of Korean women, while troubling nationalist agendas in the (re)construction of the Republic of Korea (1948 to 2023). Beginning with, but not bound to the patchwork wrapping cloth called jogakbo, I explore the possibilities of decorative, ornamental wrapping, by mapping new connections between jogakbo, patchwork in contemporary Korean fashions, and the Korean plastic surgery industries through the processes of cutting, sewing, mending, wrapping, healing, and becoming.

Locating and situating the practices of collecting jogakbo under General Park Chung Hee's cultural reform policies, this dissertation reveals how tradition and authenticity were evoked to build the written histories of the patchwork form. As the democratic uprisings of the 1980s led to the democratisation of the government, jogakbo came to represent folk cultures, while symbolising 'Korea' to global communities. By foregrounding these nationalist agendas, I draw on a multiplicity of perspectives to complicate these narratives, excavating new material relations between jogakbo as a wrapping cloth, patchwork fashions and the corporeal processes of plastic surgery cultures, while foregrounding these practices as women's work.

Three chapters of the thesis unfold to map Korean patchwork in archives, asking how Korean patchwork *as* jogakbo was constituted in national memories; the development of patchwork as style-fashion-dress in South Korea and for Korean diasporic communities abroad; embodied patchwork practices through (Korean) plastic surgery cultures, specifically exploring the experiences of blepharoplasty for Korean women and women of the Korean diaspora. This thesis builds and tests patchwork as a decolonial methodological approach, using material object

analysis, archive research, interviews, and oral histories, and autoethnography, to produce a cross-disciplinary practice that pieces fragments of knowledge, and memories of being as a conceptual writing of history.

Necessarily understanding 'Korea' and South Korea through the framework of coloniality and colonial modernity, *Fragments and Borders* highlights the multiple encounters that shaped the formation of the country through institutional and national memory. By illuminating the transcultural and global connections and constellations of Korean womanhood through patchwork, I complicate and trouble the constitutive practices of Korean womanhood through these polyvocal approaches, while imagining the possibilities for the Korean woman through an alternative ontology of ornamental existence.¹ In doing so, this thesis contributes to decolonial feminist studies, Korean diasporic studies, and Korean design and material histories by highlighting new possibilities for Korean womanhood by understanding patchwork as a form of mending and becoming.

¹ This thesis deploys and tests Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019).

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List of abbreviations

Note: The first appearance of these acronyms in this thesis uses full titles with their respective acronym referenced in parentheses (except those referenced below with a *). All references afterward will only appear with the acronym listed, except if it is deemed necessary to remind the reader of the abbreviation.

RR: Revised Romanization (system)
MR: McCune-Reischauer (system)
AMNH: American Museum of Natural History
US: United States (of America)
ROK: Republic of Korea
DPRK: Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
K-Wave: The Korean Wave
CMP: Colonial Matrix of Power
V&A: Victoria and Albert Museum
UK: United Kingdom
HoMA: Honolulu Museum of Art
KBF: Korea Bojagi Forum
SeMoCA: Seoul Museum of Craft Art
PEM: Peabody Essex Museum
J P: J P 제팩 (formerly Jen Pack)
FR: France *(does not use full title)
DE: Germany *(does not use full title)
BE: Belgium *(does not use full title)
AUS: Australia *(does not use full title)
KRW: Korean won *(does not use full title)
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
DDP(P): Dongdaemun Design Plaza (and Park)
IMF: International Monetary Fund
KCCUK: Korean Cultural Centre United Kingdom
MNAAG: Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet
WWD: Women’s Wear Daily
BoF: *Business of Fashion*
SFW: Seoul Fashion Week
GI: informal term for US soldier *(no full abbreviation, colloquial term)

Author's Declaration

This thesis represents partial submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Royal College of Art. I confirm that the work presented here is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis. During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.



Christin Yu

January 4, 2024

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Notes on language and terminology

Korean names and terms are translated using the Revised Romanization (RR) system. While the McCune-Reischauer (MR) system is widely used in academic journals and standardised as practice for the Royal College of Art's History of Design program, the RR system was standardised by the ROK's government in 2000 as the national translation system. Scholarship on translation systems argues that the MR system is 'antiquated and inefficient' as it aims to represent the 'pronunciation and not the spelling of Korean words'.³ According to the National Academy of Korean Language, the new RR system 'was devised as a compromise between the needs of Koreans and foreigners and because it was devised with both needs in question'.⁴ I recognise the problem of language as important to foreground, for such systems of knowledge are bound to colonial agendas. Frantz Fanon reminds us that '[a]ll colonized peoples [...] position themselves in relation to the civilizing language'⁵; language shapes and forms our being, and for colonised people, being is shaped and bound by languages that are imposed as systems of control and domination. This thesis pieces together both systems – using the RR system in my own authorship, while referencing the MR system through some academic citations, to reveal and highlight the shifting practices of translating language as reflective of an epistemological politic that is bound to national agendas.

I deploy practices that emerge from fashion studies to reconsider language. Following Sarah Cheang's, Erica de Greef's and Yoko Takagi's *Rethinking Fashion Globalization*, I too consider how the epistemological distinction between English and non-Euro-American terms in academia is defined through the italicisation of 'foreign words', and how this positions readers through an assumed vocabulary.⁶ I resist this graphic differentiation. Cheang, de Greef and

³ Chris Doll, 'Korean Rōmaniz'atiōn: Is It Finally Time for The Library Of Congress to Stop Promoting McCune-Reischauer and Adopt the Revised Romanization Scheme?', *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, 2017.165 (2017), 1–28 (pp. 1–8).

⁴ National Academy of the Korean Language, 'The Government's New System of Romanization for the Korean Language', *Korea Journal*, 41.1 (2001), 215–25.

⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Richard Philcox (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2021), p. 2.

⁶ Sarah Cheang, Erica De Greef, and Yoko Takagi, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Fashion Globalization*, ed. by Sarah Cheang, Erica De Greef, and Yoko Takagi (London, UK: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021), pp. 1–13 (p. 9).

Takagi also consider naming conventions, highlighting the cultural differences between the order of people's names represented in English – with the family name listed last – and cultures where the family name precedes the given names. They note that 'East Asian authors are often forced to alter their accustomed name order, which can result in feelings of alienation, and also leads to further confusion as readers attempt to work out which name-order convention has been used in any given instance.'⁷ Although I initially tried to adopt this strategy, I found that the variability between published research, and my interviewed subjects difficult to translate into a consistent practice in my thesis. For example, the artist Chunghie Lee has publications that list her name as Chunghie Lee, yet, in my interview with Charlotte Horlyck, she names the artist as Lee Chunghie. I wondered whether scholars with Korean names who were working in Anglo-European institutions were alienated by these practices, or whether their journeys and migrations were important to consider. Instead of reordering names to follow an assumed origin, I list names according to their published materials. In the case of Chunghie Lee, I list her name as Chunghie Lee, except in the citations of Horlyck's interviews.

I employ the term 'yellow woman' to reference a racialised and sexualised category of being that has been discursively constituted through imperial and colonial ideologies. According to Walter Mignolo, racial configurations congruent to classifications of skin colour can be traced to Carolus Linnaeus and later developed by Immanuel Kant, 'who metamorphosed Linnaeus's descriptive classification into a racial ranking.'⁸ As secularism replaced theology during the Enlightenment, race came to mark social difference replacing hierarchal categories of religious purity.⁹ Racial categories signified through colours are socially and historically constructed categories of coloniality, marked onto the skin surface, and specifically, skin's pigmentation.

⁷ Cheang, De Greef, and Takagi, 'Introduction', p. 9.

⁸ Walter D. Mignolo, 'Colonial/Imperial Differences: Classifying and Inventing Global Orders of Lands, Seas, and Living Organisms', in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 177–93 (p. 190).

⁹ For further reading see Mignolo, 'Colonial/Imperial Differences: Classifying and Inventing Global Orders of Lands, Seas, and Living Organisms'; Sylvia Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation - An Argument', *The New Centennial Review*, 3.3 (2003), 257–337.

Throughout the thesis, I denote ‘yellow’, ‘yellow woman’, ‘whiteness’ and so on, without quotations, but highlight here the constructed nature of these categories, using the term ‘racialised’ to define processes of mapping colonial and imperial agendas onto the epidermal surface.

The terms ‘bojagi’ and ‘jogakbo’ translate to mean ‘wrapping cloth’ and ‘patchwork wrapping cloth’, respectively. Jogakbo is a form of bojagi, but not all bojagi are jogakbo. However, bojagi is sometimes used as a shorthand for jogakbo, particularly in Chunghie Lee’s work, which is highlighted in Chapter One and Two. At times, I refer to the term ‘patchwork’ or ‘patchworked’ to reference pieces of jogakbo. Patchwork, as I explicate in the Introduction, references a process of piece-working and sewing, but I aim to build and explore this definition throughout the thesis.

In Chapter Three, I use ‘plastic surgery’ to encompass cosmetic surgery, aesthetic surgery, and reconstructive surgery, following So-Rim Lee’s implementation of the inclusive terminology. She clarifies in a footnote that

[t]he term *plastic surgery* is generally used in medical discipline to include two main categories: “reconstructive surgery,” aimed at restoring both bodily function and appearance from congenital, development, or trauma-related impairment; and “cosmetic (or aesthetic) surgery,” aimed at improving or enhancing the appearance of a functional body. In this essay, I use the term *plastic surgery* to address the inclusive surgical practice.¹⁰

I note that while I follow Lee’s practice for the most part, I reference ‘aesthetic surgery’ and ‘cosmetic surgery’ in the literature review of Korean plastic surgery history.

¹⁰ So-Rim Lee, ‘Between Plastic Surgery and the Photographic Representation: Ji Yeo Undoes the Elusive Narrative of Transformation’, *Positions: Asia Critique*, 30.4 (2022), 705–33 (p. 729).

Fragments and borders: an introduction

‘The yellow woman’s history is entwined with the production and fates of silk, ceramics, celluloid, machinery, and other forms of animated objectness.’

- Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism*¹¹

‘[N]o notion of History can precede the actual task of writing history because in the absence of a strict logic of representationalism, there is no outside event separable from its own textualization.’

- Tani E. Barlow, ‘Introduction,’ *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*¹²



L to R: *Figure 1*. B&W Photographic Print of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Missionary Exhibition 1900 folder, Archive Records Library. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.; *Figure 2*. Colour positive negative of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Missionary Exhibition 1900 folder, Archive Records Library. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

Two iterations of a representation of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* were slotted into a manilla envelope attached to a page amongst acquisition lists and objects cards in an archive record folder labelled ‘Missionary Exhibition 1900’ (*fig. 1, 2*). Stored at the stacks of the records library at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York, United States (US), both images were representations of the object captured in the same moment, taken on a large format camera that produced a 4 x 5-inch (colour) positive negative, and its corollary black and white print. The three notches on the top left corner of the colour negative belong to a coded system used to identify the film type, brand, and the emulsion side of the film. Accordingly, the notches

¹¹ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. xi–xii.

¹² Tani E. Barlow, ‘Introduction: On “Colonial Modernity”’, in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. by Tani E. Barlow (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 1–21 (p. 6).

implied that the colour negative was most likely developed from Kodak Ektachrome 64T Professional film.¹³

Despite emerging from a momentary temporal instance – a shutter releasing and catching light – the differences between the iterations were remarkable.¹⁴ The brightness of the light in the black and white print created a luminescent glow that defined the edges of the form in clear contrast to the background. In comparison, the colour negative seemed to be enveloped in darkness, such that the shape of the ties that created the bow on the top of the bundle cloth were not distinctly visible. Awash in tones of red, the low contrast throughout the colour negative made the varied colours of the fabric composing the patchwork more distinct. I speculate that in the creation of the black and white print, there was a technique of dodging applied to diffuse light from the overexposed areas to make the form more visible. The traces of this process created a ghostly halo around the object itself. While the two images were related as mirrored reflections, the differences highlight important questions about the nature of representation, such as how do the processes and interventions of materials and the technicians or authors of material processes effect the representation itself? How do these variations and possibilities of multiple representations and acknowledging the multiple processes of representation offer new ways to explore histories? Foregrounding these multiplicities can texture, complicate, and enrich our understanding of history itself, while troubling and revealing the very nature of representation as an image and imaginary.

This thesis is a decolonial feminist exploration of the representations, materials, and histories of Korean women told through Korean patchwork. In its material form, Korean patchwork is commonly known as jogakbo. This is a style of Korean wrapping cloth, known as

¹³ For reference see ‘Code Notches for KODAK Sheet Films’ (Eastman Kodak Company, 2004) <<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56a48ec2dc5cb49acfffd2de/t/57527bd7c6fc086cfe5095e9/1465023469465/Kodak+4x5+Film+Notch+Code+Index.pdf>> [accessed 28 August 2022].

¹⁴ I initially assumed the images to be two different captures, but after placing them on top of one another in Adobe Photoshop, I confirmed that the representations were the same. The black and white photographic print (*fig. 1*) was most likely produced from the colour positive negative (*fig. 2*).

bojagi, and *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (fig. 1, 2) is an example. There are many kinds of bojagi, including embroidered, quilted, and decorative types of the wrapping cloth. Jogakbo is classified as a one subset category of bojagi,¹⁵ with translations referencing jogak- as meaning ‘small segments’.¹⁶ As jogakbo is a form of bojagi, the patchwork style is sometimes referenced as bojagi.¹⁷ Wrapping cloths were and are still used for varied ceremonial occasions in Korean culture, including weddings, funerals, and ancestral rites, as well as for practical functions, such as carrying, covering, and storing clothing, objects, bedding, and food.¹⁸ Predominantly square in shape, jogakbo was an everyday textile composed of material fragments that were pieced and stitched together, and often included straps sewn to each corner.

Although there are said to be historical records of (embroidered, painted, and quilted) bojagi (wrapping cloths in general) existing from the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910),¹⁹ there are no specific records that contextualise the origins of jogakbo; the patchwork’s lack of presence in the archaeological findings from the royal courts of the period have led some researchers to assume the form to be associated with impoverished classes, and reflective of frugality because of material necessity.²⁰ In the Republic of Korea (ROK), written histories of jogakbo have defined the textiles as the creative expressions of Korean women during the Joseon dynasty.²¹ Such

¹⁵ Huh Dong Hwa, *The Wonder Cloth* (Seoul, ROK: The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1988), pp. 18–39.

¹⁶ Kumja Paik Kim, ‘Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty’, in *Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes & Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, by Kumja Paik Kim and Huh Dong-hwa (Seoul, ROK: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1995), pp. 25–33 (p. 29).

¹⁷ This is apparent in Chunghee Lee’s work, and some generalised entries in textile reference books. See Chunghee Lee, *Bojagi & Beyond II* (Providence, RI: Beyond & Above, 2014).

¹⁸ Kumja Paik Kim, ‘Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty’, p. 28; Huh Dong Hwa and Sheila Hoey Middleton, *Traditional Korean Wrapping Cloths* (Seoul, ROK: The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1990), p. 12; Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, p. 19.

¹⁹ Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, p. 19; Kumja Paik Kim, ‘Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty’, p. 28.

²⁰ Kumja Paik Kim, ‘A Celebration of Life: Patchwork and Embroidered Pojagi by Unknown Korean Women’, in *Creative Women of Korea: The Fifteenth Through the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Young-Key Kim-Renaud (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 163–73; Moon-Ja Kan, ‘Development of Fashion Art Design with Jogakbo, a Korean Traditional Wrapping Cloth’, *International Journal of Costume*, 7.1 (2007), 11–21 (p. 12); Huh Dong Hwa, ‘A Tribute to Unsung Artists’, in *Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes & Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, by Kumja Paik Kim and Huh Dong Hwa (Seoul, ROK: The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1995), pp. 34–36 (p. 36).

²¹ Huh Dong Hwa, *The Wonder Cloth*; Charlotte Horlyck, ‘Questioning Women’s Place in the Canon of Korean Art History’, in *Shaping of Modernity in the Arts of East Asia, 16th-20th Centuries*, ed. by Kristen L. Chiem and Lara C.W. Blanchard (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

narratives became powerful evocations of endurance, creativity, and survival in the ROK, particularly during the period of democratisation in the 1980s. Korean women were described as the unseen artisans behind the ‘authentically’ Korean forms, and Korean tradition expressed through Korean women supported a unifying national ideology, which idealised antiquity as the nation rapidly modernised.

My study traces and unpacks narratives of Korean women through patchwork from a so-called diasporic positionality, theorising the practice as a form of mending. Patchwork is both an amalgam of different pieces, unified through threads that sew together once separate fragments, and a decorative form that wraps, presents, and protects its contents. By situating these stories as a history of the ROK, I explore Korean women and women of the Korean diaspora through the tumult of colonialism, geopolitical partition, war, rapid modernisation, and post-industrialisation in relation to patchwork, as a material, corporeal, and decorative practice, and as a form of labour, both ritualised and embodied.

The questions of this research began with seeds that germinated from my own experiences of this world in the aftermath of Brexit and the rise of Trumpism where I felt the precarity of my racialised womanhood. Tracing my family histories and journeys as the experiences of diaspora and nation, I excavate the relationalities between material matter, personal memory, and women’s embodied experiences of making and being. In doing so, I trouble the distinction between Korean women and women of the Korean diaspora, constituting inclusive and expansive identities beyond the coloniality of national borders. Decolonial scholarship asks us to reveal and disentangle ourselves from the epistemological and ontological concepts that emerged from modernity, which includes the formation of nation-states.²² My act of sowing (these seeds) is decolonial praxis, illuminating what Catherine Walsh celebrates as ‘the

²² Walter D. Mignolo, ‘What Does It Mean to Decolonize?’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 105–34 (p. 125).

sacred, ancestral, erotic, spiritual, and creative' aspects of existence that necessarily complicate epistemologies constituted by rationality and reason.²³

By beginning with patchwork as jogakbo, I ask how the textile *became* Korean. I argue that jogakbo was defined as a form of ritual labour that through its repeated performance reinforced gender norms for Korean women. Simultaneously, Korean women as the producers of materials were, by extension, producing knowledge and ideologies. Rather than view these theoretical arguments as conflicting, I map the histories of jogakbo through a co-constitutive, relational understanding of the multiple producers and actors that defined and continue to define Korean womanhood and jogakbo. Following this exploration of Korean patchwork as jogakbo, I develop questions that ask how patchwork in relation to bodies, through fashion and plastic surgery cultures, constitutes Korean womanhood through once-fragmented and now-unified decorative forms that wrap bodies. How can patchwork be used as a lens to imagine the potential of construction and *being*, and as a process of mending and subsequent, healing?

Importantly, I also explore materiality, and specifically the ornamental materiality of Korean patchwork as a form of personhood that through Anne Anlin Cheng's *Ornamentalism* imagines an alternative 'ontological condition produced out of synthetic accretions'.²⁴ Cheng proposes that yellow womanhood is expressed through materiality, offering an alternative kind of being made from ornamental, decorative material layers, in contrast to the organic body of the white modern liberal subject. Building from a diasporic positionality, Cheng maps Asiatic femininity through an American racial logic that does not focus on the real Asian or Asian American woman, but instead, her representations in Euro-American culture.²⁵ By theorising patchwork both as a material and corporeal conceptualisation of ornamentation and mending, I aim to test Cheng's feminist theory, and materialist histories of racialisation, contributing to

²³ Catherine E. Walsh, 'Sowing and Growing Decoloniality In/As Praxis: Some Final Thoughts', in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 99–102 (p. 101).

²⁴ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 3.

²⁵ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. x–25.

decolonial feminist studies, and Korean diasporic design and materials histories by highlighting new possibilities for understandings of Korean womanhood.

My research also contributes to materialist histories of race-making, enriching, and complicating the genealogies of yellow womanhood by foregrounding histories of patchwork and Korean women. Although Cheng's work proposes to theorise Asian and Asian American femininities, her privileging of Chinese American case studies implores us to think about other kinds of racism and race-making in the West, and within racial genealogies of yellowness. By illuminating histories of Korean patchwork as Korean women, and women of the Korean diaspora, I explore the geopolitical circumstances that have shaped the imagined Korea and Koreanness through East Asian and global relations, highlighting the specific histories and tensions between Sino-Korean diplomacies and the colonialities that forged South Korean identities to enrich and complicate this understanding of yellow womanhood, asking is the Korean woman *yellow*? This research draws from feminist scholarship, decolonial studies, material culture studies and design histories to analyse textiles and textile materials, along with the intimate, personal, and situational histories that form the fragments of Korean history, and Korean womanhood through patchworking. Critically, I build this research through the shape and form of patchwork, theorising piecing together fragments as a critical decolonial feminist method that troubles nationalist histories, reimagining the epistemologies and ontologies of Korean womanhood.

Situating research: a history of the ROK

This history of Korean patchwork explores Korean women through the (re)construction of the ROK, which was formed in 1948. '(Re)construction' signifies both the reconstruction of the ROK as an imagined Korea, and the construction of a nation-state shaped by Cold War ideologies as a counterpart to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Initially established through a succession of military dictatorships, nationalism in the ROK espoused the

mythology of the Han minjok (Korean nation),²⁶ drawing a direct historical lineage to a Korea of the Joseon dynasty in order to unite the country under the belief of a singular identity. This unifying narrative was critical to preserve and ignite collective patriotism after the devastation of Japanese occupation (1910 to 1945), geopolitical partition, and the Korean War (1950 to 1953), which was further complicated by the history of erasure during Japanese colonialism, when Korean cultures were actively destroyed, and Japanese cultures promoted to subjugate the Korean people.²⁷ The ROK's nationalist agenda sought to simultaneously retrieve a past, while building the country.

Between 1948 to 1988, South Korea was controlled by a succession of military regimes, which included the First Republic of Syngman Rhee between 1948 to 1960. Rhee's regime was overthrown by massive student uprisings, and replaced with the democratically-elected Yun Poson, who was president between 1960 to 1962. Yun (forcibly) resigned as General Park Chung Hee's regime took power through a military coup d'état in May 1961. Park's respective Third Republic lasted between 1961 to 1979 and frames this thesis as a formative period for the establishment of cultural tradition and regulations surrounding cultural memory. While it was under Rhee, which policies and ministries for cultural diplomacy were initially established, it was not until Park's administration when the role of culture itself was explicitly named in public addresses.²⁸ Park's legacy is defined by a complicated and controversial memory. He was a

²⁶ Haksoon Yim describes this as the belief of a homogenous group of people. For further reading see Haksoon Yim, 'Cultural Identity and Cultural Policy in South Korea', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 8.1 (2002), 37–48.

²⁷ Todd A. Henry maps how Korean public space was used to reinforce Japanese rule. For further reading see Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014). Yunah Lee references Gong-ho Choe's findings that 'Korean craft and design under the Japanese rule, although making progress in modernization and systemization in a certain degree, evolved with the loss or distortion of Korean tradition (skill and aesthetics) and resulted in the separation of making (craft) from ideas (design).' For further reading see Gong-ho Choe, *At the Crossroad between Industry and Art: Korean Modern Craft History (Saneupgwa Yesului Giroeseo: Hanguk Geundae Gongyesaron)* (Seoul: Misulmunhwa, 2008) IN Yunah Lee, 'Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia: Part 3 Korea', *Journal of Design History*, 25.1 (2012), 93–106 (p.95). Sunghee Choi also discusses how 'Japan tried to obliterate Korean identity by assimilating it into that of the Japanese' in her exploration of Korean identity and the National Museum. For further reading see Sunghee Choi, 'Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea', in *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World*, ed. by Simon J. Knell and others (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

²⁸ Museum Studies scholar Sumi Kim highlights how the Rhee administration established the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1948 to foster 'cultural promotion abroad through cultural propaganda', and also forged initial

violent oppressor of dissenting voices of pro-democracy, but also remembered for his role in the rapid economic development defined as ‘the Miracle on the Han River’. His cultural policies remain in place today through the government institutions he established.²⁹

Park was assassinated in 1979, succeeded by a short interim presidency under Choi Gyu Ha (also spelled Choe Gyuha or Choi Gyu Ha)³⁰ between 1979 to 1980. Chun Doo Hwan (also spelled Jeon Duhwan)³¹ established the Fifth Republic between 1980 to 1988 as an authoritarian dictatorship, gaining control through two successive military coups in 1979 and 1980. Chun is largely remembered for his role in the Gwangju Uprising, a populist action of students and workers in 1980, which ended as a civilian massacre. This collective protest is broadly contextualised as part of the minjung movement, which arose as a pro-democracy action associated with common people, comprised of Korean students, labourers, and youth who were informed by liberation theory; it paralleled Latin American, Eastern European and South African movements of the time.³² The prominent historian of Korea, Bruce Cumings, defines Korean democracy as a populist movement that was built from the bottom up to trouble and ‘overturn the structure of American hegemony and military dictatorship.’³³ In 1988, the ROK officially turned into a parliamentary democracy.

In *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, Seungsook Moon maps the notion of modernity derived from the Joseon dynasty at the end of the nineteenth century as the ideological imperative for the elites controlling the ROK under military rule to adopt a ‘strong

relations with UNESCO and the World Bank. Yet, it was not until Park’s government, when culture was defined as a tool to develop subjecthood. For further reading see Sumi Kim, ‘Curating Culture, Exhibiting Nation: The Development of South Korea’s Cultural Diplomacy and Korean Exhibitions in “Universal” Museums’ (unpublished PhD, University of Leicester, 2020), pp. 49–56.

²⁹ For further reading see *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, ed. by Byung-Kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2011).

³⁰ The Korean translation is 최규하

³¹ The Korean translation is 전두환

³² For further reading see Bruce Cumings, ‘The Korean Crisis and the End of “Late” Development’, *New Left Review*, 1.232 (1998), 43–72 (p. 58-59); Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007).

³³ Cumings, ‘The Korean Crisis and the End of “Late” Development’, p. 60.

military and high productivity based on advanced technology'.³⁴ In doing so, Moon reveals the shifting ideological landscape of the unified period at the turn of the twentieth century before Japanese occupation. This thesis does not specifically focus on histories of the Joseon period, but necessarily explores the neo-Confucian ideologies of the time as shaping the reception of modernity, the development of Korean womanhood, and these histories of patchwork. By the middle of the nineteenth century, processes of modernisation were changing the ideological landscape of Joseon Korea.

While the Treaty of Ganghwa Island (also known as the Japan-Korea Treaty) of 1876 officially opened Korea's borders, establishing modern diplomatic relations with Japan and shortly after, America,³⁵ processes of modernisation arguably began earlier. According to Cumings, the Gabo Reforms which were mandated at the end of July 1884 marked the 'birth of modern Korea' by abolishing 'class distinctions, slavery, the exam system, even the clothes Koreans wore, even the long pipes that symbolized yangban status' and forming a 'new State Council, with eight ministries on the Japanese model'.³⁶ The scholar frames this birth through geopolitical events in East Asia, highlighting the defeat of China during the Opium Wars of 1839 to 1842, and Japan's concession to Commodore Matthew Perry's navy in 1853 as crucial events that opened East Asia to the Anglo-European world and its ideologies. Historian Todd Henry argues that while Korea's 'gradual modernization' is viewed by Korean historians to have been advanced by Korean diplomatic relations with Americans, 'the leaders of the Great Han Empire'³⁷ were [already] engaged in a globalized process of nation-state building, the native and nonnative elements of which cannot be easily disaggregated because of the city's (and the

³⁴ Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 2.

³⁵ Hyunsoo Woo includes 'Germany in 1883, Russia in 1884, and France in 1886'. Hyunsoo Woo, 'Early U.S. Encounters with Korean Civilization', in *Arts of Korea: Histories, Challenges, and Perspectives*, ed. by Jason Steuber and Allysa B. Peyton (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2018), pp. 200–217 (p. 216).

³⁶ Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, p. 120.

³⁷ Henry notes that 'the Great Han Empire, [was] a name associated with [the] nationalizing state under Emperor Kojong' (1896-1910), this was reverted back to Joseon with the 'promulgation of the Annexation Treaty on August 29, 1910 [when] Japanese authorities moved to gain full control over the symbolic topography not just of Seoul, but of the entire peninsula.' For further reading see Henry, p. 28.

nation's) position in an overlapping network of semicolonial structures.³⁸ Naming existing Sino-Korean relations, and the effects of the geopolitical altercations of the Sino-Japanese War, Henry frames Korea's modernisation through these regional conflicts and existing diplomatic relations which shaped both Seoul and Korea. According to Henry and Cumings, modernisation in Korea must be viewed through the multiple encounters within and surrounding the region of East Asia beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Through one of the first patchworks collected in a public institution, which I analyse in Chapter One, I map a genealogy of Korean womanhood through the multiple encounters with modernity during Korea's Open Port period (1876 to 1910), exploring the early Christian missions that shaped gender reform through the institutionalisation of education and healthcare. While this work does not focus on the period of Japanese occupation, I necessarily foreground the colonial period through the theoretical frameworks of colonial modernity and coloniality. The historical periods before geopolitical partition set the multi-layered ideological foundations for the ROK's constitution of the Korean woman.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the ROK grew from an impoverished, war-torn nation to a globally recognised economic and cultural powerhouse. My thesis title's 'construction' thus maps the development of the ROK from 'a dependent, penetrated status'³⁹ through military dictatorships and rapid industrialisation, to the democratisation period of the 1980s and into the period of post-industrialisation, which saw the rise of Korean culture as soft power. The establishment of the ROK was shaped by Cold War antagonisms, namely the neo-imperial influences of the US which not only demarcated the line of geopolitical division in 1945, but also funnelled economic and military support to the country, influencing the ROK's

³⁸ Henry, p. 25.

³⁹ Bruce Cumings explains Jung-en Woo's quote: 'First [Korea] was a colony, then it was occupied by a foreign army, then the United States retrieved it from oblivion in the summer of 1950. It was penetrated, not least by an American general commanding its army and full divisions of foreign troops. Lacking much domestic capital, the state found a way to use foreign capital and earnings both to reward its friends and to promote efficient production.' For further reading see Jung-en Woo, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in the Industrialization of Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 6–7 IN Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, p. 299.

nationhood as a counterpart to the DPRK's communist regime.⁴⁰ Forging lasting and invested political and ideological relations,⁴¹ both Rhee's and Park's governments were shaped by US military support and capital investment, such as the import substitution industrialisation that drove the textile industries toward American markets in the 1960s.⁴²

US-ROK relations were skewed toward a model of asymmetrical dependency that exploited South Korean labour and resources. These geopolitical relations frame Chapter Two, which explores globalisation through the development of national textile and garment industries, and eventually, the design sector. In Chapter Three, Cold War politics underpin the development of the medical industry in the ROK, which was initially supported by the military industrial complex and neoliberal policies towards medical privatisation, where biomedicine was a form of technical aid defined by American agendas.⁴³ 'Fragments and borders' in the title of this thesis, not only names the material and corporeal compositions of patchwork, but situates this research in a history of geopolitical division shaped by the influence of the US and Cold War policies – illuminating a fragmented nation.

By the 1990s, economists described the ROK as one of the Asian Tigers. Alongside Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, the label signified the success of the ROK's rapid industrialisation and economic growth from the 1960s, marking the country as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. However, the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis severely impacted the South Korean economy, with the currency collapsing on the global market, and the unemployment rate reaching the highest level in the history of the ROK.⁴⁴ This period marked by the Asian Financial Crisis frames the second half of this thesis, which explores the rise of the

⁴⁰ Bruce Cumings, 'A Murderous History of Korea', *London Review of Books*, 39.10 (2017), 17–19.

⁴¹ For further reading see Cumings, 'A Murderous History of Korea'; Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, pp. 299–341; Cumings, 'The Korean Crisis and the End of "Late" Development'.

⁴² Dennis McNamara, 'Reincorporation and the American State in South Korea: The Textile Industry in the 1950s', *Sociological Perspectives*, 35.2 (1992), 329–42 (p. 330). Also see Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, p. 305.

⁴³ For further reading see John P. DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea Since 1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

⁴⁴ For further reading see Uk Heo and Kim, 'Financial Crisis in South Korea: Failure of the Government-Led Development Paradigm', *Asian Survey*, 40.3 (2000), 492–507; Cumings, 'The Korean Crisis and the End of "Late" Development'.

‘Hallyu’ or the Korean Wave (K-Wave) movement in the late 1990s. Scholars trace the term ‘Hallyu’ to Chinese journalists who identified the rising influence of Korean cultural products in the Asia-Pacific.⁴⁵

The rise of the K-Wave as a regional and now global phenomenon was shaped by national strategies to de-industrialise and rebrand the country as a design center, using culture as soft power. Devised by Joseph Nye, ‘soft power’ denotes the ability for nations to influence and shape the agendas and structures of global conversations through ‘intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions’ and the ability for countries to ‘structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its power.’⁴⁶ Nye, an American political scientist, coined the term to reflect the shifting forces of control and influence after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, when he witnessed the rise of transnational corporations as neoliberal capitalism that was not bound to the governance and regulation of nation-states, and world politics increasingly governed by relational dependencies.⁴⁷ The Hallyu, and Korean culture serve as products of the ROK’s soft power, promoting a national agenda through an export market that simultaneously develops the national economy, while building global influence through culture and tourism. This research initially situates the ROK in the Korea of c.1900, exploring modernisation and modernity through Korean patchwork as women’s work, and develops to include the formation of cultural traditions during the ROK’s national reformation of the 1970s to the 1980s, finally ending on the present-day 2010s, to explore the transformation and reiterations of Korean patchwork through (post)modern cultural products, forms, and bodies.

⁴⁵ Cho Hae-Joang, ‘Reading the “Korean Wave” as a Sign of Global Shift’, *Korea Journal*, 45.4 (2005), 147–82 (p. 150); Bok-rae Kim, ‘Past, Present and Future of Hallyu (Korean Wave)’, *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 5.5 (2015), 154–60 (p. 154); Jeongmee Kim, ‘Why Does Hallyu Matter? The Significance of the Korean Wave in South Korea’, *Critical Studies in Television*, 2.2 (2007), 47–59 (p. 47).

⁴⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., ‘Soft Power’, *Foreign Policy*, 80 (1990), 153–71 (p. 167-8).

⁴⁷ For further reading see Nye, Jr.

Literature Review

Defining and decolonising Korean womanhood

The question of the ‘Korean woman’ is central to this thesis. Seminal scholarship by Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott reminds us that gender is a discursive category that is historically and geographically contingent. Gender is differentiated from the biological essentialism of sex or sexual difference, and it is theorised as a structural category of analysis.⁴⁸ By mapping the historical processes that have constituted, shaped, and defined the category of gender, I explore the ‘Korean woman’ through the ideological structures that have defined her roles in the reconstruction of the ROK. This category of the Korean woman and the woman of the Korean diaspora are distinguished in fields of Korean feminism, and Korean American studies, but I deploy decolonial feminist approaches which critique universalist, hegemonic ideas of feminism, and instead explore the relations, connections, and networks between national boundaries and women traversing them, while foregrounding embodied experiences of being.

Decolonial feminisms ‘displace the Western rationality and hegemonic discourse of white, Eurocentred feminism and the unitary category of *woman*’,⁴⁹ meaning that the category of the ‘Korean woman’ must be conceptualised through its pluralities, and moreover, that Korean women must be disentangled from structures of coloniality that have viewed her role in subordination to both men and white women. This concept is previously echoed in Elaine H. Kim’s and Chungmoo Choi’s *Dangerous Women*, who argue that ‘[f]eminism in the colonies [...] inherited [the] double legacy of discriminatory gender and race politics’.⁵⁰ Decolonising Korean womanhood requires then, that we explore coloniality/modernity, what Aníbal Quijano coins,

⁴⁸ For further reading see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Fourth edition (New York and London: Routledge Classics, 2007); Joan Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review*, 91.5 (1986), 1053–75.

⁴⁹ Catherine E. Walsh, ‘Insurgency and Decolonial Prospect, Praxis, and Project’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 33–56 (p. 39).

⁵⁰ Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi, ‘Introduction’, in *Dangerous Women: Gender & Korean Nationalism*, ed. by Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–8 (p. 7).

the colonial matrix of power (CMP), or what Tani E. Barlow describes as colonial modernity,⁵¹ and its impact on Korea and Korean identities, in order to *delink* or disconnect from Western systems of knowledge and being, and to *re-exist*, or redefine being through ancestral cosmologies and ways of thinking.

Decolonial scholarship emerged in the Global South after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, as a liberatory framework that was born from academic and public spheres.⁵² Despite the perceived end to colonisation as a geopolitical system, decolonial thinkers, including Quijano, Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, sought to illuminate how coloniality continued and continues to structure the very world we live in, through the rise of neoliberal capital as globalisation and categories of race, which were co-constituted by colonial relations. Coloniality/modernity, shorthand for the CMP, names the systems of power and domination that have come to constitute the modern world from the sixteenth century to the present day. In the experience of contemporary globalisation, neoliberal agendas of capitalist free trade perpetuate the system of domination by the Anglo-European world, maintaining control through racial capitalism. Decolonial thinking, and decolonial praxis, requires us to first *see* the coloniality to delink from it and create new (or retrieve ancestral) ways of thinking and being. This analytics of coloniality requires us to reveal and unpack the epistemologies that shape our ontologies, critically revealing the ideologies and overrepresented narratives that define us.

I commence this project at the beginning of the twentieth century, through Korean encounters with modernity. Womanhood in the ROK was thus constituted through the braiding of neo-Confucianism, Christian modernity, and capitalist/colonial modernities. Confucianism is, according to gender historians Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush and Joan R. Piggott, ‘a cluster of ethical ideals articulated in the Chinese classics as well as [Confucian] texts

⁵¹ For further reading see Barlow.

⁵² Walter D. Mignolo, ‘The Conceptual Triad: Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 135–52 (p. 142).

themselves.⁵³ The ideas were originally introduced to Korea by the Silla state in the seventh century, but it was not until the twelfth century that Korean scholars began to internalise a Confucian worldview.⁵⁴ Confucianisation refers to the deployment of Confucian ideologies as ‘a civilizing process that promised to humanize social mores and practices by transforming morality.’⁵⁵ Ko et. al. explain that this process involves both the external, institutional, or state constitution of ideals, that are then internalised on an individual level.⁵⁶ Neo-Confucianism refers to interpretations of Confucianism that were introduced to Korea toward the end of the Koryo dynasty (918 to 1392 CE), and which significantly shaped gendered relations during the Joseon period, particularly its shift toward a strict patrilineal system. Decolonial scholarship focuses on Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies as coloniality but does not consider how Confucianism was used as a civilising process. As part of a proto-colonial process in Korea, this thesis reveals the ways in which Confucianism was braided with colonial modernities to create ideologies that shaped Korean womanhood.

Encounters with Christianity and the West during the late Joseon period often referenced the perceived oppression of Korean women under the neo-Confucian system, but scholars of gender researching the premodern period, including Ko et. al, Mark Peterson, Martina Deuchler, and Laurel Kendall, argue that there was no singular form of neo-Confucianism. Instead, there were shifting practices of neo-Confucian orthodoxy, which also varied throughout each class.⁵⁷ Importantly, the scholars argue that women were active agents in

⁵³ Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott, ‘Introduction’, in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. by Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 1–26 (p. 3).

⁵⁴ Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, pp. 9–12.

⁵⁵ Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, p. 9.

⁵⁶ Ko et. al. reference Norbert Elias’s concept of a civilizing process. For further reading see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, p. 9.

⁵⁷ For further reading see Martina Deuchler, ‘Preface’, in *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, ed. by Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson (New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc., 1983), pp. 1–3; Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson, ‘Introduction: “Traditional Korean Women”: A Reconsideration’, in *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, ed. by Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson (New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc., 1983), pp. 5–21; Hyaewool Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009); C.C. Vinton, ‘Obstacles to Missionary Success in Korea’, *Missionary Review of the World*, 7.11 (1894).

the negotiations between embracing official norms and resisting others.⁵⁸ Once Christianity was introduced to Korea, it served as a competing civilising process that used the perceived oppression of Korean women under neo-Confucianism as justification for missionary work. As multiple modernities encroached on East Asia, Confucianism was imagined as a monolithic framework constructed in binary relation to the ‘progress’ narratives of Western Enlightenment, and as a shorthand for ‘Chinese civilization, secret of Asian economic success, or obstacle to modernization.’⁵⁹ Korean womanhood in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries was shaped by encounters between neo-Confucianism, Christian modernity, colonial modernity, and later as the ROK developed, forms of militarised and capitalist modernities.

Binary opposition was a dialogical construction of the CMP that sought to overturn cosmologies founded on ‘*complementary dualities* (and/and)’ with ‘*dichotomies* or *contradictory dualities* (either/or)’.⁶⁰ At the core of the CMP is a binary construction, theorised by Sylvia Wynter as the overrepresentation of Man/Human, which produced the binary between Man/Human vs. the Other.⁶¹ This Anglo-European version of Man/Human, prototyped on the white bourgeois male body, was a local or regional ideal, that became a global paradigm supported and reinforced through coloniality, constituting racism and sexism. As Christian modernity and/as colonial modernity initially encroached on the Korean peninsula, these modernities were placed in opposition to neo-Confucianism.

Gender studies scholar Hyaewol Choi defines the term ‘Christian modernity’ in her 2009 book, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, as ‘an ideology that advocates the idea of an inevitable historical movement toward material and technological

⁵⁸ For further reading see Deuchler; Kendall and Peterson; Mark Peterson, ‘Women without Sons: A Measure of Social Change in Yi Dynasty Korea’, in *Korean Women: View from the Inner Room*, ed. by Laurel Kendall and Mark Peterson (New Haven, CT: East Rock Press, Inc., 1983), pp. 33–44; Ko, Haboush, and Piggott.

⁵⁹ Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Walter D. Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 153–76 (pp. 154–55).

⁶¹ For further reading see Wynter. Also see Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’, pp. 156–59.

modernity and places the moral, cultural, and spiritual role of Christianity at the core of that enterprise.⁶² Christian modernity served a civilising agenda, mapping religious beliefs onto modernity's ideals of progress through science and technology, which shaped the gendered relations of early missionaries in Korea and their (educating) programs. According to Choi, Korean historiography defined modern Korean womanhood as liberated by (American) Christian gender ideals, but in actuality, there was a 'dynamic interplay between the Confucian-prescribed gender ideology of Korea, the nationalistic desires for nation-building among Korea intellectuals, and the Christian gender ethics of American women missionaries.'⁶³ Moreover, the narrative of feminist liberation from the West was diluted by the strict values of Victorian womanhood. In reality, as modernity encroached on the peninsula, Korean women were influenced by different value systems and geopolitical actors.

A pervasive gender ideology of the time was that of the 'Hyeonmo Yangcheo' ('Wise Mother, Good Wife'), and while it was previously perceived in Korean feminist scholarship to emerge as a construct of neo-Confucian values or as a Japanese colonial construct, Choi argues that the ideal was shaped by early Christian encounters. Although it was perceived that education reform offered Korean women liberation, Victorian values were instilled through educational demonstrations of domestic hygiene and labour, teaching Korean women the importance of being the 'future mothers who would build Christian homes'.⁶⁴ Gendered identities in Korea then, at the turn of the twentieth century, must be considered through the intersecting influences of 'Western modernity, Confucian gender ideology, Korean nationalism, and Japanese colonialism'.⁶⁵ Rather than view Christian modernity as distinct and oppositional to women's roles under Confucianism, Choi illuminates the entangled ideologies which continually placed women in domestic households.

⁶² Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, pp. 8–11.

⁶³ Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. x.

⁶⁴ Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 87.

⁶⁵ Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 18.

As the ROK was formed, and ‘Korea’ rebuilt, women constituted and were constituted by forms of androcentric nation-building. Feminist scholars Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi remind us that Korean women and women in diasporic Korean communities were shaped by the post-colonial agenda of nationalism in the ROK that imagined a ‘fraternal community’.⁶⁶ By illuminating how women troubled these masculinist discourses, their book *Dangerous Women*, explores the multiple ways that women found agency, while interrogating how nationalism shaped gender relations. In ‘Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea’, Choi maps gendered relations through US-ROK diplomacy, highlighting how commodities of capitalism were used as ‘sensuous signifier[s] of colonialism’,⁶⁷ meaning that neo-colonial domination was mapped onto goods which signified American power through charity in the 1960s. Elsewhere, Choi theorises this charity as forging a ‘liberator-benefactor’ dynamic. In her 1993 essay, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’, she argues that the American money and military support funnelled into the ROK’s reconstruction instilled the country with American values, influencing ‘(post)colonial South Koreans [...] to mimic Western hegemonic culture and have reproduced a colonial pathology of self-denigration and self-marginalization’.⁶⁸ Choi’s concern with the ‘colonization of consciousness’ over the temporal or material markers of postcolonialism⁶⁹ align her to decolonial agendas, for she is concerned with the cultural expressions of coloniality.

In her essay on gendered relations, Choi demonstrates how the gift exchange of this aforementioned US-ROK charity, constituted the sexual economy of militarised sexual services. In the 1950s, as the South Korean nationalist project carried out through militarised modernity set to legitimise its control through anti-colonial discourse, it ‘paradoxically claimed spiritual

⁶⁶ Kim and Choi, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Chungmoo Choi, ‘Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea’, in *Dangerous Women: Gender & Korean Nationalism*, ed. by Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), pp. 9–32 (p. 11).

⁶⁸ Chungmoo Choi, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’, *Positions*, 1.1 (1993), 77–102 (p. 83).

⁶⁹ Chungmoo Choi, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’, p. 79.

superiority and masculine integrity, while imposing chastity upon its women.⁷⁰ Through these Janus-faced sides of US neo-colonial and ROK militarised nationalism, women were discriminately divided between the idealisation of the Korean woman of chaste virtue against the ‘Yankee whore’, the overtly sexualised woman who cavorted with American servicemen. The trope and the origin of the term ‘yanggongju’ which translates to ‘Western princess’, and more pejoratively to ‘Yankee whore’, was ascribed to the women who engaged in the sex industry of American camptowns, also known as the residential areas where military servicemen resided, as well as the women who went on to marry American men.⁷¹ While these women were moralised in Korean society as having questionable character, they must be framed through the unequal and asymmetrical dependencies between US-ROK relations.⁷²

This thesis explores both the imagined *and* lived identities of Korean women to also recognise the women who also acted as ‘*producers*, whether of commodities, of knowledge, or of ideology’,⁷³ meaning that their labour actively produced gendered relations. Francesca Bray’s *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* challenges the binary thinking between active male versus passive female, and Western modernity versus traditions of the rest (of the world), calling for the need to study ‘alternative constructions of the world,’⁷⁴ which do not emerge in relation to master narratives of progress. By exploring the production of fabric in late imperial China, Bray maps histories of local gynotechnics, ‘a technical system that produces ideas about women, and therefore about a gender system’, to explore how technologies constructed gender.⁷⁵ The historian defines women through women’s work, highlighting the ritualistic

⁷⁰ Chungmoo Choi, ‘Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea’, p. 12. Also see Chungmoo Choi, ‘Transnational Capitalism, National Imaginary, and the Protest Theater in South Korea’, *Boundary 2*, 22.1 (1995), 235–44.

⁷¹ Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), p. 10; Grace M. Cho, ‘Diaspora of Camptown: The Forgotten War’s Monstrous Family’, *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 34.1/2 (2006), 309–31.

⁷² Yuh, pp. 2–3, 9.

⁷³ Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1997), p. 7.

⁷⁴ Bray, p. 12.

⁷⁵ Bray, p. 4.

performances that produced womanhood, including the weaving of cloth. Moreover, to think about gender through female subjectivities, is to foreground embodied experiences and lived realities.

Hyaeweol Choi, Elaine H. Kim, Chungmoo Choi, Ji-Yeon Yuh, and Grace M. Cho forge the critical foundations for this thesis. Illuminating and unpacking the imagined Korean woman and the realities of Korean women, the scholars theorise gendered relations through geopolitical encounters. Yet, I diverge from this work by focusing largely on materiality. I focus on the braided and shifting ideologies that Korean women encountered from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, employing a decolonial praxis. To decolonise Korean womanhood is to piece together these theoretical frameworks to first map how Korean women were shaped by Confucianisation, Christian modernity, colonial modernity, which includes highlighting the role of Japanese imperialism and racism, and the US's role in defining both the Anglo-European hegemony and the ROK in the aftermath of the Cold War, and in reinforcing this dominance through globalisation defined by neoliberal capitalist policies; and secondly, to actively delink from our understanding of Korean women through these paradigms by writing women's histories through an approach that embraces polyvocality, embodied knowledges, and articulating relational understanding, and ways of seeing the world. This follows Catherine Walsh's and Mignolo's goals to 'make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought.'⁷⁶ By making clear, by naming the apparatus of coloniality/modernity that has defined Korean patchwork and women, I work to excavate knowledges that emerge from listening to, and touching, the connections and underlying relations between material cultures, institutional voices, nationalist agendas, women's memories, and my own family's stories.

⁷⁶ Walsh, 'Sowing and Growing Decoloniality In/As Praxis: Some Final Thoughts'.

Orientalism to Ornamentalism

Edward Said's *Orientalism* was a seminal foundation for postcolonial theory. Published in 1978, it serves as a critique to highlight the ways in which the imagined representations of the Orient created by Europeans forged ideological and cultural beliefs that supported colonial campaigns and Anglo-European hegemony. As a tool for subjugating identities, Said theorises 'Orientalism as Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient',⁷⁷ which created reductive, irrational, exoticised, and monolithic depictions of the East and its people. The style constituted and reinforced binary ideas about the Orient versus the Western Occident, representing Asiatic people through literary and cultural tropes as the Other, and contestant of the Anglo-European world. Imagined people of the Orient were constituted through commodities and materials trades that were shaped by imperial agendas and colonial policies. As a process of racialisation, Western domination was exercised by speaking on behalf of those subjugated people, disavowing their voices with epistemologies and ontologies emerging from Eurocentric discourses.

Critics of Orientalism, including Lisa Lowe, James Clifford, and Reina Lewis, insist that Said's tendency to generalise Orientalism as a monolithic discourse negates the differences in European colonial administrations and their imaginings of cultural differences. Lowe contends that 'gendered, racial, national, and class differences complicate and interrupt the narrative of orientalism', thus it is imperative to theorise orientalism as 'heterogeneous and contradictory'.⁷⁸ This monolithic tendency, moreover, reifies the possibility of a 'real' Orient, an authentic place, peoples, and culture that is distinct from Oriental imaginings. Tracing the theoretical genealogy between Orientalism and Ornamentalism, Anne Anlin Cheng declares that 'Orientalism is a

⁷⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 3rd edition (London, UK: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. 3.

⁷⁸ Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 5. Also see James Clifford, *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 255–76; Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

critique, ornamentalism a theory of being.⁷⁹ Cheng elaborates that '[w]here Orientalism is about turning people into things that can be possessed and dominated, ornamentalism is about a fantasy of turning things into persons through the conduit of racial meaning in order, paradoxically, to allow the human to escape his or her own humanness.'⁸⁰ In other words, whereas Said's text critically highlighted the ways Anglo-European representations of 'the Orient' reduced and imagined people through objects and commodities that could be purchased, Cheng argues that such an objecthood could be the possibility for such peoples to escape the reality of a world determined by a racialised and gendered existence.

Cheng's research contributes to a larger body of literature that explores the relationships between material histories, gender, and race, derived from Said's Orientalism, but focusing on its specific localities and expressions, which includes Stacey Sloboda's work on chinoiserie, Partha Mitter's and Craig Clunas's work on collecting objects of 'the Orient', Sarah Cheang's work on ornamental embroidery, and Gavi Levi Haskell's study of japanned papier mâché explore material trades and enduring images of the Other.⁸¹ Yet, Cheng's distinctive work theorises the specific configuration of yellow womanhood in Euro-American culture through the ornament and ornamental things. It is this specifically gendered and racialised theorisation of yellow womanhood that is critical for this thesis, which attends to the particularities of Korean womanhood, both imagined and real. Cheng's work draws on feminist theory, race studies, aesthetic philosophy, and new materialism, continuing her previous explorations of race from *Second Skin*, which explores Josephine Baker and the modern surface, and Asian American identities from *The Melancholy of Race*, although digressing from its previous psychoanalytic

⁷⁹ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 18.

⁸⁰ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 98.

⁸¹ Stacey Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Press, 2014); Partha Mitter and Craig Clunas, 'The Empire of Things: Engagement with the Orient', in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. by Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson (London: V&A Publications, 1997), p. 221; Sarah Cheang, 'Dragons in the Drawing Room: Chinese Embroideries in British Homes, 1860-1949', *Textile History*, 39.2 (2008), 223-49; Gavi Levi Haskell, 'Shiny Black and Layers of White: Japanned Papier Mâché, Race and the British Empire', *Journal of Design History*, 33.4 (2020), 279-96.

methods.⁸² In building a genealogy of the yellow woman, as a racialised figure, Cheng theorises ornamentality as the possibility to live, and importantly, survive as an aesthetic object rather than as an organic body, producing an alternative ontology for yellow womanhood that exists beyond the binary of Otherness in the idealisation of modern liberal personhood. This modern liberal personhood is what Wynter and Mignolo define as the overrepresentation of Man/Human. Therefore, the configuration and constitution of an alternative ontology can be read as decolonial praxis.

The yellow woman is not a real figure, but rather a ghost in Euro-American culture,⁸³ implying that she is an imagined figure of Euro-American representations. By foregrounding the ornament, Cheng traces histories of racialised womanhood onto decorative and ornamental things to argue that '[o]bjects and materials are racialized, yes, but objects and materials also racialize people.'⁸⁴ In doing so, she imagines decorative, luxuriant surfaces and porcelain bodies becoming yellow women. In this fusion between organic and aesthetic materiality, Cheng proposes to trouble the Man/Human overrepresentation by theorising 'what it means to live as an object, an aesthetic supplement', constituting an alternative mode of ontology and survival by building a specific discourse for Asiatic femininity.⁸⁵ While Cheng insists that the origins of yellow womanhood are derived 'from a racist framework that is indifferent to ethnic and national specificities and to diasporic realities',⁸⁶ the remarkable attention toward Chinese-American case studies asks us to test this theory for Korean women's representations and materialities, for the flattening or overrepresentation of yellow womanhood seemingly overlooks the imperial dynamics and colonial histories within representations of East Asia.

⁸² For further reading see Anne Anlin Cheng, *Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸³ Cheng, *Ornamentality*, p. xii.

⁸⁴ Cheng, *Ornamentality*, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Cheng, *Ornamentality*, pp. 19–20.

⁸⁶ Cheng, *Ornamentality*, p. 24.

For English literature scholar Ju Yon Kim, COVID-19 and the resurgence of yellow peril made the term ‘yellow woman’ difficult to say in its ‘popular associations [...] with infection and contamination, or with something tainted or degraded rather than ontologically distinct.’⁸⁷ Kim’s review seems to highlight the failure to reappropriate ‘yellow’ itself. As outlined in the Notes on Language and Terminology, I employ ‘yellow woman’ to reference a racialised and sexualised category of being that has been discursively constituted through imperial and colonial ideologies. According to Michael Keevak, John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, yellow as a racial signifier applied to East Asians in the Western imaginary emerged in the nineteenth century, but it was initially applied to South Asians in the seventeenth century.⁸⁸ Following Cheng’s work, I situate the Korean woman as the imagined figure of the yellow woman through geopolitical relations that forged her racialised and gendered representation. Yet, I am interested in mapping the specific genealogies of racialised identities within East Asia and Euro-American cultures through East Asian histories of imperialism, asking how Korean women shape, reinforce, or trouble racialised histories of yellowness.

Patchwork histories and jogakbo

The existing literature on jogakbo is divided into categories that include museum catalogues, how-to guides, and academic research. A seminal figure of jogakbo’s written histories is Huh Dong Hwa (1926-2018), a curator and collector of Korean embroideries, whose role is further illuminated in Chapter One. Huh’s many publications create the foundational record for understanding Korean patchwork as jogakbo, creating a categorical system for defining wrapping cloths, which has been foundational to academic understanding. These categories list ‘Chogakpo’ as including ‘A. Cloth’, ‘B. Color’, ‘C. Knot Decoration’, ‘D. Patterns’, ‘E. Straps’, and ‘F. Uses’;

⁸⁷ Ju Yon Kim, ‘Ornamentalism by Anne Anlin Cheng (Review)’, *Modernism/Modernity*, 28.1 (2021), 189–91.

⁸⁸ Michael Keevak, *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press); John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, ‘Introduction: Yellow Peril Incarnate’, in *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, ed. by John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats (London and New York: Verso, 2014), pp. 1–32.

the last category includes the sub-categories of ‘1) One-pok chogakpo’, ‘2) Two-pok chogakpo’ and ‘3) Three-pok and larger chogakpo’,⁸⁹ dividing patchwork by material, colour, pattern, and uses defined by size. The textile history thesis by Soo-Kyung Kim, which explores bojagi through a material culture approach, notes that Huh’s work and specifically *The Wonder Cloth*, ‘is a rich pictorial source’; moreover, the collector was ‘the first to categorise *pojagi* by form and use and summarises the history of bojagi.’⁹⁰ Citations to Huh’s work includes Meong Jin Shin, Thomas Cassidy and E.M. Moore’s essay on ‘Cultural reinvention for traditional Korean bojagi’, Kyung Eun Lee’s ‘Korean Traditional Fashion Inspires the Global Runway’, and You-Jin Lee’s ‘A Human-Centric Approach to Global Art Education’, and the many museum catalogues that were published in relation to the Museum of Korean Embroidery.⁹¹

Academic research on jogakbo exists largely in the fields of Korean art history and textile research, including work by Charlotte Horlyck, an art historian and curator of Korean art, and Kim’s thesis. Horlyck argues that while wrapping cloths were largely excluded from the canon of Korean art history, the textiles were ‘the best known and best preserved examples of Chosŏn needlework, [thus stood] as a testimony of a highly sophisticated art form.’⁹² Exploring women’s creative practices is thus crucial for developing gendered histories through a relational understanding of labour. While Huh’s histories describe and prescribe how women’s practices reiterated neo-Confucian values, his relational understanding of gender is less apparent, if not absent. By drawing on feminist art history scholarship from Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, Horlyck reads the absence of jogakbo in Korean art history as indicative of the separation of the public and the private as gendered and value-laden spaces; women’s work

⁸⁹ Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, pp. 29–34.

⁹⁰ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 14.

⁹¹ Meong Jin Shin, Tom Cassidy, and E.M. Moore, ‘Cultural Reinvention for Traditional Korean Bojagi’, *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 4.3 (2011), 213–23; Kyung Eun Lee, ‘Korean Traditional Fashion Inspires the Global Runway’, in *Ethnic Fashion*, ed. by Miguel Angel Gardetti and Subramanian Senthilkannan Muthu (Singapore: Springer, 2016), pp. 47–81; You-Jin Lee, ‘A Human-Centric Approach to Global Art Education’, *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*, 25 (2007), 115–28.

⁹² Horlyck, p. 236.

produced in domestic quarters were not regarded or remembered in art histories. It is not the inherent value of the object, Horlyck argues, but rather the place of manufacturing and consumption that have determined the canon of art history; understanding jogakbo as forms of women's creativity is therefore necessary to create a holistic understanding of Korean art and gender histories.⁹³ My thesis digresses from Horlyck's call to recognise jogakbo as art. By mapping the collecting practices that defined jogakbo, I instead explore the materiality of the textile form, and the institutional guidelines that constituted its understanding. Moreover, I argue for expansive ways to understand jogakbo and Korean patchwork in forms that are also embodied.

Kim's dissertation was a material-based study of bojagi in the late Joseon period (1724-1910). Examining wrapping cloths through sumptuary laws and prevalent textile industries and trade relations, Kim foregrounds geopolitical relations through material trades and neo-Confucian ideologies as underpinning the making of everyday objects. By working with archived textiles, she observes that the archived jogakbo were predominantly 'made by higher classes [... as] *pojagi* made for the people of lower class were not preserved, most likely because they were made of poor quality.'⁹⁴ Importantly, while Huh conflates *minpo* with commoners, evidenced by *The Wonder Cloth's* taxonomy of bojagi that lists '*Minpo* or Commoner's *Pojagi*' and '*Chogakpo* or Patchwork *Pojagi*'⁹⁵ as a subset, Kim states '*min* (which literally means folk) is not considered to be the general commoners, but rather the opposite of *kung* (which literally means court or palace)'.⁹⁶ This distinction is important. It not only calls for the need to broaden the historical understanding of these labour practices, but it also implores my own thesis to situate Huh's histories through a political lens, ultimately asking how the political movements of the ROK in the 1980s shaped narratives of jogakbo. The decolonial feminist aims of my thesis diverge from

⁹³ Horlyck, p. 243.

⁹⁴ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 163.

⁹⁵ Huh, pp. 18-39.

⁹⁶ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 163.

Kim's approaches, as I foreground the specific stories of women, and the many voices of making, complicating, and enriching my reading of primary objects with interviews, oral histories, and autoethnography.

In textile histories, patchwork has been theorised as an innovative approach to excavate new patterns and methods of knowing and learning. Kristina Lindström and Åsa Ståhl describe patchworking as forming new relations, foregrounding practice-based research of making, while Sally Price reveals the shifting distinctions between fine and folk art in the art world have had especially important implications for Afro-American studies, as she focuses on the specifically stitched-together patchwork artworks of the African diaspora.⁹⁷ Elissa Auther, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock have elsewhere outlined how histories of textiles were forged through gendered associations, as were their distinctive values.⁹⁸ I highlight these global histories of patchwork, textiles, and stitch-work, to map relations between women's work, fragmented pieces, new relations and making, but ultimately, my thesis foregrounds the question of the Korean woman, and her relations to patchworking, thus uses a specific lens focusing on Korean cultures and histories of the Korean diaspora, while highlighting the leftover fragments.

Methodology

Patchwork as decolonial feminist method

This thesis develops a methodological approach that foregrounds the possibilities for multiplicity, and polyvocality, while also witnessing the absences and voids that are co-constitutive of these histories. Underpinning this exploration of patchwork, and stories of women's work, is the question of authorship, which asks *who* gets to tell our histories? And *how*

⁹⁷ Kristina Lindström and Åsa Ståhl, 'Patchworking Ways of Knowing and Making', in *The Handbook of Textile Culture*, ed. by Janis Jefferies, Diana Wood Conroy, and Hazel Clark (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), pp. 65–78; Sally Price, 'Patchwork History: Tracing Artworlds in the African Diaspora', *New West Indian Guide*, 75.1–2 (2001), 5–34.

⁹⁸ Elissa Auther, 'Fiber Art and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft, 1960–80', *The Journal of Modern Craft*, 1.1 (2008), 13–33; Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Company, Ltd., 2010); Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, Bloomsbury Revelations (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

do we tell our stories? What began as an attempt to elucidate absence, has developed into a relational history of materiality, authorial absence, embodied experiences, and the ambiguities of tangible things. I build from primary object analysis, archive materials, interviews with makers and curators, my own family histories forged through autoethnography and material memories, and oral histories from Korean women to piece together histories of Korean patchwork and Korean women building patchwork.

I am a Canadian-British woman from the Korean diaspora and a textile and print designer. As decolonial feminist scholarship foregrounds positionality, I design the lens of this research and the narrational voice of this text by recognising my journeys and my experiences as constitutive of my questions, trajectories, observations, and arguments. By recognising the impossibility of objectivity, I trouble top-down approaches, listening to and recording the many voices of (Korean) women, mapping the material histories of patchworking, to create a collaborative performance that re-tells a history of Korean women that is both imagined through patchwork, and real-life stories of making and embodying forms.

Patchwork as a methodology has previously emerged in the fields of mechanical and industrial engineering as an approach to analyse quantitative data, and in ethnography, to reimagine the possibilities of fieldwork during COVID. As I approach my research through a qualitative analysis, I diverge from using patchwork as a quantitative process. Gökçe Günel, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe's 2020 'A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography' calls to reshape and adapt fieldwork practices to build on existing 'feminist and decolonial theorizations intertwining [...] the personal and the professional'.⁹⁹ By highlighting the specific circumstances of the global pandemic, and the broader experiences of neoliberal university labour conditions, they imagine the possibilities of fieldwork that does not entail 'spending a year or longer [away]

⁹⁹Gökçe Günel, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe, 'A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography', *Fieldsights*, Member Voices, 2020 <<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography>> [accessed 28 August 2022].

in a faraway place.¹⁰⁰ Practically, they call to maintain the ‘long-term commitments, language proficiency, contextual knowledge, and slow thinking that characterizes so-called traditional fieldwork’ but they call to reimagine the physical ‘being there’ of fieldwork, exploring the possibilities for ‘short temporal spurts or remotely’, and importantly, in doing so, ask us to reconstruct ‘what kinds of new archives’ we construct ‘when we do research in fragmented, patchworked ways’.¹⁰¹

As research that was shaped by similar circumstances of COVID and neoliberal university work conditions, I acknowledge the need to reconsider how research is conducted and how the knowledge shaped by fragmentary experiences are produced. Yet, my methodology diverges to consider not how fieldwork is collected, but rather how history is remembered. Piecing together fragments allows this research to recognise and illuminate the difficulty of writing about things that have been destroyed, gone missing, eroded with time, forgotten, and disregarded. This patchwork methodology draws from cross-disciplinary approaches to present the absences in material archives, foregrounding the relational connections between material things, voices of makers, curators, and women embodying patchwork, while maintaining the ambiguity of reading and making sense of things.

i. Object and Archive Research

This research begins in the museum, exploring institutions and national archives that have collected Korean patchwork as jogakbo, and iterations of patchwork fashion. These institutions were primarily located in the US, but also included the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) in London, United Kingdom (UK). In the first year of research, I located and viewed objects at the V&A, the British Museum, the Chojun Textile & Quilt Art Museum in Seoul, and the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) in Hawai’i. During my initial visit to Seoul to 2018, I also

¹⁰⁰ Günel, Varma, and Watanabe.

¹⁰¹ Günel, Varma, and Watanabe.

attended the Korea Bojagi Forum (KBF), which I foreground as a case study in Chapter One. During this period, Huh Dong Hwa, the seminal figure of jogakbo collecting passed away. As a result, his Museum of Korean Embroidery closed, and I was unfortunately unable to visit. A large portion of his collection was donated to the Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA), which was opened to the public in 2021. I visited the SeMoCA's textile archives in November 2021.

In 2019, I viewed textiles at the AMNH, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Newark Museum, and the Detroit Institute of Art. As my research period unfolded, there were obstacles to accessing some notable archives, namely COVID and institutional funding cuts that left collections at the time of my research without curators. For example, I identified the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco as holding one of the largest collections of jogakbo outside of the ROK. The collection was closed during COVID, and after its reopening, I was informed that the curator overseeing the specific patchwork collection transferred to the Denver Art Museum in 2022. I was unable to visit the collection due to these constraints. There were also collections that held white ramie patchwork, including the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Museum of International Folk Art in Sante Fe, New Mexico, that I was not able to visit. Moreover, the National Folk Museum of Korea had jogakbo that also had stamped textile pieces similar to *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, but I could not arrange an appointment. The aim of this thesis, however, was not to build an exhaustive survey of all patchwork collections around the world, instead I worked with the accessible collections to build my understanding of the relationships between Korean women and patchwork in public archives. Importantly, I recognised that my diasporic experiences and my decolonial agendas highlighted particular relationalities within objects and collections, which were mapped along colonial trajectories and geopolitical relations defined by colonialities. These struggles with access shaped my thesis to focus on case studies of objects that were reflective of my own positionality. I thus illuminate the marginalised objects, and the materials which are anomalous to nationalist narratives and written

histories of jogakbo to imagine and conceptualise Korean patchwork and Korean womanhood beyond the borders of the nation-state.

By drawing on my own experiences of making, as a print and textile designer, I approached primary object analysis with a specialist skillset and vocabulary for identifying textile processes, stitching techniques, and fabric manipulations, analysing the objects through the lens of making. Yet, I also recognised that the material histories, and moreover, my own observations of these textiles were only part of a larger piecework of understanding patchwork and Korean women through collecting. These observations and material histories were voices and stories in an imagining of Korea and Korean womanhood through textiles. Thus, I necessarily drew on archive research to enrich and complicate my understanding through polyvocality, retrieving acquisitional histories, and letters of correspondence between curators and collections.

These written and typed pieces of history not only enriched my understanding of the historical and political factors that shaped institutional collecting, but these records also provided valuable materials, such as photographic representations, that helped to complicate and situate the narratives of individual objects. Significant to this project were archive visits to the AMNH's Archive Records Library, the Robert Allerton Art Library at the HoMA, the V&A's Object Records Archive at Blythe House. Remarkably, there were no acquisition records for Huh Dong Hwa's jogakbo collections. Instead, his career as archive was displayed as the 'Donor's Exhibition' at the SeMoCA during my initial and subsequent visits in November 2021, and November 2023. Included in this category of archive materials as primary research were also museum catalogues, object cards, collection lists, and various representations, including diptychs from Dr. Ralph Millard, Jr.'s essay 'Oriental Peregrinations'.

ii. Interviews and Oral Histories

I recorded interviews with curators, artists, makers and designers, who provided specialist insights into their processes of making or collecting jogakbo, to build a discursive

understanding of creative and collecting practices. The list of relevant interviews included: an in-person interview with Beth McKillop on 26 January 2018; an in-person interview with Zadie Xa on 9 February 2018 in London, UK; an in-person interview with Sara Cook on 8 January 2019 in London, UK; an online interview through Skype with J P 제팩 (formerly Jen Pack) on 27 February 2019; an informal in-person conversation with Sara Oka in June 2018, followed by an email correspondence in February 2019; an online interview via Zoom with Youngmin Lee on 28 October 2020; an online interview via Zoom with Anna Jackson on 12 April 2021; an email correspondence with Soyeon Turner* on July 2021; and a phone interview with Charlotte Horlyck on 26 May 2022.

In Chapters Two and Three, I interviewed four women, including my great-aunt to incorporate oral histories of Korean women and women of the Korean diasporas through their embodied experiences of labour, patchwork practices, and being. The interviews included: an in-person interview with Kim Bong Kyu, my great-aunt, on 13 February 2022 in Toronto, Canada; an in-person interview with Sarah Park* on 18 February 2022 in Toronto, Canada; an online interview via Zoom with Jiyeon Chae* on 3 August 2022; an online interview via Zoom with Iris Yi Youn Kim on 5 April 2023. The women were sought using a purposeful sampling method, which identified candidates that were most suitable for the criterion required. This process enlisted each participant's voluntary consent through a participant consent form, as well as the option to anonymise their interviews. My sampling of candidates was largely contingent on women who had undergone blepharoplasty procedures specifically, and from whom I had already established relationships with through the period of my research, except for Iris Kim, who I selected due to her public experiences of undergoing cosmetic surgery, which were detailed for her essay in *Harper's Bazaar*.

* Soyeon Turner is a pseudonym. The interviewee's name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research.

* Sarah Park is a pseudonym. The interviewee's name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research.

* Jiyeon Chae is a pseudonym. The interviewee's name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research.

While I initially sought a wider pool of candidates to interview, originally posting participation requests on public forums, such as Naver Blog, PurseForum and Soompi, there were no voluntary candidates from this process. In Ji-Yeon Yuh's *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown*, she describes the challenges of interviewing women who were military brides, as she held an outsider-insider status.¹⁰² Naming her own identity as a Korean woman, and her status as an immigrant, Yuh highlights her similarities with her interviewees alongside her definitive differences – generational, experiential, linguistic, and otherwise – which granted her a particular kind of access. This access was defined by her role as a researcher. While many of the women in Yuh's research declined formal interviews, as they were '[a]ccustomed to contemptuous treatment from fellow Koreans', she remarks that her role as a researcher carried the expectation that she could narrate the women's stories to a wider audience.¹⁰³ The relationships she developed with her participants were met with some apprehension, but also a relational kinship, and a communal familiarity. In these observations, Yuh underpins the varied dynamics of researching Korean women as a Korean woman.

In my own process of recruiting participants, both from the jogakbo community at large and women who had undergone plastic surgery procedures, I recognise that I also held an outsider-insider status. While I am a Korean woman, I am recognised as a woman from the Korean diaspora. This status shapes and shaped the questions and aims of this thesis, but also my accessibility to participants. My declared decolonial aims were perhaps troubling to nationalist histories tracing jogakbo for I had difficulties accessing cultural spaces and particular voices, with unanswered emails from national museums in the ROK, artists, designers, and curators. I was informed by a colleague that the ROK's national museums hesitate to engage with decolonial practices for they disrupt and trouble existing narratives in collections. My role as a researcher perhaps discouraged voluntary participation from message boards of women

¹⁰² Yuh, p. 5.

¹⁰³ Yuh, p. 6.

undergoing plastic surgery procedures, for I was both an outsider to their experiences, but also in a position of authority, with the potential to reveal the hidden shames and secrecy of reconstructing ourselves, which I explore further in Chapter Three. With the women I eventually interviewed, I held somewhat of an insider status with them, whether through familial, communal, or diasporic connection.

iii. Autoethnography

Elizabeth Ettore defines autoethnography as a feminist method which

(1) [...] creates transitional, intermediate spaces, inhabiting the crossroads or borderlands of embodied emotions; (2) autoethnography is an active demonstration of the “personal is political”; (3) autoethnography is feminist critical writing which is performative, that is committed to the future of women and (4) autoethnography helps to raise oppositional consciousness by exposing precarity.¹⁰⁴

This is a bottom-up method that approaches personal histories and memories as primary materials for critical analysis in a self-reflexive writing practice. Differentiated from autobiography and memoir, Ettore argues that “[a]utobiographical research is mainly concerned with placing the “I” within a personal context and developing insights from that perspective [...] On the other hand, autoethnography [...] is all about placing the “I” firmly within a cultural context and all that implies.”¹⁰⁵ That is, the ‘I’ is used not as a personal reflection in and of itself, but rather to explore the cultural context that has constituted one’s personhood.

My autoethnographic process involves re-telling and remembering my own family histories through the lens of my personal memories, captured through material objects of my family archives, rather than formal interviews, except in the case of my great-aunt who is mentioned in the previous section. In this practice, I reflect and employ the ethical considerations of autoethnographic research, informed by Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis,

¹⁰⁴ Elizabeth Ettore, ‘Introduction: Autoethnography as Feminist Method’, in *Autoethnography as Feminist Method: Sensitising the Feminist ‘I’* (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁰⁵ Ettore.

who describe a ‘relational ethics of care’ when writing about participants, whether family, loved ones, or strangers. This requires the researcher to engage in ongoing questions that think about the broader implications of the research output to affect the participant and their larger community. One must ‘interrogate’ their own role and motives, imagining ‘how other people will respond’ to the stories being told and what the consequences of the re-telling may conjure.¹⁰⁶ Importantly, one must recognise the duty of care when also approaching their own memories, being careful not to deploy extractive aims.

This work is underpinned by the problem of seeing, hearing, and viewing ‘Korea’ and Korean through the colonial gaze, and in the case of language, English. Through my own positionality, foregrounding my own histories as the lens of this research, I explore the problem of language and understanding Korean as a formal practice, acknowledging that forgetting, (re)learning, and understanding Korean is an expression of my own coloniality. Throughout this research, I found that not only language itself, but also the physical and emotional nuances of manner and etiquette were difficult to translate from Korean to English. My problems with language shaped the possibilities for interviewing and recording oral histories, and reading academic texts. I note that as a Canadian-born woman of the Korean diaspora, unlearning and erasing my Korean identity was a condition of my coloniality; my mother taught me to survive as a Canadian, assimilating into an Anglophonic culture, rather than to embrace my own Koreanness. Therefore, I consider my loss of language as conditioning my decolonial praxis, emerging from the ‘lived experience of colonial difference’.¹⁰⁷ Rather than attempting to transcend the conditions of my existence, I reflect on these difficulties of access as contributing to this piecemeal history of Korean womanhood.

¹⁰⁶ Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis, *Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Lives and Telling Stories* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), pp. 149–50.

¹⁰⁷ Catherine E. Walsh, ‘Interculturality and Decoloniality’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 57–80 (p. 62).

My autoethnographic practice is shaped from scholarship forged by postcolonial feminists and black feminist practices that seek to reclaim the academy from the epistemological idealism of objectivity and the brutality of coloniality. Krys Osei powerfully declares that ‘[t]he deliberate act of writing ourselves, our histories, and the world through our eyes undeniably pushes against the traditions of social science and critical academic enquiry [...] By embracing this legacy of life writing, I am able to preserve and further archive my voice and lived experiences as a direct act of humanization within the exclusionary walls of academia.’¹⁰⁸ Reading about the modern history of Korea includes texts and images that outline the political policies of colonial subjugation, imperial doctrines of race-making, and US war strategy. The detached rhetoric of this kind of academic writing dehumanises Korean people, separating lived lives from policy. By foregrounding my own histories of pleasure, sadness, hope, and survival within this thesis, I am able to imagine and remember lives beyond the geopolitical circumstances that have shaped my experiences of generational and racialised trauma. As the sewist, the storyteller, the eye of the needle, the lens, the hands, and the voice that produces this work, I am the medium, a medium to tell a story of Korean patchwork and Korean women. In doing so, I create a unique re-telling that moves beyond academic institutions, national borders, and linear temporalities.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One. Collecting fragments: piecing together narratives of Korean patchwork

This chapter maps Korean patchwork in institutional collections, drawing on Susan Stewart’s theories of collecting to ask how jogakbo shaped, reflected, imagined, constituted, and reinforced the ROK’s national identity through narratives of Korean women, and their creative practices, and to ask how institutional practices defined jogakbo. Beginning with the history of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (fig. 1, 2), I identify what is most likely the first Korean patchwork

¹⁰⁸ Krys Osei, ‘Fashioning My Garden of Solace: A Black Feminist Autoethnography’, *Fashion Theory*, 23.6 (2019), 733–46 (p. 735).

collected in a public institution, framing its collecting through encounters with American Protestantism and US foreign policy at the turn of the twentieth century. Collected as part of a missionary exchange, the archive record of the textile reveals the many voices and actors that shaped understanding 'Korea' through ethnographic objects at the AMNH. This case study of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* acts as a prologue to the chapter, and to the thesis, asking how institutions, and museums specifically, preserve, remember, and imagine cultural identities, connecting institutional policies to national agendas. Reading the materiality of the cloth itself, I observe the technological processes in the textile to situate Korea and Korean women during the Open Port Period, illuminating histories of transnational material trades and colonial modernities previously underrepresented in these stories of making.

Asking how jogakbo *became* Korean, I trace the written histories and institutional collecting practices of Korean patchwork as jogakbo to the 1970s in the ROK. The wrapping cloths' preservation and histories were largely prescribed and shaped by the work of Huh Dong Hwa, a private collector who established the Museum of Korean Embroidery in 1976. By exploring his work through his archive and his career, I identify and unpack one of the largest collections of jogakbo, which was posthumously donated to the SeMoCA in 2018, as the prototype collection. Although the textiles were promoted as a uniquely Korean tradition, Huh and his contemporaries also reiteratively legitimised the form through comparisons to European Modernism, revealing a persisting tension in the development of the ROK's national identity that sought to express a unique and authentic cultural tradition, while simultaneously aligning itself to styles and values of Anglo-Western modernity. Significantly, Huh's practices not only forged histories of jogakbo in national memory and the global imaginary, but resignified the everyday textile into an art object.

By situating these collecting practices alongside nationalist agendas for unifying cultural identity through tradition, this chapter also traces the legacies of Huh's work, exploring the contemporary curatorial response to Huh at the SeMoCA, and jogakbo as an art practice,

exploring the constellation of global makers who sought to imagine ‘Korea’ and Korean women through their creative practices. Locating these narratives of jogakbo through Chunghie Lee, J P 제피 (formerly Jen Pack), Zadie Xa, I explore artists working with ancestral histories and questions of belonging, to understand how nationalist ideals were reified through jogakbo, and how creative practices imagined and built beyond national borders. The question of diaspora is central to unpacking work by J P 제피 and Zadie Xa. By illuminating the constellations between global communities of makers, I interrogate patchwork as transcultural practice that has the potential to transcend borders, both gendered and national. Critically, from my diasporic positionality, as an outsider to a perceived authentic national experience, I privilege the marginalised objects in collections, examining closely the questions and implications for jogakbo histories when considering underexplored materials and their relations. I then analyse the materiality of patchwork forms: cotton, silk, hemp, and white ramie to examine the ghost of the yellow woman through jogakbo. Testing the possibilities for Cheng’s ornamental framework, I expand and complicate her genealogy of alternative being by foregrounding Korean materials made by Korean women.

Chapter Two. Piecing, sewing, styling: patchwork wrapping Korean women

In the 1980s, jogakbo became a recognised symbol of Koreanness that was used to signify cultural identity both nationally and globally. As its forms became material surfaces on the garments of contemporary fashion design, from Lie Sang Bong to Chanel, patchwork not only reflected the growing visibility of South Korean design on a global stage, but these forms revealed the complicated and problematic signposts of ‘traditional’ as the country rapidly modernised. Chapter Two explores histories of modernisation through Korea’s fashion industries, while highlighting the theoretical significance of patchwork wrapping bodies. Mapping the shifting ideals of Korean womanhood through desires for motherhood to the capitalist consumer the global marketplace, I begin by drawing on Francesca Bray, who writes

that the wedding dress handed down from mother to daughter traces ‘a female genealogy in a patrilineal culture’,¹⁰⁹ exploring stories of Korean womanhood through my own family histories. In doing so, I foreground embodied experiences as decolonial praxis, piecing together an autoethnographic approach to trace identities and women through coloniality, style-fashion-dress, and the politics of pleasure as frameworks to read the circumstances that shaped generations of my family’s style.

Through the tailored suit and luxury fashions, I map the global networks of material trade and commerce between the ROK and European fashion capitals as the nation moved into a period of post-industrialisation, contextualising iterations of patchwork design through the rise of K-Fashion and the K-Wave. While Chapter One asked how the collecting practices of jogakbo reconstructed national memory, Chapter Two explores how these practices of signifying ‘Korea’ through Korean patchwork expanded globally. Exploring iterations of patchwork in fashion, including Lee Young Hee, Lie Sang Bong, and Chanel’s Resort 2016 show, I ask how fashion has shaped Korean identities, and Korean womanhood through narratives of design and dress, and crucially how Korean patchwork acts as forms of soft power. Historically, jogakbo was described as a upcycled form of material necessity. Now in contemporary practices, jogakbo in luxury fashion signifies time-consuming labour practices. No longer an ‘authentic’ representation of poverty, I argue that using patchwork in fashion not only signifies the value of time, but it symbolises postmodern identities through a simulacra of being. This chapter builds an understanding of patchwork style-fashion-dress through the many voices of making, observing objects as they are worn, cherished, conceptualised, archived, and reimagined.

Chapter Three. Patchworking skins: boundary-materials and corporeal process

¹⁰⁹ Bray, p. 176.

Chapter Three explores patchwork as a corporeal metaphor and literal translation for plastic surgery cultures. By recording the oral histories of four women, I map connections between twenty-first century stories of blepharoplasty through Dr. Ralph Millard, Jr.'s work as an American surgeon in the ROK after the Korean war to earlier instances of surgical intervention available through Japanese colonial medicine to diasporic experiences of beauty and Korean womanhood. Foregrounding the embodied experiences of reconstructing one's skin, I excavate the relations between geopolitics, skin surfaces, and acts of being and becoming. By building polyvocal embodied experiences, alongside Ji Yeo's *Beauty Recovery Room* photographic series, I ask what possibilities are there to think about patchwork processes through skin? How can forms of cutting, piecing together, and mending skin surfaces theorise alternative possibilities for being and becoming? Moreover, how can applying Anne Anlin Cheng's ideas of ornamentalism and aesthetic being apply to skin surfaces? Exploring skin as a boundary-material, I map a framework of coloniality by tracing the colonial gaze, the eye of the needle, and the rise of blepharoplasty through the geopolitics of beauty, asking whether reconstructed skins can be conceptualised as an ornamental surface.

By foregrounding the violence that underpins these histories of Korea, and Korean women, I create a constellation between Japanese colonialism, Millard's practices, and contemporary acts of violence against Asian women incited by the COVID pandemic in America, while detailing the swollen, bruised, brutalised skins of plastic surgery patients. Through the boundary-materiality of skin itself, I explore how grotesque bodies, theorised as open, unfinished, trouble the ideal of the classic enclosed form, while undergoing processes of becoming. This quality is mapped onto the conceptualisation of patchwork itself, as an unfinished form defined by cutting, mending, and healing. Tracing these practices from girlhood to womanhood, I explore stigmatised skins and the possibilities of reconstruction. This thesis uses patchwork as a material form, a methodological process, and a historical mapping to

explore the question of 'who is the Korean woman?' through practices of making, collecting, wearing, mending, healing, and storytelling.

Chapter One. Collecting fragments: piecing together narratives of Korean patchwork

‘The point of the collection is forgetting – starting again
 In such a way that a finite number of elements create,
 By virtue of their combination, an infinite reverie’
 - Susan Stewart, *On Longing*¹¹⁰



Figure 3. Overhead photograph of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289). *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Asian Ethnographic Collection. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Photograph is author's own. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

Cloth Bundle, Patchwork (Object No. 70.0/5289) (fig. 3) was acquired by the AMNH's Asian Ethnographic Collection in 1928 as a transfer from the museum's Department of Education.¹¹¹ While there were no archive records for its original acquisition, the textile was most likely collected for the 'Missionary Exhibition 1900',¹¹² which was a showcase for the Ecumenical Conference for Foreign Missions in 1900. The conference was held in New York and organised by the Protestant Episcopal Church as an event to discuss and promote religious missionary work.¹¹³ After the conference proceedings, the exhibition was acquired by the AMNH, setting the foundation for the museum's research into Asian material cultures.

¹¹⁰ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Minature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

¹¹¹ Lisa Whittall, 'Object Card for Catalogue No. 70.0/5289' (American Museum of Natural History), Missionary Exhibition 1900, Archive Records Library.

¹¹² As mentioned in the Introduction, the 'Cloth Bundle, Patchwork' object card was part of a 'Missionary Exhibition 1900' archive record folder, which also included acquisition lists and photographic representations of the object.

¹¹³ James M. Whiton, 'The Ecumenical Conference', *The New York Times*, 2 May 1900, section Letters to the Editor, p. 6; 'The Ecumenical Conference', *The New York Times*, 3 May 1900, p. 8.

Franz Boas (1858-1942) is remembered as the founder of American anthropology, and during his employment at the AMNH between 1896 to 1905, he developed the museum's collections and collecting practices. Boas aimed to establish the museum's collections without religious influence, but the exhibition offered a valuable opportunity to acquire material objects, thus expanding the institution's ethnographic knowledge, while building valuable relations with collectors, who were also missionaries.¹¹⁴ According to Laurel Kendall, the AMNH's Chair of the Division of Anthropology and the current Curator of the Asian Ethnographic collection,¹¹⁵ Boas's work with the 'Missionary Exhibition' extended the museum's study into Asia and fostered important relations with missionaries abroad, including CC Vinton (1856-1936) who served the museum as a collector of Korean objects.¹¹⁶

Cloth Bundle, Patchwork along with under garments, a small silk handbag, and other clothing items,¹¹⁷ were incorporated into a collection that constructed the first imaginings of 'Korea' through material culture at the AMNH. Through the lens of Christian missionary work, these objects were purposeful for a multitude of reasons: they were originally collected to advertise to American missionaries the possibilities of their life abroad, and simultaneously the need for their work on the mission field, while also educating the Christian public about Korea, raising both money and interest for future missionary work. Once acquired by the museum, this patchwork, along with other textile materials shaped academic, ethnographic knowledge about Korean people in the early twentieth century.

¹¹⁴ Erin Hasinoff, 'The Missionary Exhibit: A Frustration and a Promise for Franz Boas and the American Museum of Natural History', *Museum History Journal*, 3.1 (2010), 81–102 (p. 81).

¹¹⁵ Kendall first began working at the AMNH in 1983 as an Assistant Curator; she was then employed as the Curator of the Asian Ethnographic Collections in 1993, and later, as the Chair of the Division of Anthropology in 2009. She held both roles as Curator and Chair at the time this dissertation was submitted in 2023.

¹¹⁶ Laurel Kendall's 'So Close to the Canon, but...' explores the multiple actors that developed the foundation for the Korean collection against the backdrop of the Spanish American War in 1898, and America's growing interests in Asia. For further reading see Laurel Kendall, 'So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things', *The Journal of Korean Studies*, 21.2 (2016), 423–48.

¹¹⁷ These items were listed in the acquisition list that was part of the 'Missionary Exhibition 1900' folder. See Appendix A: American Museum of Natural History, 'Acquisition List of Objects from Korea (No. 70.0/5272-70.0/5307)', Missionary Exhibition 1900, Archive Records Library.

My written notes recording my experience visiting the AMNH on 11 April 2019 remark upon the reddish-pink brickwork façade, the three rounded towers with conical rooftops, and the archway above the doorway to the West 77th Street entrance. The museum is housed in a formidable Victorian Gothic building that takes up an entire block in the geographically precious urban space of New York City across from Central Park. This block was formerly called Manhattan Square. According to a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the museum is not a singular building, but rather ‘consists of eighteen interconnected units.’¹¹⁸ I imagine that this architectural interconnection shaped and reflected my experiences of wandering through the interior spaces of the galleries, where open atriums of natural light shifted into enclosed corridors lined with windowed showcases, top-lit from the inside of the displays. This undulating natural to artificial light, and large to narrow spaces unfolded alongside a mapping of geographic regionality, geological materials, animalia, and chronologies of human development.

‘Asian Peoples’, which included the Korea gallery, were located in the south-west corner of the museum on the second floor. The Korean display included a diptych display of a mannequin representing a Korean man of scholarly pursuits on the left, surrounded by books and calligraphy brushes, and a Korean woman performing needlework or clothing-related labour, sitting beside a sewing box on the right (*fig. 4*). The two figures in their respective displays were separated by a thin partition – a wooden panel that divided and enclosed each representation in a distinct, but related display of Koreanness. These displays represented the gendered divisions of interior spaces and labour of yangban households in Joseon Korea under the strict regulations of Confucian principles, where men and women lived separately save for occasional instances for martial consummation.¹¹⁹ Notably, these principles were more likely to be practiced by yangban

¹¹⁸ *The American Museum of Natural History* (Landmarks Preservation Commission, 24 August 1967).

¹¹⁹ Describing the segregation of households, Young-hee Shim, writes that the under Confucianism and neo-Confucianism, the ‘man (*yang*) and woman (*yin*) [i]s the root of all human relations [...] This distinction leads to segregation even without the household. The husband stayed in the separate quarter called *sarangchae* near the *taemun* (the gate), and the wife’s quarters (*anchae*) were hidden behind the *chungmun* (middle gate). Husband and wife slept together only on certain days, which were usually arranged by the husband’s mother, who based her choice on procreative considerations.’ For further reading see Young-hee Shim, ‘Feminism and the Discourse of Sexuality in



Figure 4. Display of 'Korea' in April 2019. New York: Gardner D. Stout Hall of Asian Peoples, American Museum of Natural History, photograph is author's own, taken on April 11, 2019.

households, for economically, only a 'small upper[-]class could afford to approximate ideological purity in daily life.'¹²⁰ Seemingly then, the Korea gallery of the AMNH during my visit in April 2019 represented in these displays, only a *specific* demographic of historical Korean society: the small upper-class elite.

On the day of my visit, I not only explored the galleries, but I also examined material objects from the Asian Ethnographic Collection, which included *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289) (*fig. 3*) and the object's corresponding records which were held at the Archive Record Library. *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* is a patchworked textile formed of two hundred and thirty-seven varied gauze, damask and plainly woven silk pieces, plainly woven and patterned cottons, and four additional plainly woven cotton straps sewn to the corners. The two hundred and thirty-seven fragments forming the patchwork were each machine-stitched together into a 95 x 85 cm square, which I call the body of the textile. On each corner, there were four plainly

Korea: Continuities and Changes', *Human Studies*, 24.1/2, Intertexts: Philosophy, Literature and the Human Sciences in Korea (2001), 133–48 (pp. 135–36).

¹²⁰ Deuchler, p. 2.

woven cotton tie pieces piece-dyed carnelian red, which were each individually folded over and seamed together along their long edge using a machine-stitch. Each piece was then machine-stitched onto the four corners of the main patchworked body. Machine-sewn onto two tie pieces, on two corners of the body were also two small tabs of white rectangular Velcro. From the archive images and descriptions of jogakbo,¹²¹ I assumed that the ties served a utilitarian purpose – to fasten and enclose the objects and materials that were to be placed as the contents of the wrapping cloth. The two white tabs of Velcro were added later, most likely as part of the cloth’s life in the museum, for Velcro was invented in 1955,¹²² at least fifty-five years after *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* was collected. The additional material made of white nylon not only designated the front of the cloth from the back, or what the museum designated the front from the back, but it also revealed evidence of exhibition practices. Commonly, this type of Korean patchwork was often displayed as a flat composition, thus the Velcro tabs seemingly marked where the patchwork was once secured for hanging or mounting.



Figure 5. Close-up detail of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289). *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Asian Ethnographic Collection. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Photograph is author’s own. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

¹²¹ For further reading see Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*.

¹²² ‘George De Mestral. Velcro®’, *Consumer Devices* <<https://lemelson.mit.edu/resources/george-de-mestral>> [accessed 14 February 2023].

The body of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* appeared to be sewn together with a ssamsol (flat fillet) stitch (fig. 5). This is a flat seaming technique that has two visible seam lines. Two fragments were first sewn together to create one seam that attached the once-separate pieces, and then one of the pieces was folded over and another seam line was sewn on the reversed side of the folded piece to reinforce the attachment close to the raw edges of the fabric.¹²³ The rows of stitches sewing the fragments together on this patchwork were not evenly distanced from each other. While the stitches themselves were perfectly measured, even, consistent, and taut,¹²⁴ implying a mechanised method for the sewing, the pathways of the stitches were seemingly improvised, without any rule(r) or measure. In this cloth, Korean tradition encountered modernity, for it was shaped and formed through mechanised technologies that were evidence of Korea's cross-cultural exchanges at the end of the nineteenth century. Both the stitching and the machine-woven silks and cottons forming the patchwork were made from industrial technologies that complicate the history of jogakbo as a traditional handicraft. *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* reveals the entangled encounters that not only influenced the ethnographic imaginary of Korea, but also the realities of women who made the cloths, shaped by new Christian values, multiple colonial encounters, and new material cultures.

This chapter explores how patchwork as jogakbo *became* Korean. Jogakbo has been classified as a subset category of bojagi defined as minbo.¹²⁵ Regarded as the handicraft labour of common people, jogakbo has been nationally remembered as a textile made by unknown women. According to historians of jogakbo, the cloths expressed the creative ambitions of Korean women during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897) and served as evidence of neo-Confucian

¹²³ Description for ssamsol stitch found in Chunghie Lee, *Bojagi & Beyond II* (Providence, RI: Beyond & Above, 2014), pp. 89–91, but it was also evident in the material composition of the cloth itself.

¹²⁴ Andrew Gordon describes how the sewing machine's introduction in Japan unfolded with a debate based on cultural forms and practices that viewed the tightness of machine stitching as a demerit for the loose hand-stitching required for Japanese dress. This remarkable tightness was also evident in 'Cloth Bundle, Patchwork'. For further reading see Andrew Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers: The Sewing Machine in Modern Japan* (London, UK: University of California Press, 2012).

¹²⁵ Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*; Kumja Paik Kim, 'A Celebration of Life: Patchwork and Embroidered Pojagi by Unknown Korean Women'.

value systems which esteemed women's needlework as a virtuous pursuit.¹²⁶ The patchworks became powerful evocations of endurance, creativity, and survival in the ROK, and were first exhibited during the period of the democracy movements in the 1980s through the work of the curator, Huh Dong Hwa. Korean tradition expressed through Korean women's labour has supported a nationalist ideology, which invoked neo-Confucian values to reinforce new patriarchal systems. Scholars of Korean feminism, including Elaine H. Kim, Chungmoo Choi and Seungsook Moon, have mapped the ways that South Korean nationalism was shaped and reinforced by asymmetrical gender relations that viewed national liberation as 'the liberation of men.'¹²⁷ Kim and Choi write that Korean feminism and women have been shaped by the experiences of Japanese coloniality, Cold War partition,¹²⁸ and I add, Christianity, thus decolonial feminist research necessarily needs to address the legacies of these encounters by highlighting the ways that Korean women have been shaped and constituted by these forces.

Museums as archives play a crucial role in the preservation and imagining of cultural identity, but they are also shaped and determined by ideological agendas. By preserving and exhibiting material and visual culture, such institutions not only act as a repository for public memory through collecting objects, but also become the 'remembered and lived experiences of untold numbers of many generations of visitors, museum professionals, and readers.'¹²⁹ The spaces, displayed cultures, objects, and embodied experiences of looking and listening, become embedded in the memories of the public viewing, curating, building, managing, and experiencing the galleries, (sometimes) lasting in people's memories after they leave the museum. Yet, the politics of museums also represents the tension between remembering and forgetting. Susan Stewart argues that the act of collecting *is* an act of forgetting. She writes 'the point of the

¹²⁶ Kumja Paik Kim, 'A Celebration of Life: Patchwork and Embroidered Pojagi by Unknown Korean Women'; Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*; Charlotte Horlyck, 'Questioning Women's Place in the Canon of Korean Art History', in *Shaping of Modernity in the Arts of East Asia, 16th-20th Centuries*, ed. by Kristen L. Chiem and Lara C.W. Blanchard (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

¹²⁷ Kim and Choi, p. 7.

¹²⁸ Kim and Choi, p. 2.

¹²⁹ Susan A. Crane, 'Introduction', in *Museums and Memory*, ed. by Susan A. Crane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).in

collection is forgetting – starting again in such a way that a finite number of elements create, by virtue of their combination, an infinite reverie.¹³⁰ In other words, collections forge new narratives that are derived from the objects bound to the collection and the relations of the objects bound to the collection that are seemingly presented as the only objects or the only relations to define the subject of the collection. As institutions that develop and sustain public memory then, museums' collections produce enclosed narratives that imagine the subject defined by an author or perhaps, several authors *as* reality. For the collector *is* the author. In decolonising histories of Korean patchwork, we must ask initially what kind of knowledge was produced by collecting Korean patchwork, whose voices and ideological agendas have shaped and continue to shape narratives of Korea and Korean women (through patchwork), both imagined and real, and critically, whose voices have been lost in the act of collecting? Importantly, how does the tension between remembering and forgetting constitute Korean womanhood through cultural memory?

This chapter begins with *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* and the American ethnographic collection. A collection built through Christian missionary work, I trace the actors that preserved what is most likely, the first Korean patchwork collected in a museum archive. I interrogate these politics of collecting through James Clifford's critique which highlights how ethnographic collections were shaped by colonial agendas that imagined worlds and their ontologies through a Eurocentric gaze. Museums became institutions of authority that determined through their collecting, and ownership of material cultures, the definitions, and narratives of the objects collected, and thus by proxy, the people that were imagined through these material possessions.¹³¹ Through the case study of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, I explore 'Korea' through the American imaginary, exploring how collecting material culture has shaped American foreign policy in Korea today, thus the nation itself. By highlighting the materiality of the patchwork

¹³⁰ Stewart, p. 152.

¹³¹ Also see Ariella Aisha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London, UK: Verso, 2019); Shuchen Wang, 'Museum Coloniality: Displaying Asian Art in the Whiteness Context', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 27.6 (2021), 720–37; *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

object, I piece together new voices that emerge from reading, listening to, and analysing the cloth's material composition, complicating the 'Korea' signified through its original collection.

In the second case study, I explore public memory through private collecting. By foregrounding the work of Huh Dong Hwa, I map the histories of Korean patchwork and womanhood that were shaped and established by the curator of the Museum of Korean Embroidery. I argue that Huh built the seminal and prototype collection for jogakbo as Korean patchwork, and in doing so Huh's authorship has dominated the written historiography of the textile. Examining Huh's collecting practices through the lens of coloniality, I situate his research in relation to Euro-American values, regarding the period of cultural reform defined by General Park Chung Hee and General Chun Doo Hwan, and the rising democratic protests defined by the minjung movement as foundational to his historical narrative. Chungmoo Choi describes the US and South Korea in a 'liberator-benefactor' relation that has reproduced Western hegemonic values through American influence.¹³² That is, America's economic and militaristic support bound the ROK into establishing American values. I unpack and explore this US-ROK relation as an expression of coloniality. Mapping the shifting symbolic status of the textile from the quotidian to the revered, I connect the homophonic connections between minbo and minjung to situate the signification of patchwork as a tradition appealing to the rising populism of the ROK. But what can we build beyond nationalistic ideas of jogakbo and its ideals of the Korean woman? What can we complicate in our understanding of intention and desire, by unpacking Huh's work through the memory discourses of remembering and forgetting? Huh's collections were donated to the Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA) after his death in 2018, thus I also explore the lasting impressions of his work as public memory.

Finally, I survey the legacy of Huh's work through jogakbo as the art object, asking how national identity and consuming tradition has produced new modes of capitalist production. By

¹³² Chungmoo Choi, 'The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea', p. 83.

viewing jogakbo in transnational sites and archives, including the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA), and through voices of diasporic makers, including J P 제피 (formerly Jen Pack), Zadie Xa, and Youngmin Lee, I reveal the polyphony of Korean women's voices which have shaped global memories of jogakbo. I also build global conversations of patchwork through Zadie Xa, J P, and Legacy Russell. Russell's curation of 'The New Bend' explored the possibilities for imagining women's work not through locally bound sites, but rather through the diasporic relations between raced, gendered, and classed quilting traditions.¹³³ The show was displayed in three iterations at Hauser & Wirth's galleries, starting with New York from 3 February to 2 April, 2022, then Los Angeles between 27 October to 30 December 2022, and finally in Bruton, UK from 28 January to 8 May 2023. By mapping these transcultural connections, through Russell, I imagine the radical potential of moving beyond nationalist boundaries of being and belonging.

Imagining 'Korea' through Ethnographic Collecting

i. Colonial encounters: Christianity and Americans in Korea

American and European histories have reiteratively defined Korea as the 'Hermit Kingdom', a label bound to the perceived policies of extreme isolationism during the Joseon dynasty. Kirk W. Larsen writes that '[t]he English appellation "Hermit" may have been first applied to Korea by William Elliot Griffis, an American educator and preacher who lived in Japan in the 1870s and, while never actually visiting Korea or reading Korean-language materials, wrote *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, a history of Korea widely read in the late nineteenth century.¹³⁴

Korea as the 'Hermit Kingdom' traces a history of colonial thinking, where Christianity and

¹³³ Andrea Schwan and Christine McMonagle, *The New Bend* (New York: Hauser & Wirth New York, 22nd Street, 3 April 2022) <https://www.hauserwirth.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Press-Release_TheNewBend_HWNY22-1-1.pdf> [accessed 27 July 2023].

¹³⁴ For further reading see Kirk W. Larsen, 'Competition in Absentia: China, Japan, and British Cotton Textiles in Korea', in *The Pacific in the Age of Early Industrialization*, ed. by Kenneth M. Pomeranz (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009), pp. 153–74 (p. 154); William Elliot Griffis, *Corea, The Hermit Nation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1882).

modernity served as ideological frameworks underpinning the colonial desire and perceived duty to civilise Korean people.

This designation still has resonance in Korea's cultural history today. 'Hermit Kingdom' is reiterated in museum collections, government papers, and history texts.¹³⁵ Yet, there were established transnational relations prior the writing of Griffis's *Corea*, including the Sino-Korean relations¹³⁶ which spread the neo-Confucian ideologies of the Joseon period during the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910).¹³⁷ Once Korea's borders were forced open and modern diplomatic relations were established, initially with Japan through the Treaty of Ganghwa Island in 1876, and then with the US under the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1882, diplomats and missionaries were allowed to travel and trade in the country, which began cross-cultural exchanges of materials and knowledge. This period prior to Japanese colonial occupation (1910-1945) was known as the Open Port period (1876-1910). Some of the objects collected from these early encounters formed the foundation for ethnographic collections of Korea, and along with accompanying travelogues and written correspondence, an understanding of 'Korea' in global memory.

Studies from museums, and specifically interrogations of the imperial politics of ethnographic collections, remind us that the museum is a colonial mode of representation that was invented in colonial metropolises to establish and reinforce ideas about material culture on an index of civilisation. James Clifford's critique views the ethnographic collection as a colonial mode of representation bound to Anglo-Eurocentric ideologies. Clifford argues that such

¹³⁵ For further reading see Chang-su Houchins, *An Ethnography of the Hermit Kingdom: The J.B. Bernadou Korean Collection 1884-1885* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 2004); Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*, pp. 86–138; George Foulk and Col. John F. Prout, 'The First US Naval Attaché to Korea', *Studies in Intelligence*, 49.1 (2005) <<https://www.cia.gov/static/92ce6e9d0edd7657cf26fd4ee77765e6/First-Naval-Attache-Korea.pdf>> [accessed 16 February 2023].

¹³⁶ These relations are often described as the 'tributary system', but Peter C. Perdue argues that there was no such definition used in any Chinese dynasty and that the penchant for scholars and journalist to reiterate the term reinforces Orientalist ideas about the rise of China in the twenty-first century. Sino-Korean relations changed and shifted, depending on the different policies of both countries. For further reading see Peter C. Perdue, 'The Tenacious Tributary System', *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24.96 (2015), 1002–14.

¹³⁷ Deuchler, p. 1.

practices reflected a Western ‘strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity.’¹³⁸ That is, ethnographic collectors perceived the discovery, ownership, and fixed understanding of other cultures through a lens informed by a Eurocentric worldview. Debates emerging from museum studies and critiques of imperialism, which include studies by Ariella Azoulay, Shuchen Wang, Ivan Karp, Steven D. Lavine, Walter Mignolo, Partha Mitter and Craig Clunas,¹³⁹ argue that museum systems and their taxonomies of material culture were shaped by Eurocentric ideals, imbuing a universality onto the collected objects that were governed by and reinforced Western ideals of being and belonging. Historical authority was granted to those possessing material cultures, allowing their voices to dominate both the narratives of the objects collected, and crucially, the people that were imagined through these material possessions.



Figure 6. Catalogue No. E153613, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution. © Smithsonian Institute, all rights reserved.

¹³⁸ Clifford, *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, p. 218.

¹³⁹ Also see Azoulay; Wang; Karp and Lavine; *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, ed. by Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); Mitter and Clunas; Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Eurocentrism and Coloniality: The Question of Totality of Knowledge’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 194–210.

The first collections of Korean objects acquired in American public museums include the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts, and the National Museum of Natural History, now part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, which began in 1882 and 1881, respectively.¹⁴⁰ Some of the first pieces collected for these museums included celadon ceramics, commissioned paintings, wood and lacquered furniture,¹⁴¹ and a block-printed cotton bojagi, which measured 122 x 140 cm (*fig. 6*). The bojagi, Object No. E153613-0, was acquired by the National Museum on 24 February 1886 by John Baptiste Bernadou (1858-1908), an officer in the US Navy who was ‘trained to scientifically collect [Korean] objects’ as the “‘Smithsonian attaché’” to the U.S. legation in Seoul’ between March 1884 to April 1885.¹⁴² The gathering of such materials was part of an intelligence initiative that eventually set the foundation for modern American foreign policy.¹⁴³ Edward Said reminds us that knowledge is necessary for domination, and such collecting practices foreshadow the long and ongoing relation between the US-ROK that began with these initial acts of curiosity, diplomacy, and eventually, ideological and religious coloniality. Currently, there are no Korean patchworks in the Smithsonian Institute, and the earliest acquisition of Korean patchwork for the PEM was *bojagi (wrapping cloth)* (Object No. E300107) in 1995.

Alongside the collecting of objects, there were also early travelogues and written correspondence that formed the foundations for US intelligence of Korea. One of the first naval attachés assigned to the peninsula was George C. Foulk (1856-1893), who began his career as a junior officer escorting the first Korean delegation to America in 1882.¹⁴⁴ Foulk’s writings and explorations are remembered as the first American encounters of Korea. They offer insights into Korea’s political relations with China and Japan, Korea’s military and defence strategies, and

¹⁴⁰ Hyunsoo Woo.

¹⁴¹ Hyunsoo Woo; Ji Hye Hong, ‘Collecting Korean Things: Actors in the Formation of Korean Collections in Britain (1876-1961)’ (Royal College of Art, 2020).

¹⁴² Houchins.

¹⁴³ For further reading see Mark Russell Shulman, ‘The Rise and Fall of American Naval Intelligence, 1882-1917’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 8.2 (1993), 214–26.

¹⁴⁴ Foulk and Prout.

everyday life at the end of the nineteenth century. Reading Foulk's writings more than a century later, Colonel John F. Prout published an essay in 2005 for the US Central Intelligence Agency's journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, to highlight Foulk's concern with the violence of civilian uprisings against the Royal Family (who were aligned to Chinese ideologies), the '[p]roblems with the Chinese',¹⁴⁵ and what Foulk regarded as the presence of a 'powerful and dangerous figure', the Chinese minister in Korea, Yuan Shi-kai.¹⁴⁶ These writings of US military intelligence reflect and express the historical imagining of China through the lens of yellow peril¹⁴⁷ in American foreign policy, situating Korea as a valued ally in military strategy and diplomacy. Foulk observed how Korea was beginning to separate from the Sinosphere, marking a critical stage of building US-ROK relation.

In Foulk's writings Korea was viewed in proximity to American values – initially, Christianity. Recorded in the original correspondences to his family, there were several references to the darkness of the pagan land, the need for Christianity,¹⁴⁸ and the visuality of white dress worn by Korean people that was dirtied by soil. In a letter to his family written in Seoul on 2 July 1884, Foulk wrote

[t]he Koreans about the streets were all in white, or what had been white for it was now greasy black and muddy. Dirty coolies wandered about with rough racks strapped with straw ropes on their shoulders to carry things. Every here and there a crowd of these dirty savages, they seemed to be, were wildly gesticulating as if about to begin a fight and talking Korean jargon at the tops of their voices.¹⁴⁹

His passage includes both the presence of white, and its absence – the Korean bodies adorned in white were sullied with mud that represented to Foulk, a 'dirty' and 'savage' nature. Richard Dyer

¹⁴⁵ Foulk and Prout.

¹⁴⁶ Foulk and Prout.

¹⁴⁷ Yellow peril, 'yellow wave', 'yellow plague, and the 'Mongol invasion' were terms that expressed the anti-Asian immigration sentiments of the mid-nineteenth century that were eventually ratified into the Chinese Exclusionary Act of 1882, and the Asian Exclusionary Act of 1924. Erika Lee's essay describes how 'Asians – especially Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians – were described as being inassimilable aliens', but notably not Koreans. For further reading see Erika Lee, 'The "Yellow Peril" and Asian Exclusion in the Americas', *Pacific Historical Review*, 76.4 (2007), 537–62. Also see Tchen and Yeats.

¹⁴⁸ *America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. by Samuel Hawley (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008), pp. 27, 44–45, 84.

¹⁴⁹ Hawley, p. 32.

argues that Whiteness, as a concept of racial embodiment, was constituted by three elements: ‘Christianity, “race” and enterprise/imperialism.’¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, white and representations of Whiteness were historically coded to signify the moral and aesthetic superiority of Anglo-European bodies. Although Christianity was not historically (and essentially) White, as the foundation for European and American selfhood, it became marked, ‘thought and felt in distinctly white ways for most of its history’.¹⁵¹ This contrast between White as light and Black as dark defines racial and colonial binaries, which Frantz Fanon describes as a Manichean dualism.¹⁵²

Light and dark relationalities were also found in East Asian philosophies, for example in the yin-yang symbol,¹⁵³ but the motif signified concurring dualities and not binary oppositions. In tracing coloniality through the logic of noncontradiction¹⁵⁴ and Christianity, Walter Mignolo reveals how the world was once built on polyversal¹⁵⁵ ideas of being that embraced the ‘coexistence or complementarity of the opposite’.¹⁵⁶ These ideas were systematically erased, oppressed, and marginalised through the universal claims of coloniality/modernity, which built narratives of modernity through binary oppositions, constituting a constructed idea of Man as the universal/singular representation of humanity. Through Mignolo, Quijano, and Sylvia Wynter we learn that the overrepresentation of Man/Human, that is the Eurocentric ontology of

¹⁵⁰ Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge), p. 14.

¹⁵¹ Dyer, p. 17.

¹⁵² Fanon remarks that ‘[t]he colonial world is a Manichaeic world’, declaring that the world is divided by the white colonizers and the ‘[O]ther’, who he references as the colonized people belonging to the ‘native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation’. For further reading see Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Constance Farrington (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 31–32; See also Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

¹⁵³ Laurel Kendall, *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p. 23.

¹⁵⁴ Mignolo writes that ‘[t]he law of contradiction or of noncontradiction (both terms are used to refer to it) seems to be the seed for the construction of binary opposition in Western thoughts.’ The construction of dualities shaped a thinking that through the rhetoric of modernity created the dualisms of ‘Christians and non-Christians, masculine and feminine, white and nonwhite, progress and stagnation, developed and underdeveloped, First and Second/Third World.’ For further reading see Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’, pp. 154–56.

¹⁵⁵ While this is not a word in the dictionary, I use it to denote the multiplying of ‘universal’

¹⁵⁶ Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’, p. 154.

Man as Human, was the formative myth of coloniality.¹⁵⁷ In the first formation of this ontological framework, which Wynter defines as Man1, a new mode of being Human was re-invented through a ‘de-supernaturalizing’ or a ‘de-godding’ process which saw the ‘True Christian Self’ re-imagined as the ‘Rational Self of Man’.¹⁵⁸ From the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, this process set the foundation for the ideological belief that aligned Christianity with rationality, and all other religious beliefs as belonging to the irrational Other. As the West forged new colonies and colonial expansion, the binary between the Christian versus the non-Christian was mapped onto inventions of race as Otherness, where the Rational (European and White) Man opposed the irrational Indigenous Others that they sought to control.

The white versus dark motifs in Foulk’s passages reflect and foreshadow the development and encroachment of Christianity as coloniality on the Korean peninsula. According to Hyaeweol Choi, light versus dark was descriptively present in the ‘recurring motif[s] [of] emancipatory missionary discourse’ in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁵⁹ Through Christianity, Anglo-European values were embedded into the project of Korea’s modernisation. The early Christian missionary work during the Open Port period modernised/Westernised Korea through medical and educational reforms, introducing new ideas of the mind and body, including liberal feminism, and democracy.¹⁶⁰ When Korea was colonised by Japan, Christianity was also framed as a form of resistance against Japanese colonial agendas. Reading Foulk’s descriptions of Korean bodies marked and observed through white dress reflects a proximity to Whiteness that reveals both the Western colonial agenda through motifs of Christianity, and the foreshadowing influence of American values that shaped (and racialised)

¹⁵⁷ For further reading see Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’; Anibal Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America’, *Nepantla: Views from South*, 1.3 (2000), 533–80; Wynter.

¹⁵⁸ Wynter, pp. 263–66.

¹⁵⁹ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Andrew Eungi Kim, ‘Christianity, Shamanism, and Modernization in South Korea’, *CrossCurrents*, 50.1/2 (2000), 112–19.

Korean bodies. Mapping *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* and the origins of the Korean ethnographic collection at the AMNH through the ‘Missionary Exhibition’ begs critical questions about the influence of Christianity in shaping ‘Korea’. That is, how did Christianity shape both the imagined ‘Korea’ of the ethnographic collection and the real, geographic place of Korea and Korean women at the turn of the twentieth century?

ii. The Missionary Exhibition

As part of the ‘Missionary Exhibition 1900’, *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* was displayed for local American audiences to visualise the possibilities of their life abroad. Both Erin Hasinoff and Laurel Kendall write about collecting under this American Protestant lens. According to Hasinoff, the exhibition was an opportunity for a public assessment of missionary progress and a propaganda act. It was an effort to sell the public both the success of Christianity abroad and to incentivise further missionary work for American audiences.¹⁶¹ For the AMNH, the ‘Missionary Exhibition’ established crucial relationships for collecting (Korean) objects, including the appointment of CC Vinton, who was a medical missionary living in Seoul. Kendall describes Vinton’s work under Boas’s direction as forming a complicated record of Korea at the turn of the twentieth century. Instructed to collect everyday objects, Vinton purchased Japanese pottery and American kerosene cans, which were commonplace and represented the cross-cultural exchanges between China, Japan, and America that shaped Korean society at the time.¹⁶² Kendall remarks that some of the Korean visitors to the museum found the American and Japanese items to jar their perception of a ‘desired purity of old Korean things from an older Korean time’, yet for the curator, they were a critical ‘reminder of the looming imperial shadow circa 1900.’¹⁶³ Boas left the museum in 1905, and the funding for Vinton’s collecting ended in 1908.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Hasinoff, ‘The Missionary Exhibit: A Frustration and a Promise for Franz Boas and the American Museum of Natural History’, p. 86.

¹⁶² Kendall, ‘So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things’, p. 436.

¹⁶³ Kendall, ‘So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things’, p. 436.

¹⁶⁴ Kendall, ‘So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things’, p. 427, 433.

For Kendall's Korean visitors, the Open Port period seems to have complicated their vision of 'Korea', which was shaped by the ROK's nationalist agenda that espoused a singular and 'authentic' nationhood based on the narrative of the *han minjok* ('Korean nation').¹⁶⁵ This mythology of a singular collective identity became an essentialising narrative for modern (South) Korean nationalism, deployed in the ROK's cultural policies since Syngman Rhee.¹⁶⁶ Such ideological agendas sought to retrieve an 'authentic' Korean identity from the period of Japanese colonialism, when colonial reform sought to erase Korean cultural forms. In the Japanese mandate to assimilate Korean people during the occupation, several laws were constituted to colonise Korean citizens. These included the 1907 Newspaper Law and 1909 Publication Law which suppressed free press and therefore, public dialogue, and reforms to the educational system which established Japanese control of textbooks and curriculum in public schools, changing the national language from Korean to Japanese.¹⁶⁷ These educational reforms also extended into the art, design, and craft sectors, where according to design historian Yunah Lee's historiography of Korean design, the problem of defining Korean identity and authenticity in Korean design history maps onto the erasure of Korean culture under Japanese occupation, and the Orientalising distinction between traditional and modern forms.¹⁶⁸ Defining 'Korea' was a colonial project that reinforced binary thinking between the coloniser and the colonised, viewing

¹⁶⁵ Haksoon Yim writes that '[o]ne of Korea's most striking characteristics has been its long and continuous existence as a unified country. In spite of numerous invasions and occupations, the Koreans have remained remarkably homogeneous, and have been termed *Han minjok* (meaning "Korean nation"). Furthermore, despite being divided, the national consciousness constructed by *Han minjok* has remained.' Accordingly, this mythology of cultural identity serves as a significant foundation for Yim's exploration of cultural identity through cultural policy since 1948, as the ROK was forming. For further reading see Yim.

¹⁶⁶ For further reading see Carter J. Eckert and others, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul, Korea: Ilchokak Publishers, 1990), pp. 406–12; Yim.

¹⁶⁷ Eckert and others, pp. 254–73.

¹⁶⁸ Lee highlights Gong-ho Choe's research which claims that 'Korean craft and design under the Japanese rule, although making progress in modernization and systemization to a certain degree, evolved with the loss or distortion of Korean tradition (skill and aesthetics) and resulted in the separation of making (craft) from ideas (design).' Lee foregrounds how the problem of defining Korean identity and authenticity when naming Korean craft and design is framed in design history through debates regarding colonial modernity. Gong-ho Choe, *At the Crossroad between Industry and Art: Korean Modern Craft History (Saneupgwa Yesului Giroeseo: Hanguk Geundae Gongyesaron)* (Seoul: Misulmunhwa, 2008) IN Yunah Lee, 'Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia: Part 3 Korea', *Journal of Design History*, 25.1 (2012), 93–106. For further reading see Yunah Lee, 'Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia: Part 3 Korea'.

Korea as traditional, static, and even backwards. If modernity denotes a renunciation of the past, Japan justified the 1910 annexation of Korea as a necessary step toward modernisation as progress. Jini K. Watson argues that ‘both Japan’s historical role in imperialism and the way racial epistemologies formed in [the colonial period] are themselves constitutive of [...] the very *translatability* of Orientalist structures of knowledge’.¹⁶⁹ In other words, Orientalism is not exclusive to a West-East binary logic, but it is a theoretical framework that underpins global expressions of colonialism. In the case of Japan, knowledge systems were used to justify and establish a binary position between the Japanese (Self) and the Korean (Other).

For the ROK’s national agenda post-occupation, collective unity and identity were necessary to defend against encroaching Cold War antagonisms (from the DPRK). The regulation of cultural heritage and tradition¹⁷⁰ was used to retrieve a vision of the past that connected the ROK to a unified Korean peninsula – building a meta-narrative to stake a claim to authentic Koreanness. While this desire to retrieve the past was deployed as a strategy of nationalism, these cultural policies bound cultural tradition to a historical revisionism that problematically perpetuates colonial thinking, for the very notion of a static, authentic Korean identity was initially constituted by Japanese colonial policies. Sunghee Choi reminds us that ‘this type of thinking is itself an imposition of the Japanese regime, for it *denies Koreans the possibility of possessing, or being aware of the reality of, ever-changing identities* [ital. mine].’¹⁷¹ This binary thinking is self-Orientalising; and as Choi argues, Koreanness should not be bound to a singular conception of self, nationhood, or people.

Historians of trauma and memory have often referred to practices of forgetting or what Andreas Huyssen describes as a ‘culture of amnesia’ that enables people to forge new (national)

¹⁶⁹ Jini Kim Watson, ‘Imperial Mimicry, Modernisation Theory and the Contradictions of Postcolonial South Korea’, *Postcolonial Studies*, 10.2 (2007), 171–90 (p. 176).

¹⁷⁰ This is particularly apparent in the ‘intangible heritage’ culture, which was designated by the ROK’s 1962 Cultural Property Protection Law, which safeguarded and preserved static forms of art and craft as authentic Korean heritage. For further reading see Laurel Kendall, ‘Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft’, *Acta Koreana*, 17.2 (2014), 537–55.

¹⁷¹ Sunghee Choi, ‘Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea’, p. 294.

identities that are not necessarily bound to memories of violence.¹⁷² The question of cultural memory then, is shaped by national politics, and cultural contexts. As Steven J. Stern reminds us, mapping the history of memory illuminates the multiple voices and agendas of actors vying to control historical narratives.¹⁷³ His metaphor of the memory box teaches us that the collective memory of trauma should be forged through community experiences that compile together the various, and sometimes competing narratives. By placing *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* into a memory box of Korean patchwork, and moreover, ‘Korea’ itself, I include an object that troubles the normative histories of the handicraft, yet it reveals the complicated intersections between nation, coloniality, modernity, and womanhood.

Cloth Bundle, Patchwork is formed of the multiple encounters of material trade and Christian missionary work that shaped Korea during the Open Port period. During this time, Christian missionaries sought to offer religious reform through charity work. Hasinoff argues that ‘[a]cts of donation simultaneously fashioned a Christian community, which, although always open to new members, would have reinforced the Otherness of those on the receiving end.’¹⁷⁴ American Christian charity through missionary work set the foundation for what Chungmoo Choi explores as the ‘liberator-benefactor’ relation, which questions the status of South Korea’s postcolonial statehood.¹⁷⁵ Missionaries in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century established the first medical hospitals and the first schools for women. In doing so, they sought to deploy

¹⁷² For further reading see Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994); Ruth Linn, *Escaping Auschwitz: A Culture of Forgetting* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004); Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁷³ Steven J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet’s Chile. Book One: The Memory Box of Pinochet’s Chile* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. xix–xxxi.

¹⁷⁴ Erin Hasinoff, *Faith in Objects: American Missionary Expositions in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 7–8.

¹⁷⁵ Choi’s essay on ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’ critiques the assumption of South Korea’s ‘post’-colonial status for it ‘eludes the political, social, and economic realities of its people, which lie behind that celebrated sign “post” of periodization, without considering the substantive specificity of Korean histories.’ The scholar foregrounds the US-ROK, and Cold War ideologies as having lasting implications on the decolonization of the ROK. For further reading see the Introduction and Chungmoo Choi, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’.

technological, educational, and medical innovation as charity, seeking to civilise the Korean people while representing themselves as ‘pioneers of Korean *modern* womanhood.’¹⁷⁶

By offering charity, ideological agendas in education reform were shaped by Christian modernity. As an iteration of colonial modernity, Hyaeweol Choi defines the Christian version as ‘an ideology that advocates the idea of an inevitable historical movement toward material and technological modernity and places the moral, cultural, and spiritual role of Christianity at the core of that enterprise.’¹⁷⁷ In other words, it is belief system that frames progress through Christian values. Mapping its gendered histories and constitutions in Korea, Choi continues ‘[t]he gendered form of Christian modernity is prominently displayed in the missionary discourse on modern womanhood in Korea. It privileges the spiritual over the secular and the political in defining true womanhood.’¹⁷⁸ With ‘true womanhood’ defined through Christianity, alternative figurations of womanhood, including the role of shaman (*mudang*, *mansin*), were increasingly marginalised.¹⁷⁹ Under the project of coloniality/modernity, dispensable women were re-invented into witches, in opposition to necessary women, which included the wives and mothers needed to ‘secure the regeneration of the species.’¹⁸⁰

Missionaries shaped ideologies about the body and womanhood through Christian values. While Vinton perceived a ‘devaluation of women’ in Confucian society, remarking upon

¹⁷⁶ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, pp. 10–11.

¹⁷⁸ A footnote for this quote reads: “The overall conservative nature of missionaries in the Korea mission field is succinctly summarized by the Rev. Charles A. Clark: “From the beginning, nearly all members of the Mission have held notably conservative views on theology. The missionaries in their teaching have always laid strong emphasis upon the sinfulness of men, and the paramount need of getting rid of sin, and upon salvation through the blood of Christ alone. They have accepted the supernatural as presented in the Scriptures, and believe in the Bible as a book of authority. They have believed and still believe that the message of the Gospel is unique in the world, and that Christianity is not one among several coordinate religions ‘searching for God,’ but the one and final religion which, through revelation, has found Him.” See “Fifty Years of Mission Organization Principles and Practice,” in *The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Korea Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, June 30–July 3, 1934 (Seoul: Han’guk kidokkyo yōksa yōn’guso, 2000, rpt.), 56–66 IN Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁹ For further reading see Merose Hwang, ‘The Mudang: Gendered Discourses on Shamanism in Colonial Korea’ (unpublished PhD, University of Toronto, 2009).

¹⁸⁰ Mignolo, ‘The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature’, p. 158.

Korean gender dynamics as one of the ‘Obstacles to Missionary Success in Korea’¹⁸¹, Choi argues that Christian womanhood was not necessarily an emancipatory and liberatory feminism. Rather, the Christian reforms taught Korean women values that reinforced women’s place in the domestic household, through the ideal of the ‘Wise Mother, Good Wife’, which was shared by both the Christian missionaries who viewed the cultivation of future mothers as necessary to build Christian homes and ‘many Korean male intellectuals, who advocated educated motherhood in their pursuit of national reformation.’¹⁸² In both ideological systems, Korean women were disciplined into maintaining the patrilineal order of Korean society which positioned women in supporting roles of mother and wife. By situating *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* within the practices of missionary collecting then, I necessarily contextualise the making and collecting of the textile through Christianity modernity as an ideological encounter that supported education and medical reforms, while continuing to define women’s role through domestic duties.

iii. Reading *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*: Archive records, materiality

The archive record for *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* in the ‘Missionary Exhibition 1900 folder’ included: two iterations of a representation of the patchwork, taken on Kodak Ektachrome 64T Professional film, which was highlighted in the Introduction (*fig. 1, 2*); a written inventory of objects possibly collected for the ‘Missionary Exhibition’, or otherwise acquired from the exhibition (Appendix A); two different object cards for *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, one with a drawn illustration and the other with a black and white thumbnail photograph of the textile folded (*fig. 7, 8*); a report from the ‘Missionary Exhibition’ that outlined its aims, contributions, and proposed scheme or organisation; a typed inventory of medical objects that were donated from various sources, including many doctors; a written inventory of objects ‘[l]oaned by Dr. Vinton’;

¹⁸¹ Vinton; Kendall, ‘So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things’, p. 432.

¹⁸² Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 87.

‘discursive objects’, Silverman argues that ‘[o]bjects of knowledge often possess multiple layers of meaning, an epistemological patina that may or may not be accessible and apprehended by those who encounter and engage them.’¹⁸⁴ This ‘epistemological patina’ references the discourses of museum studies and the knowledge generated from ethnographic research, but also points to the hidden or underrepresented histories that may not have been recorded, which were perhaps inaccessible to or overlooked by the institution. While Karp’s and Kratz’s understanding foregrounds the museum as a mediator and process, Silverman explores objects moving back into community, with meanings that are enriched by the local readings of community members who have the ability to translate the many layers of the objecthood. This archive record serves as a contextual guide to explore the many relationships between the object and the multiple mediators and translators involved in understanding and forging meaning for the textile. These

A <u>E</u>		COUNTRY: <u>KOREA</u>	OBJECT: <u>patched work bundle cloth</u>	CAT. NO: <u>70.0/5289</u>
Locale: _____		No. Pieces: <u>1</u>	ACCESS. NO: <u>1928-36</u>	
CULTURE or TRIBE: _____		Donor: <u>Dept of Ed. Museum</u>		
DESCRIPTION	Material: _____	Exped <input type="checkbox"/> Gift <input type="checkbox"/> Rrch <input type="checkbox"/> Exch <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Technique: _____			
	Dimensions (Metric): L: _____ W: _____ H: _____ Diam: _____			
	Disting. Feature/color: _____			
COMMENTS: _____		NEG. NO: <u>69492</u>		
CONDITION: _____		Other Negs: _____		
(date) (/ /)				
STORAGE LOC: _____				
(date) (/ /)				




Figure 8. Object Card with photograph of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Missionary Exhibition folder, Archive Records Library. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

¹⁸⁴ Raymond A. Silverman, ‘Introduction: Museum as Process’, in *Museum as Process: Translating Local and Global Knowledges*, ed. by Raymond A. Silverman (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1–18 (p. 3).

layers of knowledge then, act as a process, recording and illuminating the geopolitical relations and ideological agendas that shaped these epistemologies of patchwork cloth and ‘Korea’.

The two object cards for *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* in the ‘Missionary Exhibition’ archive folder, one with a photographic image (*fig. 7*), and the other with a drawn illustration (*fig. 8*), were documentations of the object using different technologies of representation. In the photographic object card of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, the black and white thumbnail captures the textile in an inanimate state, folded into a flattened rectangle with its ties gathered across the top of its main body. The cloth was seemingly top lit with a relatively even perimeter of shadow around its edges. A small placard denoting its museum identification number: ‘Neg. 69492; AMNH 70.0/5289’ was placed on the front left side of the composition, in front of object to reference both the accession number that corresponded to the textile’s place in the archive, and the negative number attached to the corresponding photograph. This photographic object card emerges out of a style of photography defined by visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards as the seemingly naturalised, transparent, and ubiquitous practice of image making that was part of the ‘representational matrix that substantiated relations of knowledge and power’ in museum practices.¹⁸⁵ Edwards describes how this style of photographing ethnographic objects removed objects from their contextual setting and captured them as isolated objects. Aesthetically, the photographs avoided theatrical or highly stylised lighting, opting to produce a uniformity to the images that emphasised each object’s ‘form, texture, material or decoration’.¹⁸⁶ In the thumbnail photography for *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, the textile is isolated from any cultural references, placed alone on an off-white ground. The overhead lighting produces minimal shadows that seemingly presents a neutrality, a lack of stylisation that offers the viewer the perception of objectivity.

Edwards argues that this perceived transparency served to ‘articulate the universalising,

¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 51–52.

¹⁸⁶ Edwards, p. 58.

encyclopaedic archival¹⁸⁷ knowledge systems of the museum and reinforce the authority of its ethnographic knowledge about other cultures. These practices belonged to a continuum of visual aesthetics and ideological agendas related to the representation of ‘race, gender and the anthropologized body’¹⁸⁸ through photography.¹⁸⁹

In the drawn representation of the second object card, the patchworked textile was illustrated as a geometrically patterned square with four, curling ties that moved both outward from the body, and equally downward, as if they were drooping. Outlined in black ink and shaded with what seemed to be the ink blotched with water, it bore an uncanny quality where the rhythmically waving ties seemed to animate the textile, as if they were arms, outstretched and undulating. The card listed the techniques and materials of its composition, stating ‘silk, patchwork handstitched and machine stitched, gauze weave, damask weave, cotton, plain weave ties.’¹⁹⁰ While there was no date or author to signify when or by whom this card was made, Laurel Kendall confirmed that it was ‘the clear and precise hand’ of Lisa Whittall (1926–2019),¹⁹¹ a curatorial assistant of textiles in the Department of Anthropology between the 1970s to the 1990s. Whittall was not a specialist in Korean textiles, and had mislabelled the cloth as ‘Puroshiki’, the Japanese iteration of the wrapping cloth. Since my visit in April 2019, Mary Lou Murillo, the senior textile conservator updated the label to ‘Pojagi’.

Material cultures have long served as proxies for Other(ing) cultures. Ariella Azoulay argues that museums obscure their legacies of imperial violence through the act of documenting,

¹⁸⁷ Edwards, p. 52.

¹⁸⁸ Edwards, p. 62.

¹⁸⁹ Paul Landau’s explorations of photography in the colonial administrations of Africa reveals how the technology was used to create a visual index of differentiation and identification, emerging ‘as a “scientific” mode of representing human types.’ Anne Anlin Cheng’s and Anna Pegler-Gordon’s research reveals that Asian, and specifically Chinese women were subjects of the first passport photographs, a practice that was constituted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. For further reading see Paul S. Landau, ‘Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa’, in *Images & Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, ed. by Paul S. Landau and Deborah D. Kaspin (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), p. 145; Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 26–60; Anna Pegler-Gordon, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

¹⁹⁰ Whittall.

¹⁹¹ This was confirmed by Dr. Laurel Kendall, the chair of the Division of Anthropology in email correspondence. Laurel Kendall to Christin Yu, ‘Object 70.0/5289’, 17 May 2021.

periodising, collecting, displaying, trading, and studying. By separating the makers from their labour, material cultures are ‘expropriated and recognized – or misrecognized’¹⁹² by museum experts and inserted into a timeline of imperial knowledge. These acts of collecting materials turn people ‘into objects, into aggregates of disposable people,’¹⁹³ that are rendered no longer useful in the narration of one’s own histories. In my own observation of the record, I imagine the undulating movement represented by the waves of the ties to animate the illustration of the textile. In this animated thingliness, the Korean woman as patchwork seemingly enters a history of racialisation that expresses her Asiatic femininity, what Anne Anlin Cheng defines as her yellow womanhood.

Whittall’s observations of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, referenced in the object card, included an assumption of its Japanese objecthood, and the inclusion of silk and cotton materials. During my visit, I observed approximately eleven different patterns and fabric variations of silk and cotton compositions in the body of the patchwork, not including the ties. These fabrics included



Figure 9. Close-up detail of stamp on *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289). *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Asian Ethnographic Collection. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Photograph is author’s own. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

¹⁹² Azoulay, p. 61.

¹⁹³ Azoulay, p. 61.

navy gingham, navy stripes, teal stripes, and open, unbalanced plain-weave structures which resembled machine-woven cottons (*fig. 9*), as well the plainly woven cotton ties. Using a handheld magnifier at 100x, Murillo observed fibres that were ‘swollen, smooth and straight [with] a lustrous surface,’ and although they did not resemble the ‘unrul[iness]’ of cotton fibres from her experiences, they may have been treated with a process of mercerisation.¹⁹⁴ Mercerising cotton, a process of treating cotton with an acid or chemical treatment, was developed by John Mercer in Lancashire in 1844 and later patented in 1850.¹⁹⁵ Lancashire was an important location for cotton production for the British nineteenth century textile industries and such textiles were prevalent in Korea during the Open Port period. Economic historian Kirk W. Larsen has described machine-made cottons as a symbol of British industrialism and imperialism. Although the British had minimal presence in Korea, selling their textiles through Chinese and Japanese merchants, this period of cotton trade shaped the East Asian cotton industries.

Scholars of material histories have mapped the relationship between imported goods, materials and the constitutional histories of race and gender defined by colonial modernity. Gavi Levi Haskell and Sarah Cheang highlight how the trades of East Asian objects to Europe, beginning in the sixteenth century, used speculative assumptions of the artisans as knowledge forging racialised categories. Haskell highlights the shiny back surfaces of Chinese and Japanese lacquer which produced ‘Victorian anxieties about the boundaries between self and other’, and Cheang remarks that ornamental embroidery and ivory carving stereotyped Chinese people as having an ‘ability to labour continuously’, dehumanising Chineseness in its association to machines.¹⁹⁶ In her analysis of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s *China: Through the Looking Glass* exhibition in 2015, Anne Anlin Cheng describes the ‘fraught amalgamation between inorganic commodity and Asiatic female flesh’¹⁹⁷ signified by the use of porcelain in evening dresses by

¹⁹⁴ Mary Lou Murillo to Christin Yu, ‘Object 70.0/5289’, 26 May 2021.

¹⁹⁵ Agustí Nieto-Galan, ‘Calico Printing and Chemical Knowledge in Lancashire in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Life and “colours” of John Mercer’, *Annals of Science*, 54.1 (1997), 1–28 (pp. 14–18); Larsen, p. 153.

¹⁹⁶ Haskell; Cheang, ‘Dragons in the Drawing Room: Chinese Embroideries in British Homes, 1860-1949’, p. 237.

¹⁹⁷ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 94.

Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen and Roberto Cavalli. The value and histories of porcelain too, viewed initially by Western manufacturers as unknowable and seemingly impossible in its properties, were mapped onto stereotypes of Asiatic femininity. This body of scholarship offers important insights into the relationship between material trades and histories of race-making, but *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* also represents an illuminating case study of transnational objecthood.



Figure 10. Close-up detail of open-weave cotton on *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289). *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* (Object No. 70.0/5289), Asian Ethnographic Collection. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Photograph is author's own. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

Similar to the structure of the navy gingham, navy stripes, teal stripes machine-woven cottons, were the open, unbalanced, undyed plain-weave structure of white fabric (*fig. 10*), which were also defined by the swollen and smooth lustrous surfaces that resembled mercerised fibres. This was most likely an iteration of ogyangmok (machine-woven Western cotton). Commonly known as calico, the textile was imported to Korea initially during the Open Port period. Kim Nayun's thesis, 'A Study of Modern Ogyangmok' maps the consumption of machine-woven foreign cottons from this period, highlighting encounters with the British cotton textile industry

through Chinese merchants, as Larsen also corroborates. By the nineteenth century, ogyangmok became one of the most imported goods to Korea as it became highly regarded, signifying wealth, and its changing patterns of consumption evidenced trends in the local fashion system.¹⁹⁸ While British imports initially dominated the market of machine-woven fabrics, Japanese imports eventually flooded the market, between 1895 to 1905, by then the market was comprised of half Japanese and half British cottons.¹⁹⁹ This marketplace of transnational textile exchange shaped the emergence of local industries. Local manufacturers of industrially-woven textiles emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, with the Great Joseon Ramie Spinning Company and the Hansang Spinning Joint Investment Company opening in 1897 and 1899, respectively,²⁰⁰ then the Gyongsong Cord Company in 1910.²⁰¹ The Gyongsong Spinning and Weaving Company opened in 1919 as the first joint-stock textile company, indicating the development of Korea's capitalist marketplace.²⁰²

Cotton has signified multiple meanings in the modern world. In Giorgio Riello's global history of cotton, he argues that the European and specifically, British mechanisation and industrialisation of the cotton market marked the beginning of the "divergence" between different parts of the world: the rich and the poor.²⁰³ By the nineteenth century, the global cotton trade overtook the woollen and linen industries, positioning Britain as the core of a 'system of trade, exchange and power [...] that exploited resources, that made and controlled new technologies and that dominated markets to the detriment of Asian merchandise.'²⁰⁴ In

¹⁹⁸ Nayun Kim, 'A Study of Modern Ogyangmok' (unpublished Masters, Ewha Woman's University, 2022), pp. 41–42, 95–96.

¹⁹⁹ Jungtaek Lee, 'The Birth of Modern Fashion in Korea: Sartorial Transition between Hanbok and Yangbok through Production, Mediation and Consumption', *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 4.2, 183–209 (p. 186).

²⁰⁰ Bu-ja Go, *Uri Saenghwal 100nyeon, Ot* (Seoul: Hyeonamsa, 2001), p. 95 IN Jungtaek Lee, 'The Birth of Modern Fashion in Korea: Sartorial Transition between Hanbok and Yangbok through Production, Mediation and Consumption', p. 186.

²⁰¹ Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1991), p. 28.

²⁰² Eckert notes that this is the first joint-stock company 'which we have actually primary evidence'. Eckert, pp. 28–29.

²⁰³ Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 3.

²⁰⁴ Riello, p. 265.

order to secure a foothold in the Asian market, the British, other European and eventually, the American industrial economies relied on securing free trade agreements, liberalising global markets, using diplomacy, force, alongside economic and political power to ensure the flow of Anglo-European produced commodities to compete with and supplement local (Asian) products.²⁰⁵ Quijano's theory that globalisation was 'the culmination of a process that began with the constitution of America and colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism as a new global power'²⁰⁶ is illuminated in the swollen and smooth lustrous surfaces of mercerised cottons and the machine-woven calicos in *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, for they serve as a material record of globalisation in the nineteenth century.

Raw cotton was a 'white gold' that was cultivated through the labour of enslaved Africans in the Americas during the seventeenth century.²⁰⁷ This period propelled the 'Second Cotton Revolution' between circa 1750 to 2000, as Riello defines it, which marked the rise of Europe and predominantly Britain, through a centripetal system that developed an industrialised manufacturing core in Europe, separated from the agrarian production of cotton in the US, sold through an established global trade network defined by colonial histories.²⁰⁸ Although the plantation slavery system ended in the early nineteenth century in Britain and the mid-nineteenth century in the US, the principles of exploiting resources, lands and labour were nevertheless foundational to industrial capitalism. As the Open Port period was established through the opening of Korea's borders, marking Korea's modernity through new diplomatic relations on a global scale at the turn of the twentieth century, these cottons of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* trace a globalised cotton industry which saw the Anglosphere at its very center. This history maps the connections between Indigenous displacement, trans-Atlantic slavery and the aftermath of racial capitalism, the industrial manufacturing system, and wage labour to a 'free market' economy and

²⁰⁵ Riello, pp. 267–71.

²⁰⁶ Quijano, p. 533.

²⁰⁷ Anna Arabindan-Kesson, *Black Bodies, White Gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), pp. 1–28.

²⁰⁸ For further reading see Riello, pp. 185–287.

trade politics which favoured and favours Anglo-European capital dominance through globalisation, constituting the asymmetrical dependencies that define the fashion and textile industries that I explore in Chapter Two.

While hand-stitching can form even and consistent stitches, the lasting tautness, preserved for over a century in the stitching of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* was strong evidence of sewing machine technologies. As previously observed at the beginning of this chapter, the stitches forming *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* consisted of perfectly measured, repeated, consistent lines sewn in rows that were neither perfect, nor consistent. That is, the pathways of the stitches were not measured, seemingly improvised without a clear marker, nor level. Each fragment was sewn together with two rows of stitches, one row that was most likely used to attach two fragments together, and the other to finish the seamline (*fig. 4*). Soon-Young Kim and Jung Ha-Brookshire map the introduction of the sewing machine to Korea during the first industrial revolution, which began after the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1876.²⁰⁹ Analysing newspaper articles retrieved from 1896 to 1938, they note the early uses of sewing machines in custom-made clothing stores, making Western-style clothing, such as custom uniforms and government officials' ceremonial outfits.²¹⁰ Andrew Gordon's research on the introduction of the sewing machine in Japan reveals how Singer, which was viewed by historians as the world's first successful multinational company, transformed women's work. He argues that by the turn of the twentieth century, the notion of progress fundamental to coloniality modernity was a positive value established around the Pacific, and thus the sewing machine became 'explicitly linked to the possibility of progress for women in particular.'²¹¹

This belief was echoed in the diaries of early Christian missionaries, who also brought sewing machines to Korea. Hyaeweol Choi's research highlights an entry from Mattie Noble's

²⁰⁹ Soon-Young Kim and Jung Ha-Brookshire, 'Evolution of the Korean Marketplace From 1896 to 1938: A Historical Investigation of Western Clothing Stores' Retail and Competition Strategies', *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 37.3 (2019), 155–70 (p. 156).

²¹⁰ Kim and Ha-Brookshire, pp. 157–58.

²¹¹ Gordon, p. 17.

writings which evidences how the missionary educators sought to display and promote domestic femininity by inviting Korean women into their homes. Noble was an early educator in Korea's mission schools, and Choi argues that '[i]n the eyes of Koreans, those Western style mission houses were like a fancy "heaven" equipped with an organ, a clock, a sewing machine, rocking chairs, and imported kitchen facilities that they had never seen before.'²¹² Along with the custom-made clothing industry, the sewing machine was simultaneously introduced to Korean women through the missionary home. As previously noted, Christian modernity underpinned education reforms for Korean women with ideological beliefs that sought to present technological innovation and progress through the moral values of Christianity. Women were educated to be the future mothers of Christian households. Domestic labour was important curriculum for early missionary schooling, as evidenced by Noble's diaries and the traces of machine-stitching on *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, which included the introduction of the sewing machine to benefit the maintenance of the nuclear household. Both narratives of modernity seemingly introduced the sewing machine to Korean women as a technology of progress.

As part of the Asian Ethnographic Collection under the Korean Collection, *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* is undoubtedly a 'Korean' object, and yet it troubles and complicates narratives of 'Korea' that were constructed through jogakbo's recorded narratives. What is 'Korea' is a question that sits adjacently to this exploration of the 'Korean woman', and as evidenced in this patchwork object, the definitions of Korea forged through nationalist histories seem to neglect the global history of material trades that were apparent during the Open Port period. According to Riello, a global approach maps the complicated and often geographically dislocated happenings to expose 'how events located in a precise space and time [...] are in reality the fruit of complex interactions between different parts of the world.'²¹³ It is within these complexities,

²¹² Mattie Noble was married to Arthur Noble. The couple was sent to Korea in 1892 by the Methodist Church. Mattie was one of the few educators who allowed Korean women from the missionary schools to visit her home. Mattie Noble, 'Diaries', 1903 IN Hyaewool Choi, p. 83.

²¹³ Riello, p. 3.

relationalities, and intimacies, to borrow Lisa Lowe's term, that we can see 'Korea' and Korean womanhood through a holistic picture that highlights the transnational and transcultural influences of her being and becoming. Rather than view the material composition of this cloth as a sign of the 'looming imperial shadow', as Kendall describes Korea at the turn of the twentieth century,²¹⁴ it serves as a reminder of coloniality already at play in shaping the ideological underpinnings of a modern Korea. Christianity profoundly shaped both the imagined 'Korea' of the ethnographic collection and the real, geographic place of Korea and Korean women at the turn of the twentieth century through the introduction of material cultures, education reforms, charity work, and gendered roles and beliefs, evidenced in *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*. Significantly, it also shaped Korea in relation to an ontological idea of Man/Human that positioned Europe at its center.

Reconstructing the ROK: how jogakbo became Korean

i. Introducing Huh Dong Hwa

Cloth Bundle, Patchwork is a unique and unusual object in the histories of Korean patchwork collecting, for the form was not widely collected in museums until after the 1980s. Moreover, it does not fit into the categories of 'silk' and 'ramie' that came to distinguish jogakbo.²¹⁵ Susan A. Crane reminds us that '[b]eing collected means being valued and remembered institutionally'.²¹⁶ That is, being collected requires the institution to acknowledge the value of an object being remembered, and I add, this value acts to uphold the narrative for the national or local identities that the museum represents. The work of Huh Dong Hwa, a private collector of Korean embroidery and patchwork, emerges as *the* seminal figure in the history of jogakbo. His work elevated the status of the Korean patchwork wrapping cloth into a nationally and globally recognised and valued object and created a written historical record for

²¹⁴ Kendall, 'So Close to the Canon, but ...: Of Franz Boas, C.C. Vinton, and Some Korean Things', p. 436.

²¹⁵ See Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*.

²¹⁶ Crane, p. 2.

understanding the Korean patchwork wrapping cloth known as jogakbo. Jogakbo not only became valued and remembered, but Huh as the historian and expert of the Korean patchwork was also remembered, and nationally recognised for his work.

Regina Bendix argues that '[d]eclaring something authentic legitimated the subject that was declared authentic, and the declaration in turn can legitimate the authenticator [...]. Processes of authentication bring material representations by elevating the authenticated into to category of the noteworthy.'²¹⁷ In other words, Huh's collecting practices not only legitimated patchwork wrapping cloths as jogakbo, but also as an authentic Korean tradition. Then by declaring his own understanding of the everyday textiles and defining their histories as histories of Korean women's labour, Huh also declared his own expertise as authentic. Through this process, he elevated the status of the seemingly ordinary textile into a nationally and internationally recognised and valued object – an object to be collected, with a history that served to define national histories and reinforced specific ideas about Korean womanhood.

Over the years of working on this research, I have heard and read the stories of jogakbo through craft hobbyists, professional artists, designers, curatorial descriptions, and historical texts, and what was remarkable was the prevalence and the direct references to Huh's authorship. When I first travelled to Seoul for this research in the summer of 2018, I met several jogakbo makers who reiterated to me that the patchwork tradition had a likeness to Mondrian and Klee. This comparison stood out as a peculiar comment, not only for the notable consistency in which this phrasing was repeated, but I wondered why this 'Korean' textile was constantly likened to these Modernist artists. I have heard this phrase repeated in many discussions of jogakbo, and I will address its origin shortly. In 1976, Huh established and opened his private museum, the Museum of Korean Embroidery, 'on the upper floor of [his] wife's dental clinic in central Seoul.'²¹⁸ Over the course of his life, him and his wife, Park Young Sook,

²¹⁷ Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), p. 7.

²¹⁸ Huh, 'A Tribute to Unsung Artists', p. 35.

amassed a significant collection of Korean embroidery, which included the largest collection of jogakbo for a museum. His collection was not only exhibited in his own private gallery, but also in global institutions through his collaborative curations.

Huh was said to have curated over one hundred shows.²¹⁹ The list of these exhibitions included: ‘Classical Korean Embroideries Exhibition’ at the National Museum of Korea in 1978; ‘Five Hundred Years of Traditional Embroideries’ at the National Museum of Korea in 1978; ‘Stitch by Stitch: No-Name Woman Works’ at the National Folk Museum of Korea in 1983; ‘Korean Embroidery’ at the V&A in 1984; ‘Broderie Coréenne Traditionnelle’ at the Centre Culturel Coréen (Paris, FR) in 1984; ‘Cha Su: Die Kunst der koreanischen Stickerei’ at the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst (Köln, DE) in 1987; ‘Korean Wonder Cloth Exhibition’ in 1990; ‘Traditional Korean Wrapping Cloths’ at the Fitzwilliam Museum and Ashmolean Museum (UK) in 1990; an exhibition of Korean costumes and textile at the IBM Gallery of Science and Art (New York) in 1992; ‘Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes & Wrapping Cloths of the Choson Dynasty’ at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Seattle Asian Art Museum and PEM between 1995 to 1996; ‘Couleurs des quatre saisons. Costumes et *pojagi* de Corée à l’époque Chosŏn’ at the Musée Royal de Mariemont (Moralnwelz, BE) in 1996; ‘Rapt in Colour’ at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, AUS in 1999; ‘The Exhibition of Korean Traditional Pillow Pads’ at the Museum of Korean Embroidery in 2009; ‘Labores Milenarias’ at the Tejidos Del Museo de Bordados de Corea in 2011; ‘Bohçaşve Bocagi’nin Buluşması’ at Resim ve Heykel Müzesi in Turkey in 2013. In addition to these many showcases, he also published several museum catalogues through the private museum, which now form the foundational historiography of jogakbo. Huh’s private museum was closed after his death in 2018, and the collection was donated to the newly established Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA). The SeMoCA officially opened in 2021 and now holds five thousand, one hundred and twenty-nine

²¹⁹ *Huh Dong-Hwa, the Museum Director*, 2023, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Seoul, ROK.

pieces from Huh's original collection. Huh's practices formed the prototype collection for jogakbo and his work is thus a significant case study of how private memory has shaped national identities.

Korea's First Minister of Culture, Lee O-Young, defines Huh Dong Hwa as synonymous with Korean wrapping cloth cultures due to his extensive work exhibiting collections both within the ROK and abroad.²²⁰ Written in 2004, Lee's essay, 'On Wrapping Cloths' argues that the textiles were symbols of a premodern Korea, before 'cotton wrapping cloths stained with kimchi juice indeed began to disappear one by one in classrooms', replaced by the leather schoolbags that were symbols of modernity in Tokyo, 'Paris, London or New York'.²²¹ This evocative description of bojagi unites a haptic and olfactory representation of Korea as cultural memory. According to Kyung-Koo Han, '[k]imchi was the food of the colonized [...] In colonial times and during and after the Korean War, Koreans had been characterized as "kimchi-smelling."²²² Han describes how the Japanese and Westerners associated the pungent smells of kimchi with Koreans, thus the 'stained kimchi juice' describes an embodiment and potent symbol of Koreanness made by Korean women.

For Lee, Huh's work defined the wrapping cloths as uniquely Korean material culture and built crucial ties to a Korean history prior to Western/colonial modernisation. By formally comparing the leather schoolbag to the textile, Lee lauds the wrapping cloth's flexibility, highlighting its multi-purpose nature, unlike the single use of the book bag, which was stiff, formed, and only designated for books. Lee also sought to debunk Japanese claims of inventing wrapping cloth cultures (with the furoshiki), proclaiming that Korea was 'the founder of the wrapping cloths culture',²²³ while using Huh's work as significant evidence to a nationalist history

²²⁰ O-Young Lee, 'On Wrapping Cloths', in *Bojagi's Simple Elegance*, ed. by Huh Dong Hwa (Seoul: Museum of Korean Embroidery, 2004), pp. 10–13.

²²¹ O-Young Lee, 'On Wrapping Cloths', pp. 10–11.

²²² Kyung-Koo Han, 'The "Kimchi Wars" in Globalizing East Asia: Consuming Class, Gender, Health, and National Identity', in *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity: Commodification, Tourism, and Performance*, ed. by Laurel Kendall (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), pp. 149–66 (p. 158).

²²³ O-Young Lee, 'On Wrapping Cloths', p. 12.

that founded the material culture. Critically, for Lee, Huh's collecting practices gave the world insights into 'a new global civilization of the post-industrial society, emerging soundlessly after the collapse of modernity' through 'everyday goods which women used in their boudoir'.²²⁴

According to Lee's narrative, South Korea seemingly emerged from Japanese colonialism into a post-industrial society to reclaim its authentic identity through the everyday items used by women in domestic households.

Exploring the gynotechnics of late Imperial China, Francesca Bray describes women's work through the making of cloth as producing a gendered system through labour.²²⁵ Cloth was used by the state as a form of taxation, which enacted state control by requiring citizens to weave cloth.²²⁶ By setting the amount of cloth required for taxation, the hours of labour spent weaving the cloth was also determined by the state, thus reinforcing its control on people's bodies. This mode of taxation was also apparent in Korean histories. Textile historian Soo-Kyung Kim writes that cotton was used during the Joseon period as 'a means to pay taxes to the government'.²²⁷ The rhetoric that emerges from Lee's essay then, not only reflects the desire to retrieve Korean identities from Japanese colonial histories, but in doing so, it also idealises women's labour as foundational to nationhood. Korea's 'superiority' is articulated through the labour of Korean women, who made these everyday textiles. By controlling the narrative of its making, transforming the patchwork forms through a nationalist gaze, this rhetoric renders control of women's bodies through narratives of textile labour, transforming women's work into a nationalist history. This nationalist history is one that supports an androcentric, patrilineal order, while suppressing the multi-vocal possibilities of women's stories.

²²⁴ O-Young Lee, 'On Wrapping Cloths', pp. 16–17.

²²⁵ Bray defines '*gynotechnics*: a technical system that produces ideas about women, and therefore about a gender system and about hierarchical relations in general.' See Bray, p. 4.

²²⁶ Sheng, AYY, 'Textile Use, Technology, and Change in Rural Textile Production in Song China (960-1279)' (unpublished PhD, University of Pennsylvania, 1990), p. 125 IN Bray, p. 187.

²²⁷ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 66.

Notably, the word ‘colonialism’ remains remarkably absent from Lee’s essay, with words such as ‘modernization’ and ‘Western civilization’ used instead to define the linear history of progression. Sunghee Choi reminds us that the desire of Koreans to ‘endlessly [discuss] the cultural uniqueness of Korea’ is rooted in ‘a belief that emphasizing the authentic culture of Korea, produced and consumed before the colonial period, would compensate for the lost (and negated) history of Korea under Japanese rule.’²²⁸ However, this idealisation of ‘Korea’ contributes to re-Orientalising Korean identities by imagining a singular definition of Koreanness, problematically reifying the very agendas of coloniality. As cloth was once used as a means to control bodies through taxation that defined the labour required to make cloth, the narrative and symbol of this wrapping cloth under Lee and Huh bind the histories of Korean women into performing Korean womanhood through the disciplining ideologies of Confucianism, where patchwork as a form of needlework was deemed a virtuous pursuit that was associated with frugal necessity.²²⁹ By situating Huh’s practices during a period of national reform defined by General Park Chung Hee’s cultural policies, I necessarily illuminate the connections between nationalism and women’s work to reveal what was at stake for these narratives of Korean women, exposing the analytic of coloniality.

Modelled on the Japanese 1950 Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, the Cultural Property Protection Law was established by General Park Chung Hee’s government in 1962. According to Yang Jongsung, this policy was ‘aimed at the revitalization, promotion, and protection of tangible and intangible²³⁰ indigenous Korean folklore genres for the purpose of preventing the loss of traditional heritage in the face of industrialization, urbanization, Westernization and modernization.’²³¹ The law was introduced to protect Korean heritage against

²²⁸ Sunghee Choi, ‘Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea’, p. 294.

²²⁹ For further reading see O-Young Lee, ‘On Wrapping Cloths’; Huh, ‘A Tribute to Unsung Artists’.

²³⁰ Tangible cultural heritage refers to material forms of culture, which include pottery, clothing, sculptures, and buildings; intangible cultural heritage refers to performances of culture, which include music, dance, and the weaving of ramie from the Hansan region. For further reading see Jongsung Yang, *Cultural Protection Policy in Korea: Intangible Cultural Properties and Living National Treasures* (Seoul, ROK and Edison, NH: Jimoondang International, 2003); Yim.

²³¹ Yang, p. 3.

the damage to cultural identity incurred by previous colonial agendas through policies of cultural assimilation, destruction, and transformation through modernisation, but this act of regulating and streamlining cultural identity served a nationalist agenda. This, and other cultural reforms were enacted to answer, ‘What is the ROK?’ at a time that was fraught with the tension of defining a unified identity as a fragmented nation in the aftermath of Japanese colonialism, Cold War division, and encroaching Americanisation. Cultural campaigns were developed as public propaganda, encouraging global cultural diplomacy through the definition of a national culture aligned to democratic values.²³² During Park’s dictatorship, several ministries were established, including the Ministry of Public Information in 1961, which shaped and continues to shape cultural memory today.²³³

Park’s policies funnelled public expenditure into folk arts and traditional culture to establish a clear lineage to the mythology of *han minjok* (‘Korean nation’).²³⁴ It was during this period that Huh established his museum, thus the national agenda for cultural heritage contextualised and shaped Huh’s practices. Although, the cultural heritage policies were developed from Japanese laws, the ways in which they were enacted differed. Rosalie Kim, the V&A’s curator of Korean art, explains that while the Japanese tangible and intangible material cultures were able to develop their traditions, adjusting to contemporary lifestyles, the ROK sought to preserve the ‘untainted Korean traditions’ from ‘earlier than the colonial period’; in a contemporary setting, Kim notes, these designs can look antiquated.²³⁵ Chinese cultural heritage policy was only more recently established, due to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that began in 1966, which saw the destruction of numerous significant sites under a program of revolutionary idealism. Once China entered into a global marketplace, cultural heritage politics

²³² For further reading see Sumi Kim, ‘Curating Culture, Exhibiting Nation: The Development of South Korea’s Cultural Diplomacy and Korean Exhibitions in “Universal” Museums’, pp. 52–67.

²³³ This Ministry became the Ministry of Culture and Public Information in 1968.

²³⁴ Yim, p. 40.

²³⁵ Rosalie Kim, ‘On Curating Korea’ (presented at the Memory and Borders Workshop, Victoria & Albert Museum, 2019). For further reading on the heritage policies in Korea and Japan, see Hyung Il Pai, *Heritage Management in Korea and Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013); Kendall, ‘Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft’.

were implemented to drive China's aims to build a singular identity, which could promote soft power to gain national unity and global influence, while also establishing 'intraregional, interregional and international relationships'.²³⁶

Although there are similar drives between each countries' cultural heritage policies, namely the desire to build a defined national identity in a globalised world, the ROK's rigid guidelines, set by Cultural Heritage Administration, were undoubtedly shaped by colonial and semi-colonial histories, which placed Korea in a diminished position to Japan and China. Today, in 2023, there are no jogakbo that are recognised as tangible cultural assets, nor is the performance of its making recognised as an intangible cultural asset. Such assets are designated by the Heritage Administration, which Laurel Kendall defines as a team of purists.²³⁷ The 'unknown women' makers and the untraceable origins of jogakbo undoubtedly place the handicraft traditions outside of the controlled and verifiable nationalist histories regulated by the Heritage Administration.

During General Chun Doo Hwan's dictatorship, between 1980 to 1988, there was another significant shift to cultural policy that included the public subsidisation of culture that was no longer limited to cultural and traditional arts, but it also funded 'contemporary arts and to the everyday life of the people'.²³⁸ This period coincided with intense political activity in the form of the minjung movement, which is described by Namhee Lee as 'the driving force for the country's transition from an authoritarian military regime to a parliamentary democracy'.²³⁹ The minjung were recognised as the 'common people', and as a populist uprising. In 1988, Huh Dong Hwa's first English-language catalogue of Korean patchwork was published as *The Wonder Cloth*; it was the first comprehensive history of Korean patchwork as 'chogakpo' and coincided

²³⁶ For further reading see Helaine Silverman and Tami Blumenfield, 'Cultural Heritage Politics in China: An Introduction', in *Cultural Heritage Politics in China*, ed. by Tami Blumenfield and Helaine Silverman, eBook (New York, NY: Springer, 2013), pp. 3–22 (p. 4).

²³⁷ Kendall, 'Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft', pp. 539–40.

²³⁸ Yim, p. 40.

²³⁹ Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea*, p. 1.

both with the Seoul Summer Olympics and the democratisation of the ROK. Huh describes this form as a ‘mosaic cloth, made from leftover small pieces of material, [that] was made and used by the common people for all practical purposes and [wa]s not found among kungpo used in court.’²⁴⁰ According to Soo-Kyung Kim, Huh was ‘the first to categorize *pojagi* by form and use; he also sums up the history of *pojagi*. [His foundation] serves as a useful basis for further research because it is a comprehensive compilation of *pojagi*.’²⁴¹

Bojagi, to recall, is the Korean wrapping cloth, of which jogakbo is the patchwork iteration. In the histories of the cloths, the terms are sometimes conflated. In categorising and defining the history of the cloth, Huh also defined the possibilities for the textile practice, streamlining patchwork into a regulated narrative that was used to recognise, collect, and regulate forms of jogakbo. As a result, his authorship went on to shape, define, and reinforce ideals of Korean womanhood, for he spoke on behalf of, authoring the histories of Korean women who were said to be the makers of Korean patchwork. Such narratives also reinforced nationalist agendas. The reiterative narratives of patchwork said to be formed out of frugal necessity could also be read as an expression of what Chungmoo Choi defines as a ‘discourse of poverty’ which was used during the Cold War period to discipline people through ‘a sense of crisis [that] proportionally, promoted material fetishism, [which] effectively sustained the South Korean military and economic dependence on the U.S.’²⁴² This discourse was a propaganda tool that encouraged South Korean citizens to spend and consume less, while simultaneously elevating the status of material goods.²⁴³ Thus the narratives of jogakbo reflected and were contextualised by these nationalist agendas.

²⁴⁰ Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, p. 28.

²⁴¹ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 14.

²⁴² Chungmoo Choi, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’, p. 81.

²⁴³ Choi writes about how American soldiers in the post-Korean War period often gave out American commodities. She names these commodities the ‘sensuous signifier(s) of colonialism’, arguing that such gifts established firm relationships between the coloniser and the colonised. For further reading see Chungmoo Choi, ‘Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea’, pp. 10–14.

Jogakbo in Huh's histories were classified as a '[m]inpo or [c]ommoners' [p]ojagi',²⁴⁴ but Kim's study troubles this categorisation. She identifies minbo as *not* referring to common people, but as the opposite of court for 'pojagi made for the people of lower class could not be preserved, more than likely because of the poor quality of materials,' thus the patchworks that were preserved in museums, including Huh's collection, were most likely made by the higher classes.²⁴⁵ This discrepancy between these two voices reveals the complicated histories of writing about jogakbo. Huh's voice was foundational to the historiography of the Korean patchwork, yet he did not initially build his work through academic methods. In the posthumous donation of his collection to the SeMoCA, there were no archive records, nor any detailed acquisition histories of the textiles donated. He did, however, record personal memories of his museum's textile preservation processes. In an introduction essay for the *Profusion of Color* museum catalogue, he recalled a vivid memory of addressing an audience of an exhibition in Paris in June 1984: 'I was embarrassed for a moment because scientific preservation was yet a fancy thing for my small museum, a labor of love which depended entirely upon my limited personal resources. I said that I had little knowledge in scientific preservation but I looked after each item in my collection just like my own family.'²⁴⁶ In this personal reflection, he revealed not only the agenda of his own practices – as a labour of love funded by his own limited resources, but also the clear disconnection between institutional practices of European museums and what he seems to define as his own intuitive strategies for collecting and preserving the collected objects.

He continued with a recollection of preserving a folding screen:

It was covered with such a thick layer of dust that its embroidered peony design was almost unrecognizable. The dust was removed with a lot of effort but as a result the embroidery became fluffy, it wouldn't lie down. At a loss what to do, I rubbed it anxiously with my palm, murmuring, "Why do you worry me so much? What should I do for you, baby?" Then, a very strange thing happened: the fluff lay down and the screen looked fine, the silky texture of its embroidered pattern restored to its original state.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, p. 25.

²⁴⁵ Soo-Kyung Kim, pp. 2, 163.

²⁴⁶ Huh, 'A Tribute to Unsung Artists', p. 34.

²⁴⁷ Huh, 'A Tribute to Unsung Artists', p. 34.

Expressing the anxieties of building a collection without the funds, tools, nor expertise to preserve objects, he also highlighted his misunderstanding of the material compositions of embroideries. Yet he remembered his answer to have received a ‘big applause’, and he later reflected that the audience ‘might have taken [him] for some kind of mystic from the Far East’.²⁴⁸ Huh professed that he believed the objects of his collection were ‘like humans’ that ‘they feel comfortable when we humans feel comfortable.’²⁴⁹ Reading these reflections, I imagine that he too, must have taken himself to have had a spiritual understanding of the objects he collected. The memory reveals how the totality of knowledge, or the coloniality of knowledge manifests in museum practices. Huh’s unconventional practices are equated to mysticism, distinct from the rationality of Western epistemological practices. His essay reveals the complicated tensions in his practices, between caretaking intentions, remembering as an act of love, building national memories, and speaking on behalf of, misreading, owning, and profiting off women’s work. Perhaps more problematically, Huh seemingly overlooks the power dynamic between his role as a collector, who possesses and owns the objects, instead positioning himself as a caretaker, or when reading his reference to calling the object ‘baby’, as a lover, or more likely, as a parental figure. As the politics of the AMNH’s collection and *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* also revealed, these histories and understandings problematically distort, speak over, and reduce the voices of the Korean women who made the cloths with imagined narratives authored by the collectors, curators, and the many museum staff preserving the objects with their assumptions.

The Wonder Cloth, published by the Museum of Korean Embroidery opens with a poem by Kim Choon-Soo, a member of the National Academy of Arts titled, ‘In Praise of the Pojagi’. Kim writes, ‘[i]n this unique heritage of a culture, Mondrian can be seen, Klee can be found, revealing the sense of modern formative art, ahead of Europe.’²⁵⁰ In this, Kim defines a

²⁴⁸ Huh, ‘A Tribute to Unsung Artists’, p. 34.

²⁴⁹ Huh, ‘A Tribute to Unsung Artists’, p. 34.

²⁵⁰ Choon-Soo Kim, ‘In Praise of the Pojagi’, in *The Wonder Cloth*, by Huh Dong Hwa (Seoul, ROK: Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1988), p. 3.

foundational understanding of jogakbo that references it in comparison to Modernism through Mondrian and Klee. This reiterative reference filters into texts by Sara Cook, Rand Castile (the Director of the Asian Art Museum in 1995), Kumja Paik Kim, Moon-Ja Kan, and many others.²⁵¹ Sunghee Choi writes that under the Japanese colonial framework, ‘Koreans incorporated the logic of others in order to define themselves.’²⁵² Chungmoo Choi also reminds us that America’s influence over South Korea’s cultural landscape included ‘a colonization of consciousness, which result[ed] in a broad range of cultural expression, values, and behaviour [...] that] adopted Western cultural ancestry as their very own.’²⁵³ South Korean culture was bound to a double process of colonial subjugation, one initially shaped by Japanese colonialism that enforced the Korean Other to define oneself as a static identity through the lens of colonial modernity, and then later, through American imperialism, which connected the ROK’s cultural expressions to Western modernity.

While Kim Choon-Soo defines bojagi as establishing Modernist aesthetics prior to Modernism, the comparison expresses both a proximity to Western ideals, and the need to be recognised through a Western lens while simultaneously defining bojagi and jogakbo as ‘unique’ cultural expressions of Korea. In discussing the authenticity of Oriental carpets, professor of anthropology Brian Spooner maps how the voices of the dealers came to overrepresent the histories of the textiles. Their value became determined by their exchanges, and the voices of the weavers, who ‘were not literate, and the literary-minded of their culture and time’²⁵⁴ were eventually lost. The original meanings of the carpets became unknowable. Spooner finds that the ‘original meanings of the decorative elements have been largely forgotten by the people who

²⁵¹ Sara Cook, *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art* (London, UK: Batsford, 2019); Rand Kim, ‘Foreword’, in *Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes & Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, by Kumja Paik Kim and Dong-hwa Huh (Seoul, ROK: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 1995), p. 5; Kumja Paik Kim, ‘Profusion of Color: Korean Costumes and Wrapping Cloths of the Chosŏn Dynasty’, p. 28; Kan, p. 12.

²⁵² Sunghee Choi, ‘Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea’, p. 293.

²⁵³ Chungmoo Choi, ‘The Discourse of Decolonization and Popular Memory: South Korea’, p. 82.

²⁵⁴ Brian Spooner, ‘Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 195–235 (p. 198).

weave them (who probably anyway think about their work in terms that would not provide answers to Western queries about meaning)'.²⁵⁵ These Western discourses regarding textiles and their meaning cannot be applicable to all cultural histories, and therefore, the voices of the original makers are perhaps irretrievable. So, if these voices of the original makers are irretrievable, what other voices emerge?

The rhetoric of this poem represents the desire to recognise jogakbo and authenticate it as a Korean cultural tradition; in doing so, it, and the broader collecting practices, transformed the everyday textile into an art object, shifting the trajectory of how the everyday textile was historically understood and considered. Arguably, this continued the practice already set out by *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*. Ivan Karp reminds us that the museum exhibition is a 'medium of and setting for representation',²⁵⁶ thus the act of collecting and exhibiting textiles thrusts the objects onto a stage that interprets reality and the lives of the collected objects through a narrative and system of categorisation determined by institutional agendas that are then constituted as an objective worldview. Importantly, by setting specimens under glass, museums render objects through a visual language and into visual interest. Svetlana Alpers coins this the 'museum effect', describing this as a way of seeing. She demonstrates that objects in museums are registered, not necessarily through cultural significance, but through a 'visual distinction', and by doing so, the processes of institutionalising objects turn 'cultural materials into art objects'.²⁵⁷

Visuality, and the visuality of the museum, however, is bound to colonial modernity and has misinterpreted and misread jogakbo's form. When likening jogakbo through its similarities to the abstract geometries of Mondrian and Klee, one misses the materially driven processes.

Patchwork, after all, is a piecework that is defined by material fragments. It is a form that is at

²⁵⁵ Spooner, p. 199.

²⁵⁶ Ivan Karp, 'Culture and Representation', in *The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 11–24 (p. 12).

²⁵⁷ Svetlana Alpers, 'The Museum as a Way of Seeing', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 25–32 (pp. 30–31).

once bound by a material border but can also grow to incorporate additional pieces at any point. Pieces can be sewn onto the textile to mend holes, reinforce fraying fibres, or patch over existing pieces. Once these textiles were viewed as art objects, the institutions and collectors constituted their forms through practices of naming, and defining categories of material differences, which also shaped their values through a capitalist marketplace. In this process, Korean women's patchwork practices and their stories turned into commodities of nationalism. Critically, by regulating jogakbo into a uniquely Korean cultural tradition, Huh reinforced coloniality inherited by the Japanese desire to Other Korean identities. Collecting jogakbo turned the pieces into finished forms, denying the cloths, and their makers or communities of makers the possibilities to build upon, use, and mend the patchworks, which in turn, limited the potential of their ever-changing, growing formal capacity.

ii. Framing Korean patchwork



Figure 11. Photograph of exhibition details of 'Huh Dong-hwa, the Museum Director' in 2023. Seoul: Bojagi Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, photograph is author's own.

On the third-floor permanent exhibition of the SeMoCA's Exhibition Building 3, which is also known as the Textile Gallery, there were two relational exhibitions: *'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life'* and the *'Donors Exhibition'*. I will discuss the first exhibition and these relational practices in an upcoming section on public memory and the SeMoCA, but for this section, I highlight the *'Donor's Exhibition'*, as a tribute to the career of Huh Dong Hwa, which served as an important catalogue for his changing and developing curatorial practices, as well highlighting his many roles that served the preservation of bojagi. Curated by Lee Hyo-Sun, the exhibition was placed after the *'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life'*, although technically, the entrance corridor held two pathways, one where the gallery observer could enter through to the second exhibition first. This second exhibition entrance was further away from the first, thus the flow of the entrance corridor promoted a marked pathway into the *'Bojagi'* exhibition – directed by arrows on the ground. In the *'Donor's Exhibition'*; there were several walls devoted to Huh's many roles, including a wall section titled *'Huh Dong-Hwa the Museum Director'*. This display was comprised of three black ring binders placed on a plinth protruding from the wall, under white frames of paper and digitally rendered posters of his various exhibitions (*fig. 11*). The binders chronologically catalogued the history of Huh's expansive career as a museum director and offered the visitors an opportunity to physically flip through archive materials of poster designs, museum correspondences, and 4 x 6-inch photographs placed under plastic sleeves. In reviewing the pages, it was possible to see the evolution of the curator's installation practices, which moved from his own private museum to working with curators in global institutions.

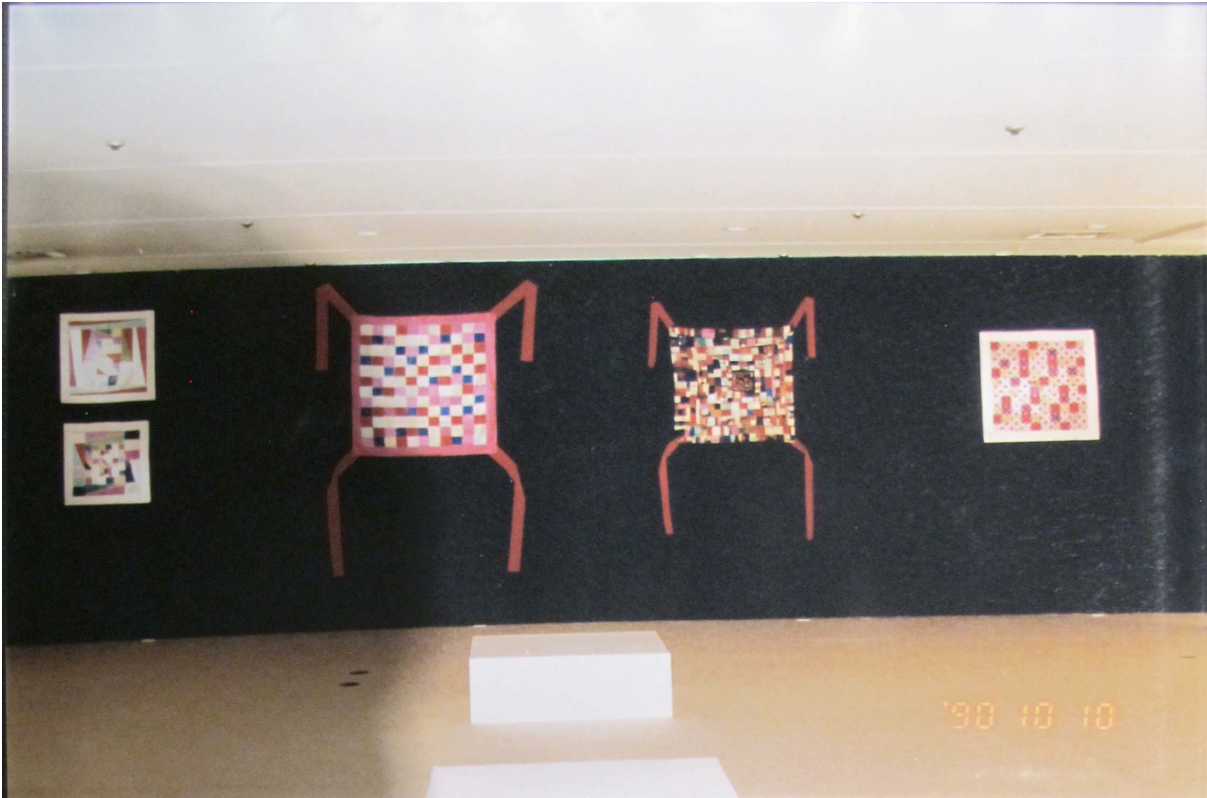


Figure 12. Photograph of exhibition details 'Huh Dong-hwa, the Museum Director' (photograph of photograph of 'Korean World Cloth Exhibition', 1990) in 2023. Seoul: Bojagi Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, photograph is author's own.



Figure 13. Photograph of exhibition details 'Huh Dong-hwa, the Museum Director' (photograph of photograph of 'Korean World Cloth Exhibition', 1990) in 2023. Seoul: Bojagi Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, photograph is author's own.

Photographic documentation from the ‘Korean World Cloth Exhibition’ in 1990 recorded patchwork textiles mounted on black backgrounds, displayed as hanging vertical compositions (*fig. 12*) and textiles attached to sloping, white translucent backgrounds that were positioned as 45-degree angles and seemingly backlit – illuminated from light sources that were placed underneath the backgrounds, shining upward from the floor (*fig. 13*). The cloths were placed with their ties stretched outward. The two top ties were seemingly pinned down to the backdrop less than halfway up each tie, which left the excess material to dangle down. Each dangling tie seemed to resemble the limbs of a body – animating the anthropomorphic nature of the textiles. Anne Anlin Cheng describes yellow womanhood as emerging from ‘synthetic extensions [...] as a “body ornament”’.²⁵⁸ Describing a specific history of racialisation and gendering, she argues that the yellow woman is defined by a decorative, aesthetic objecthood. In these displays then, the cloths are presented *as* yellow women – a representation of Korean



Figure 14. Photograph of exhibition details ‘Huh Dong-hwa, the Museum Director’ (photograph of photograph of ‘Profusion of Color’ exhibition, 1995) in 2023. Seoul: Bojagi Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, photograph is author’s own.

womanhood bound to a specific, and dehumanising process of race making. This animate objectness was also expressed through Huh's own words, recalling his preservation treatment, he described rubbing (and perhaps, soothing) the object, and murmuring his worries with 'Why do you worry me so much? What should I do for you, baby?'²⁵⁹

When the 'Profusion of Color' exhibition series took place at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco between 30 February to 30 April 1995, Seattle Art Museum between 9 September 1995 to 3 March 1996, and the PEM between 25 April to 22 July 1996, the curatorial approach moved the textiles into frames with mounted borders (*fig.* 14, 15). Some cloths were presented as diptychs, some presented horizontally with their frames mounted to the wall perpendicular to the ground, and the cloths with ties were scrolled or folded neatly near the corners, no longer protruding like extra limbs. The pieces were seemingly spot lit, that is, the lights were no longer emerging from behind, but rather from a light fixed to the ceiling that was directed to frame each cloth in a circular light. The photographs from these archive folders reveal the contrast lighting in the exhibition room, with shadowed walls juxtaposed to the illuminated cloths in frames. No longer grouped together or displayed in clusters, the cloths were moved behind glass panes.

Trapped in these frames, these everyday textiles became visual objects, viewed for their decorative compositions over their functional, everyday use. Scholars such as Martin Jay, Svetlana Alpers, James Clifford, and Ariella Azoulay, have discussed the prominence of visibility in 'scopic regime' of modernity.²⁶⁰ By framing the textiles as Modernist artworks, the objects became bound to visual interpretations, through a discourse of art history, and to an economy of

²⁵⁸ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ Huh, 'A Tribute to Unsung Artists', p. 34.

²⁶⁰ Martin Jay describes modernity as 'ocularcentric', mapping Cartesian perspective as forging the connection between sight and the rational world view of sciences that was not only developed through visibility, but through a singular gaze. Accordingly, this singularity constituted modernity/coloniality's universality. Ethnographic museums in the twentieth century built visual spaces of representation, using ordering, systematising, and historicising categories for objects, to reinforce knowledge and authority about global cultures through this notion of a universal idea of being. For further reading see Martin Jay, 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity', in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), pp. 3–28; Alpers; Clifford, *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*; James Clifford, 'Quai Branly in Process', *October*, 120 (2007), 3–23; Azoulay; Mignolo, 'Eurocentrism and Coloniality: The Question of Totality of Knowledge'.

art exchange. In her discussion of boro, the design historian Leren Li highlights how the practice of exhibiting Japanese patchwork forms as artworks that were ‘stitched down and framed in rectangles’ forged lucrative relationships to the fashion and art fields in the commodification of the textiles.²⁶¹ Naming the ‘Boro: Threads of Life’ exhibition at Somerset House in London in April 2014, which was curated from the collections of Phillippe Boudin, as one of the first exhibitions to display boro as an artwork, Li argues that the ‘event caused significant growth in the market price of *boro*.²⁶² Moreover, the textiles lost their practical and utilitarian objecthood, and were instead governed by Boudin and other art collector’s definitions of authenticity.²⁶³ Treating these once-functional textiles, which include jogakbo as decorative, symbolic and decorative forms, visual readings overlook the materiality and the material function of the cloths

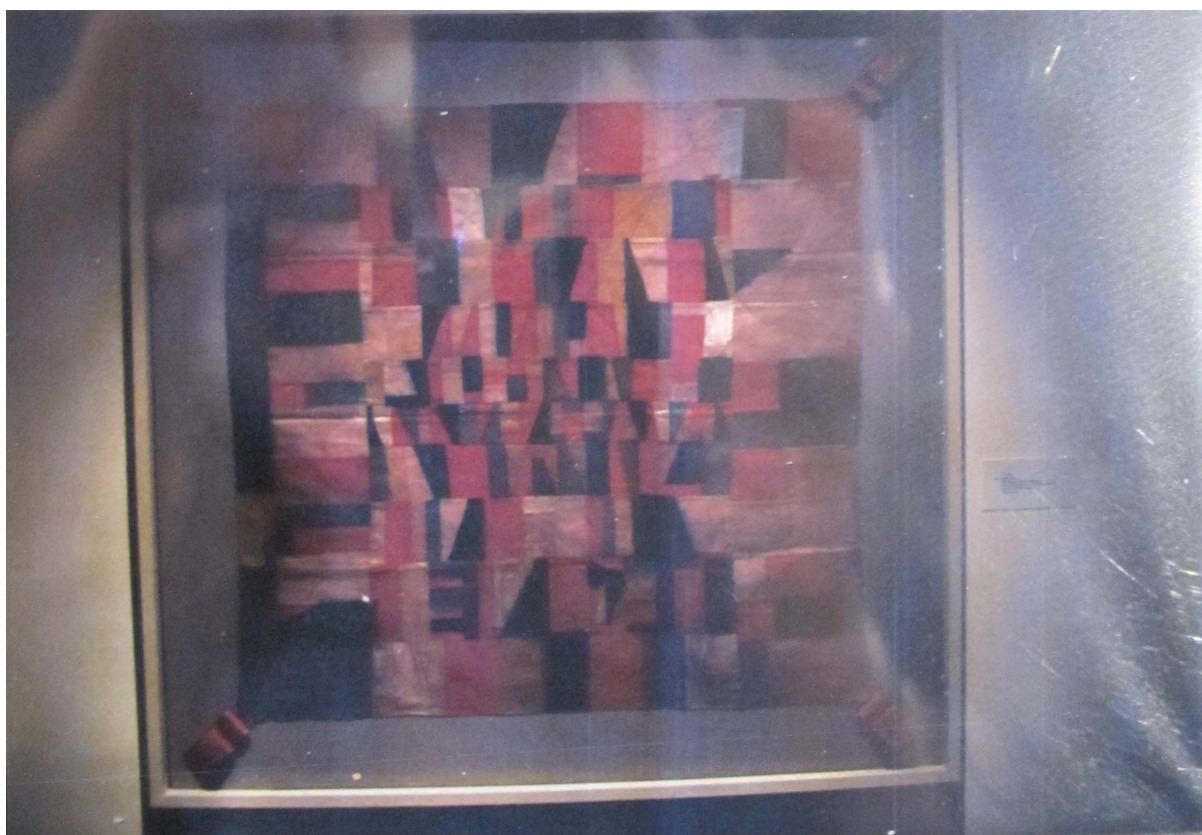


Figure 15. Photograph of exhibition details ‘Huh Dong-hwa, the Museum Director’ (photograph of photograph of ‘Profusion of Color’ exhibition, 1995) in 2023. Seoul: Bojagi Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition, Seoul Museum of Craft Art, photograph is author’s own.

²⁶¹ Leren Li, ‘Reviving Boro: The Transcultural Reconstruction of Japanese Patchwork’ (unpublished PhD, Royal College of Art/Victoria and Albert Museum, 2020), p. 184.

²⁶² Li, p. 185.

²⁶³ Li, pp. 186–89.

and their makers, situating them in a language of art that overrepresents their compositions as geometric abstractions.

iii. *No Name Women*: Chunghee Lee and the Korea Bojagi Forum

According to the recorded histories of jogakbo, and its commonly heard lore, the Korean woman making historical iterations of jogakbo had no name. This conceptualisation of the ‘no name woman’ has become a powerful evocation in narratives of Korean patchwork, reiteratively recalled in its origin stories as reflecting gendered identities during the Joseon period. Chunghee Lee, a textile artist and prominent figure of the global bojagi and jogakbo maker’s community recalls in the foreword to British bojagi artist, Sara Cook’s 2019 book, *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art*, that she first came upon the form and the concept of the unauthored work through Huh Dong Hwa’s exhibition, ‘Stitch by Stitch: No-Name Woman Works’, which was held at the National Folk Museum of Korea in 1983.²⁶⁴ Lee’s career has since grown to incorporate Huh’s histories of jogakbo in her own formal iterations and exhibitions, developing and incorporating this concept of the woman with no name. Her *No Name Women* series, which includes *No-Name Women* (2001), *No-Name Women* (2002), *No-Name Women Ivory Scroll* (2006), *No-Name Women 05* (2005),²⁶⁵ builds iterations of jogakbo with screen-printed and embroidered images of anonymous Korean women. One of these artworks was available at the AMNH, called *Textile Portrait, Two-Sided Bojagi* (Catalog No. 70.3/6679) (fig. 16); the artwork is a two-sided 71 x 72 cm composition with one multi-coloured panel of various silk materials, machine-stitched together onto a single-panelled silk gauze that was printed with images of Korean women, who were ‘unnamed’ and most likely, unknown to the artist.

²⁶⁴ Chunghee Lee, ‘Bojagi and Beyond’, in *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art*, by Sara Cook (London, UK: Batsford, 2019), pp. 6–7 (p. 6).

²⁶⁵ Lee Chunghee, *No-Name Women*, 2001, Portland Art Museum <<http://portlandartmuseum.us/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=4456;type=101>> [accessed 9 August 2023]; ‘No-Name Women: By Lee Chunghee’, *Two Kitties*, 2008 <https://twokitties.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/12/noname-women-by-lee-chunghie.html> [accessed 9 August 2023]; Chunghee Lee, *Bojagi & Beyond II*, pp. 64–65.



Figure 16. Chunghee Lee, 21st C. Textile Portrait, *Two-Sided Pojagi* (Catalogue No. 70.3/6679). Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. © American Museum of Natural History, all rights reserved.

Lee describes in an interview with Jessica Hemmings from *Selvedge Magazine* in 2006 that the concept of the *No Name Woman* reflects Korea's 'old times' when

women's role was raising and giving birth to children. Especially in male dominant societies [...] woman's role was very limited and there was almost no leisure time. But out of necessity most people raised ramie, cotton and hemp in their fields and made hand spun thread and wove it. They made fabric and clothing for their families. There was so much time and labour in making – so much patience – the fabric was precious. After they made clothing for their family there were scraps. Out of the scraps they made patchwork pojagi. It was in the spirit of saving or recycling to make something necessary, like a food cover or bedspread. The motivation was saving, not to show off oneself through making. Today, everyone finds beauty in the good craftsmanship, compositions and colours in the old pojagi. There was no professional ambition to make pojagi; it was an innocent motivation.²⁶⁶

Lee's references seemingly perpetuate the beliefs that women in the Joseon period were oppressed by Confucian ideologies, yet scholars of Korean gender history have troubled and complicated this reductive perspective. Dorothy Ko et. al remind us that the 'old stereotype' that 'construes Asian women as victims of tradition or Confucian patriarchy' needs to be complicated through the shifting histories and subjectivities where 'women appear[ed] as agents of

²⁶⁶ Jessica Hemmings, 'Chunghie Lee: Multiple Layers', *Selvedge Magazine*, February 2006, pp. 22–23.

negotiations who embraced certain aspects of official norms while resisting others.²⁶⁷ Such stereotypes were often deployed by programs of Christian modernity, which viewed Korean women who were ‘the wretched and depraved product of oppressive patriarchy’ as needing of civilising, but gendered relations varied across class structures where lower-class women worked outside of the private household, and importantly, agency existed within yangban households as well, where women were in charge of the domestic space.²⁶⁸

In Lee’s and Huh’s explanations of jogakbo’s makers, there is also an apparent assumption that elides the perceived oppression of women with the perceived systemic erasure of women’s names from each artwork, but this seems to misidentify the problem. It is the framework of understanding jogakbo as an artwork that miscategorises, mistranslates, and ultimately, misunderstands the material object, and also the framework that governs the organisation of collections. Rosalie Kim describes the difficulties of writing labels and naming practices at museums. In a presentation for the ‘Memory and Borders’ workshop, held on 11 February 2019, she highlights

issues [in] relation to the collections management system, which is very much a Western-based, collection management system. So initially we were not able to input any information in Korean, Japanese or Chinese characters, it all had to be Latin based, which made our lives very difficult, because we had to find the right translation, but the translation one could make would not be the same as the other ones. This has been since remediated, but there are systematic questions that remain. Such as “Who is the Maker?”, and often in Europe, the maker is known. There is branding. There is a clear provenance that you can trace back to the maker. It is very different in East Asia, while you can trace back perhaps to a region, and if you are lucky, a production site, but you don’t have the name of the maker. I think we were always setting this result. For East Asia, the result would be “Not Available”, and it [implied] that we, as curators, didn’t make an effort to go and find the makers, but that was not the case. And now this “Not Available” has been transformed into “Unknown”, but this is still not satisfactory, because it doesn’t mean that we don’t know who they are, but it just means that they are unknown.²⁶⁹

Underpinning these discussions, Kim highlights the cultural differences in practices of manufacturing craft that are incompatible with collections management systems based on

²⁶⁷ Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, p. 1.

²⁶⁸ For further reading see Deuchler; Kendall and Peterson, p. 6.

²⁶⁹ Rosalie Kim, ‘On Curating Korea’.

European industries. This universalising mode is a categorisation reinforcing coloniality, assuming all material objects can be interpreted through a singular lens of making.

Lee has become a prominent voice in jogakbo's history and seems to reinforce and build upon the legacies of Huh's foundational work. In 2012, Lee created the KBF as 'a biennial conference that brings together artists, textile lovers, and scholars from around the world'.²⁷⁰ During a research trip to Seoul, I was able to attend sessions of the 2018 event, the first part of which was held between 31 May to 3 June 2018 in Seoul, and included a series of lectures, an exhibition at the Seoul Trade and Convention Center, which was held in conjunction with the Korean Traditional Architecture Expo, a guided tour of Seoul, an opening reception, and a bojagi making workshop. Each event, including the lectures, had an admission fee ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 KRW per person.²⁷¹ During my participation, I attended the guided tour, and viewed the exhibition, where I met Lee and other artists in attendance, including Sara Cook.

My guided tour was organised by Moonhe Baik, who at the time was the Interior Design Program Head for the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Louisville. While there were two tours during the program, I was able to attend on 4 June 2018, alongside Cook, who was also an artist exhibiting and lecturing at the KBF. Our morning began at a hotel in Insadong, from where we ventured into the Dongdaemun Market area, specifically to the Gwangjang Market, where the textile and garment stalls specialising in hanbok were located. It seemed that our tour was directed toward consumption and shopping, as Baik led us to several specialist vendors of silk and ramie. The top floor of Gwangjang Market has a section of stalls that specifically sell all the material needs for making hanbok, from the lustrous, vivid tones of silk and silk gauzes to the ornamental decorative trims and threads. Baik brought us to a silk vendor – a woman in her 80s, who had a perfectly set perm, and inherited her silk business from her

²⁷⁰ '2023 Korea Bojagi Forum', *Beyond & Above Publications Wordpress* <<https://www.beyondabove.com/korea-bojagi-forum/>> [accessed 18 March 2023].

²⁷¹ 150 000 KRW was equivalent to approximately 101.91 GBP on 1 May 2018 via *OANDA Currency Converter* (OANDA FX Data Services) <<https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=KRW&to=GBP&amount=150000>> [accessed 18 March 2023].

father. Her fabric stocks included silks from local and now closed silk mills from around Korea, rolled into clustered stacks that surrounded her.

This area is a labyrinth for tourists, and despite returning to the market several times since that first tour (in 2020 and 2021), I could not remember those original bearings.²⁷² During our tour, Cook purchased several kinds of silk from this silk stall, and later she purchased ramie at a store specialising in ramie on the ground floor of the market. After this market shopping excursion, we had lunch at Hwangsaengga Kalguksu, a famous knife-cut noodle and dumpling restaurant beside Gyeongbok Palace, which had iterations of jogakbo framed on the walls. Our afternoon was comprised of a brief tour of the Bukchon Hanok Village, which the ROK's national tourism website *Visit Korea* describes as an area 'home to hundreds of traditional houses, called hanok, that date back to the Joseon dynasty.'²⁷³ In the district, which is comprised both of residential housing and commercial properties, there were allocated houses which held craft tutorials. These were part of the government's program to demonstrate historical Korean craft skills as cultural tourism coined the 'hanok experience',²⁷⁴ which incorporated cultural facilities and workshops, including saeksilnubi, a Korean quilting technique that uses mulberry paper as cording underneath fabric – a skill that Cook was particularly interesting in acquiring.

In the 2011 compilation of essays, *Consuming Tradition in Early and Late Modernity*, scholars foreground the multiple and complicated meanings of tradition, framed through the problems of modernity. Laurel Kendall, the book's editor, posits the act of consuming tradition in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries through a postmodern dialectic, highlighting the need to grasp onto an authentic Korean identity as the surrounding society rapidly changed. Nostalgia culture, and cultural tradition, was foundationally important to the construction of the ROK.

²⁷² I emailed Baik in September 2020 to follow-up with the details from the tour, but I received no response.

²⁷³ 'Bukchon Hanok Village (Bukchonhanongmaeul)' <<https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/svc/whereToGo/locIntrdn/locIntrdnList.do?vcontsId=97932&menuSn=351>> [accessed 14 August 2023].

²⁷⁴ For further reading see 'Hanok Experience' <<https://hanok.seoul.go.kr/front/eng/exp/expPlaceList.do?searchGubun=P100>> [accessed 14 August 2023].

Returning to a historical period before colonial occupation allowed Koreans to imagine a national identity retrieved from the violence of cultural, ideological, and material erasure. As the ROK rapidly modernised, and entered into a post-industrialised development stage, national identity was further complicated by globalisation. Kendall explains, the ROK ‘industrialized under a cold-war military dictatorship with a draconian transformation of urban and rural life that critics now describe as slavish Westernization. In South Korea nostalgia talk, the rural past was not so much “lost” as taken away by someone else, and an undercurrent of patriotism ripples through the conversation.’²⁷⁵ The act of yearning for and idealising the past in South



Figure 17. Inside cover in Sara Cook, *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art* (London, UK: Batsford, 2019). © B.T. Batsford Ltd., all rights reserved.

²⁷⁵ Laurel Kendall, ‘Introduction’, in *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity: Commodification, Tourism, and Performance*, ed. by Laurel Kendall (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011), pp. 1–18 (p. 6).

Korea through cultural tradition must be contextualised by nationalist agendas that seek to reclaim the past from colonial imaginings.

Cultural tourism in the ROK, however, is not always a nostalgia market, for it caters to

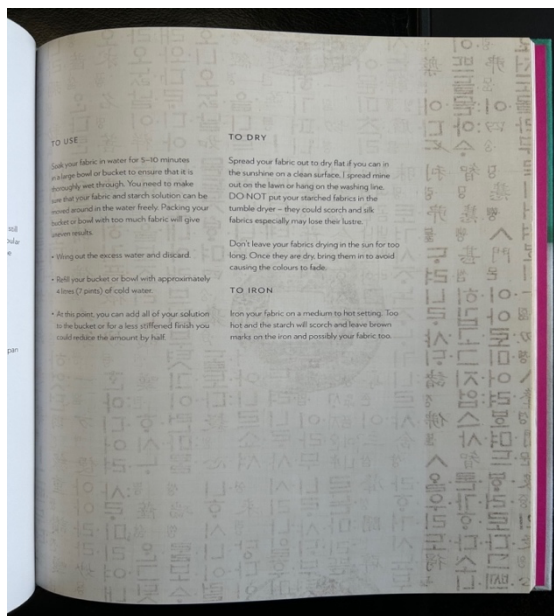


Figure 18. On 'Starch' in Sara Cook, *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art* (London, UK: Batsford, 2019), p. 43. © B.T. Batsford Ltd., all rights reserved.

demographics that have no traceable heritage connection to Korea. For Cook, her interests in jogakbo and by extension, Korea, were initially forged through her own practices as a textile designer. It is easy to critique her methods as appropriative, and at times, Orientalising. Cook perpetuates the linear narratives of jogakbo, while profiting from the narratives of Korean women, after producing her own publication in 2019.



Figure 19. On 'Embellishments' in Sara Cook, *Bojagi: Design and Techniques in Korean Textile Art* (London, UK: Batsford, 2019), p. 87. © B.T. Batsford Ltd., all rights reserved.

Throughout Cook's *Bojagi*, the graphemes of Korean language are used as backdrops. On the inside book cover, on two pages on 'Starch', and in the photograph of a 'tea caddy carrying cloth' under embellishments,²⁷⁶ the same Korean script is used in the background (fig. 17-19). On each of these pages, the script is consistently flipped backwards, turning Korean language into decorative ornamentation. Cheng observes that the use of '[w]ritten Chinese is considered beautiful to the general Western public [...] as an illegible, aesthetic manifestation [...] no longer functional in

²⁷⁶ Cook, pp. 2–3, 42–43, 87.

the modern world.²⁷⁷ Remarking on the use of Chinese as a decorative surface, rather than as a functional language system, Cheng reminds us that the genealogy of modern personhood places Asiatic identities as the ornament in binary relation to functional, organic, and necessary subjectivities. Once language is misrecognised as decorative ornament rather than as a functional system of communication, it signifies and reifies the association of the surface, aesthetic, and superfluous. The mirrored Korean language in Cook's book jacket, and subsequent pages, similarly serve no functional purpose, but rather as a decorative backdrop signifying 'Koreanness'. Her history of bojagi and Korean women accordingly defines 'Koreanness' as a decorative aesthetic, a design that one can remake through bojagi.

In a section on 'Different Types of Jogakbo', Cook references 'The Quilts of Gee's Bend', describing a correlation between the quilt-makers of the American South to Korean women through the collective challenges of their everyday lives. She writes, 'Gee's Bend quilters thought like artists, commenting that, after working in the field all day, the difficult part of their day was going back to work on their quilts. We can only guess at what the women of Korea felt about their creative work.'²⁷⁸ By associating these two groups of makers, Cook maps a connection between global communities of makers that are making patchwork craft, making do, and making sense of their realities through creative labour. This concept of a community of makers was central to the KBF. The biennial event was attended by bojagi and jogakbo makers from around the world, and many who participated in the conference several times, including Cook, who also attended the 2016 Forum. Predominantly formed by women aged fifty to seventy, the attendees formed bonds over their creative textile practices, and seemingly their identities as women. Yet, the significant difference between the Gee's Bend Quilting Collective, the historical makers of bojagi and jogakbo, and the women of the KBF was marked by the

²⁷⁷ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 103.

²⁷⁸ Cook, p. 112.

global aspect of the latter category, as membership defined by economic purchase, curiosity of quilting cultures and creative practices.

iv. National memory at the Seoul Museum of Craft Art

Seoul's first craft museum, the SeMoCA, officially opened its doors to the public in 2021. The publicly funded institution established by the Seoul Metropolitan Government is comprised of five renovated buildings of the former Poongmoon Girls' High School on a 12,823 m² space in Jongno-gu.²⁷⁹ Geographically, the museum is located approximately 600 m to the east of the main entrance of Gyeongbok Palace, the site of both the National Folk Museum of Korea and the National Palace Museum of Korea, with the Bukchon Village to its north and Insadong directly south. This is an area of visual and historical importance in Seoul – it is a location of 'geomantic propitiousness'.²⁸⁰ When the city was under colonial occupation, Seoul was renamed Keijō, and the city's palaces were converted into public spaces. Gyeongbok Palace 'became home to the new Government-General building (est. 1926) and the stage for several spectacular expositions [... that were] aimed to display Japan's authority over the peninsula's ineluctable "progress" and Koreans' subordinated participation in colonial modernization.'²⁸¹ The palace(s) became a site(s) that reinforced the people's subjugation – the sacred and symbolic spaces were built over, and resignified to express Japanese domination in the public space. During this period, Gyeongbok Palace held exhibitions of modernised technologies which were used to promote "progress" and aimed to encourage Korean spectators to embrace the colonial project.²⁸² The SeMoCA too, is on an auspicious site: the grounds where Prince Yeongeung

²⁷⁹ 'Seoul Craft Museum (Seo-Ul-Gong-Ye-Bag-Mul-Gwan)', *Civic & Culture* <<https://haenglim.com/projects-architecture/?q=YToyOntzOjE5OjIjZl3b3JkX3R5cGUiO3M6MzoiYWxsIjtzOjY6ImtleXdvcmQiO3M6MTI6IuyEnOyauOqzteyYiCI7fQ%3D%3D&mode=view&idx=427659&t=board>> [accessed 10 April 2023]; Yuna Park, 'Country's First Craft Museum Shows off Beauty of Korean Craftsmanship', *The Korea Herald*, 21 August 2021, section Arts & Design <<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210819000996>> [accessed 23 February 2023].

²⁸⁰ According to Todd Henry, Chinese spatial philosophies were consulted when determining the location of Gyeongbok Palace, and the location of the Joseon dynasty's capital. Henry, p. 23.

²⁸¹ Henry, pp. 29–30.

²⁸² Henry, p. 92.

(1434-1467), who was the son of King Sejong the Great (1397-1450), resided and where Sejong supposedly died, and close to Andong Byeolgung, the royal villa for King Gojong (1852-1919).²⁸³

Seoul's cityscape is now an expression of its rapid modernisation, compressed with the material and visual articulations that form a palimpsest of architectural histories as the traces of global encounters, but this area remains locked in the codes of its historical past. While the Gyeongbok Palace restoration only began in 1990, mainly due to the ROK's lack of public funds, the area was used from the 1960s as a symbolic site for national identity, initially staging anti-communist activities, then anti-government protests, to civil demonstrations, and national ceremonies.²⁸⁴ Set against the backdrop of the Bugaksan mountains, the area is a formidable space, both visually, and symbolically. The efforts to restore the Palace and this area were driven by a local and national imperative to reimagine Korea's cultural memory, wresting it away from histories of Japanese colonial occupation. This proximity to the Palace, and to the surrounding areas situates the SeMoCA in an important location. Not only near the Palace, but the new museum is also adjacent to Insadong, an area that was revitalised in the mid-1980s to transform it into a tourist destination that was promoted as the historical quarter for traditional crafts and arts.²⁸⁵ In February 2002, Insadong was defined as the first cultural district by Seoul's municipal government, and as a result, economic subsidies and municipal protections helped to develop culture-related businesses,²⁸⁶ shifting the space into what Mike Douglass refers to as a 'cultural economy'. This cultural economy is one that is defined by the promotion of consumerist activities, shifting the 'creative community' that was capable of creative production, into a non-

²⁸³ Ji-won Park, 'Director of Seoul Museum of Craft Art Promotes Artisan Spirit', *The Korea Times*, 31 August 2021, section Interview <https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2022/09/398_314753.html> [accessed 23 February 2023].

²⁸⁴ Henry, pp. 210–11.

²⁸⁵ Mike Douglass, 'Creative Communities and the Cultural Economy - Insadong, Chaebol Urbanism and the Local State in Seoul', *Cities*, 56 (2016), 148–55 (p. 151).

²⁸⁶ Jinsun Song, 'Traditional and Commerce in Cultural Districts: A Case Study of Insadong in Seoul, Korea' (unpublished Masters, University of Waterloo, 2011), p. 163.

residential area promoted for consuming tradition.²⁸⁷ This framework seems to likewise shape the contours of the KBF.

As outlined in the previous section, culture, and cultural tradition specifically, played an important role in nationalist campaigns to build a unified identity. In Park Chung Hee's public propaganda campaigns, several initiatives were established to promote and build national culture as tools of economic development, global diplomacy, and collective patriotism. Decades later, the building of the SeMoCA, the restoration of Gyeongbok Palace, and the cultural designations of Bukchon Village and Insadong were supported by municipally and nationally administered government programs that encouraged and developed from these policies of cultural heritage reform as national ideology. The building of the SeMoCA was aligned to the ROK's Culture and Arts Promotion Act, which was constituted in the early 1990s as a policy to establish and expand the museum and art gallery sectors.²⁸⁸ On a municipal level, the legacies of the mayoral terms governed by Lee Myungbak (2002 to 2006) and Oh Sehoon (2006 to 2011) led to programs that advanced urban redevelopment driven by amenity-oriented cultural policy, and culture-driven economic development.²⁸⁹

The five buildings of the SeMoCA include an administrative building, three exhibition buildings, an education building also named the Children's Museum, an information building with a glass façade connecting Exhibition Building 1 and 3, and a small Craft Annex behind Exhibition Build 2. Reconstructed by Haenglim Architecture & Engineering (Lee Yongho), the museum's site has been reconstructed into an open ground, with a field, ginko trees, and wooden, sand-lined pathways, which seemingly match the exterior facades, particularly of Building 1. On my visit to the institution in November 2021, I was able to see several objects

²⁸⁷ Douglass, p. 150.

²⁸⁸ For further reading on the Culture and Arts Promotion Act see Sohyun Park, 'Museums and Art Galleries as "Cultural Spaces"?' , *Public History & Museum*, 5 (2022), 36–49 (pp. 36–37).

²⁸⁹ Jong Youl Lee and Chad Anderson, 'Cultural Policy and the State of Urban Development in the Capital of South Korea', in *The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy: Global Perspectives*, ed. by Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 69–80 (p. 69).

from Huh Dong Hwa's collections, and view Building 1's third floor permanent display, 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life/Donors Exhibition'. I subsequently visited the exhibitions again in November 2023. While 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' and the 'Donor's Exhibition' were two separate exhibitions, curated by Yi Seung Hae and Lee Hyo-Sun, respectively, they were represented through their relation to Huh's collecting practices, with the first showcase featuring objects from Huh's donations.



Figure 20. Photograph of 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' exhibition entrance at the SeMoCA in 2023. Seoul: *Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life*, SeMoCA, photograph is author's own.



Figure 21. Photograph of 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' exhibition entrance at the SeMoCA in 2023. Seoul: *Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life*, SeMoCA, photograph is author's own.

At the entrance corridor to the exhibitions on the third floor, and specifically the entrance to the 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' exhibition, there was an illustrated design of grey people, roads, and bojagi represented in petrol blue and raspberry reds on a beige ground (fig. 20). The grey representations seemingly correlated to the 'daily life' that was listed in the exhibition's title, with the outlines resembling roads, people, garments, and activities from pre-modernised Korean life. Bojagi were illustrated in blue and red, with the varied uses of everyday life emphasised in the design by these highlights of colour. As the spectator was encouraged to walk through a pathway designated by arrows on the concrete ground, there was a large hand-painted bojagi that was mounted

against a wall in a glass display case just before the main exhibition room (fig. 21). Spot lit from ceiling track lights that hung outside of the glass case, the displayed piece was a formidable 201 x 181 cm red painted design on a cream cloth from the nineteenth to twentieth century. The piece was named *Inmun Bojagi* and included intricate patterns of floral motifs and phoenixes segmented into square blocks. Presented as a flat compositional piece, the colours of red on an off-white ground set against the navy-blue petrol wall background echoed the colours of the entrance corridor. This relationship set between bojagi in everyday use and daily life, and its striking compositional grandeur, was emphasised and reiterated throughout the exhibition displays, seemingly echoing the curatorial history of bojagi alongside shifting national imperatives to democratise and recontextualise culture in an era of globalisation.

After entering the dimly lit space of the main exhibition room beyond the entrance corridor, I initially encountered a wall display of cut out black icons – outlines akin to the representations of the entrance corridor of people engaged in activities with bojagi designated



Figure 22. Photograph of 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' exhibition room at the SeMoCA in 2023. Seoul: *Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life*, SeMoCA, photograph is author's own.

this time in pastel yellows, chartreuses and pale persimmons. The outlines were plotted along a dashed line in two rows, yet there were no clear temporal designations. Mixing the silhouettes of historical Korean gat (men's hats), durumagi (men's overcoat) with mini-skirts and three-quarter length coat hemlines, the representations seemingly referenced looks that were both contemporary and

some that were anachronistic – everyday life of the past and present. As I gazed into the room itself, there were several freestanding cases that were formed of low plinths encased in glass, with an additional windowed display pane built above each encased plinth. The combined freestanding cases displayed vibrant multi-coloured silks and pale muted cellulose-fibre patchwork that were mounted as flat compositions in the windowed displays above the plinths which exhibited various household and ceremonial objects that were wrapped in cloths (*fig. 22*). The bojagi and jogakbo were jewelled colourful spectacles that were spot lit by overhead track lights in the dark space.

As the freestanding glass frames had no wooden or opaque backing, the mounted cloths could be viewed from both sides, from the inside and outside of the cloth. For each hanging textile composition, there was set below a similarly sized cloth that demonstrated the various uses of the corresponding bojagi, and included practices of wrapping ceremonial objects, letters, bedding, storing boxes, as it bundled the objects and protected its contents. The textiles in the freestanding cases were largely categorised by size, and thus use, recontextualising the wrapping cloths as everyday objects through an ethnographic presentation. Alongside the textiles on display, there were also recorded histories mapping jogakbo in their everyday use, instructional guides on making wrapping cloths, including a wall illustration on measuring bojagi, and a page from *Joseon jaebong jeonseo (Compendium of Joseon Sewing)* demonstrating how to make jogakbo, which I explore further in the next chapter. There were also several framed patchworks throughout the exhibitions, mounted on the walls.

Decontextualising objects, from a colonial perspective, was an important tool of imperialism. Isolating material culture from their original sites and uses, the Japanese colonial government meticulously preserved Korean cultural objects, displaying the forms at the Japanese Governor-General of Korea Museum held in Gyeongbok Palace, for one, to reinforce and

symbolise their power, domination, and hegemony over Korean cultural histories.²⁹⁰ When the National Museum (of Korea) was established in 1948, inheriting the collections of the colonial museum, US military policies were said to have continued a management style that did not significantly deviate from the policies of the Japanese.²⁹¹ To recall, Japanese policies shaped Korean cultural policies during the Park Chung Hee era, including the induction of the intangible and tangible cultural heritage reform. Nationalism in the ROK, and nationalist policies are thus imbricated with US cultural agendas that carry a latent Japanophilia. Moreover, in the desire to construct an authentic national identity, the ROK has reified the Orientalising project of coloniality. Sunghee Choi found that the exhibitions of the National Museum focused on ‘accentuating the visual value of objects rather than facilitating visitors’ understanding of them’.²⁹² By decontextualising objects from their cultural setting, and instead foregrounding their visual uniqueness, the museum sought to define a definitively Korean identity that was presented as distinct from and comparable to Chinese and Japanese traditions. More recently, the call to recontextualise material cultures in museums, or to contextualise material cultures in their original settings, has been an imperative of museum scholarship and direction in the ROK since the 2000s.²⁹³

Although Huh’s practices sought to define the visual language of jogakbo through Modernism, in the SeMoCA’s displays, the exhibitions resituated the textiles in an everyday context, while simultaneously displaying their decorative, ornamental surfaces. On the one hand, there was a continued emphasis on displaying the visual spectacle of Korean culture, for the framed wrapping cloths were presented on a higher visual sightline than their everyday demonstrations. However, the displays also offered multiple ways of seeing jogakbo, allowing visitors to view the interior facing of the cloths, which sometimes included the details of the

²⁹⁰ For further reading see Kyung Soo Jun, ‘Representing Colonialism and Nationalism in the Korean Museum’, *Journal of Museum Studies*, 3 (2000), 159–201 (pp. 161–69).

²⁹¹ Jun, p. 182.

²⁹² Sunghee Choi, ‘Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea’, p. 295.

²⁹³ For further reading see Jun, pp. 189–95; Sohyun Park.

patchwork's construction, instructions on making and measuring cloths, and demonstrations on how the cloths folded and knotted. Toward the end of the 'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life' exhibition, the natural light began to seep in through the windows of the 'Donor's Exhibition' space. I left the first exhibition rooms vividly remembering the bejewelled tones of silk and rich ornamental details that emerged in the pervasive darkness of the first displays. These visual memories were reinforced by the lustrous colours, signifying a rich material history of Korea that was remarkably striking in comparison to the undyed, white ramie patchwork that is prevalent in global collections. The relational link connecting the two exhibitions was evident in the displays



Figure 23. Artist in Korea. *bojagi* (wrapping cloth), early 20th century. Ramie. 32 ½ x 34 ½ in. (82.55 x 87.63 cm) H x W (width includes sash). Museum purchase made possible by the Topfritz Hilborn Memorial Fund, 2001. E301728. Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum. © Peabody Essex Museum, all rights reserved.

of the ‘Donor’s Exhibition’, which sought to map the work of Huh Dong Hwa as he shaped the narratives of jogakbo, and as a result, these exhibitions, and collections.

v. Collecting white ramie

Patchworks composed of white ramie are now remarkably common in collections of Korean art globally.²⁹⁴ Although there are now many iterations of colourful patchwork in Korean collections as well, I highlight the abundance of white ramie to explore the representation of Koreanness in relation to whiteness that was initially foregrounded through Foulk’s travelogues, asking how does white ramie represent Koreanness? Of the seven objects posted on the PEM’s website on February 2023 to represent its ‘Korean Art’ collection, there was one white patchwork wrapping cloth, *Bojagi (wrapping cloth)* (Object No. E301728) by ‘Artist in Korea’ (*fig. 23*).²⁹⁵ The cloth measures 81.28 x 81.28 cm and is composed of white ramie; it is a patchwork of fragmented pieces that are formed of the woven bast fibre spun from the bast layer of the stem of the perennial plant, *Boehmeria nivea*. Belonging to the shrub of the Nettle family, Urticaceae, the plant is indigenous to eastern Asia, including Korea.²⁹⁶ There are two main variations of ramie, which include the white and green variety. *Boehmeria nivea* is commonly known as white ramie. The plant is known as ‘one of the oldest fibers cultivated for textiles. It is also one of the strongest natural plant fibers [... and it] takes dye well but [is] prone to discolor and crock.’²⁹⁷ Also known as mosi or moshie, Soo-Kyung Kim writes that the cloth was commonly used before cotton was imported to Korea in the mid-fourteenth century and that it was highly regarded; cloths formed of ramie were offered as tributes to Chinese officials during the Joseon

²⁹⁴ The list of objects formed from this material composition include: *Bojagi (wrapping cloth)* (Object No. E301728) at the PEM; *Modern Interpretation of Traditional Pojagi (Wrapping Cloth)* (Object No. 2001.170) at the Art Institute of Chicago; *Wrapping cloth (bojagi)* (Object No. 1993.9) at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco; *Pojagi* (Object No. FA.2012.16.1) at the Museum of International Folk Art in Sante Fe, New Mexico; and *Wrapping cloth (bojagi)* (Object No. FE.303-2011) at the V&A (*fig. 19*).

²⁹⁵ ‘Korean Art’, *Peabody Essex Museum Collection* <<https://collection.pem.org/portals/collection/#category/883>> [accessed 10 February 2023].

²⁹⁶ For further reading see S Roy and Latifa Binte Lutfar, ‘Bast Fibres: Ramie’, in *Handbook of Natural Fibres. Volume 1: Types, Properties and Factors Affecting Breeding and Cultivation*, ed. by Ryszard M. Kozłowski and Mackiewicz-Talarczyk, Second Edition (Duxford, UK: Woodhead Publishing, 2020), pp. 61–69.

²⁹⁷ ‘Ramie’, *Textilepedia: The Complete Fabric Guide* (Hong Kong: Fashionary International Ltd, 2021), p. 23.

period.²⁹⁸ Joseon histories detail both noble and common people wearing the material.²⁹⁹ In 2011, the performance of weaving ramie from the Hansan region was defined as an intangible cultural asset of the ROK by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).³⁰⁰ Notably, the object's authorial label conceals the gendered practices of its making. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock demonstrate that by reading women's work through the lens of geometric abstraction, woven Navajo blankets 'bec[a]me paintings and women weavers bec[a]me nameless masters.'³⁰¹ They argue that by naming the makers of the blankets as



Figure 24. Photograph of Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie or Monochromatic jogakbo (Object No. FE.303-2011) on display at the V&A's Korea Gallery in 2022. London: Korea Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, photograph is author's own.

'masters', modern art history supports the synonymous system of defining the fine artist as male while concealing both the sex and the race of the makers.³⁰² Similarly, by identifying the maker of *Bojagi* (wrapping cloth) as 'Artist in Korea', the PEM not only appropriates or constitutes the everyday textile as an art object, placing it into a typology of art that decontextualises it from its cultural use, but it also erases the gendered histories implicit in its making.

Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie or

Monochromatic jogakbo (Object No. FE.303-2011) is a

jogakbo made from undyed ramie that was wall-

mounted between Lie Sang Bong's *Cocktail dress from the New Romancer collection* (Object No.

FE.62-2012) and Chang Yeon Soon's *Matrix II 201025* (Object No. FE.97-2013) (fig. 24) during

²⁹⁸ Soo-Kyung Kim, pp. 66–69.

²⁹⁹ Beth McKillop, 'Textiles, Dress and Embroidery', in *Korean Art and Design* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1992), pp. 125–47 (p. 128).

³⁰⁰ Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Bali, Indonesia: UNESCO, November 2011).

³⁰¹ Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p. 65.

³⁰² Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p. 65.

my several visits to the V&A's Korea galleries between 2021 to 2023. The museum placard noted that these were iterations of *jogakbo*, captioning the history as

Jogakbo – Creative upcycling in the Joseon dynasty: The Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) introduced a new system of rules and ethics based on values like morality, modesty, purity and the importance of living in harmony with nature. Joseon architecture gently blended with leafy surroundings, and furniture was kept simple and functional, leaving the natural wood grain as the main decorative feature. White became the representational colour of Joseon ceramics, and Joseon people became known for their white overcoats. The object that best encapsulated all these ideas was the *jogakbo*, where leftover scraps of fabric were upcycled into a wrapping cloth, reducing waste by turning them into useful items. The values represented by the *jogakbo* and the Joseon pragmatic lifestyle continue to be relevant today.³⁰³

The placard emphasised the sustainability of the form, reflecting the museum's 2021 mission toward the climate crisis,³⁰⁴ while classifying the patchwork form alongside Joseon architecture, ceramics, and clothing, as it highlighted the colour white.

White dress in Korea was commonly referred to in early travelogues and letter correspondences from America, Europe, and Japan, including Griffis's imagining of *Corea*, Angus Hamilton's *Korea*, and George C. Foulk's travelogues and letters to his family.³⁰⁵ In Seung-Mi Han's analysis of Japanese travelogues of the late-Meiji period, Han demonstrates that the tour materials reveal 'a highly significant body of self-representations as well as representations of the Other.'³⁰⁶ In one example, Han highlights how Koreans were objectified and rendered immobile in the landscape through a connection to material and natural whiteness: '[At Anju] the rice fields are extensive, green, and beautiful, and the Koreans with white clothes standing in the middle of the rice fields look like cranes or herons from afar. But sometimes, they really are white herons and cranes'.³⁰⁷ By assimilating Korean people into the natural scenery, Han argues that Korea was not viewed as a civilisation, but as a natural landscape. It is through their white

³⁰³ '*Jogakbo Display*', London: V&A Korea Gallery.

³⁰⁴ For further reading see 'Sustainability', *V&A* <<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/sustainability#sustainability-blog>> [accessed 8 December 2023].

³⁰⁵ Griffis; Angus Hamilton, *Korea* (London: William Heineman, 1904), p. 96 IN Charlotte Horlyck, 'Colour in Korean Textiles', *Arts of Asia*, 33.2 (2003), 110–17 (p. 113); Hawley.

³⁰⁶ Seung-Mi Han, 'Colonial Subject as Other: An Analysis of Late Meiji Travelogues on Korea', in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. by Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 688–701 (pp. 689).

³⁰⁷ *Mankan Jun'yūsen (Voyages to Manchuria and Korea)* (Asahi shinbunsha, 1906), pp. 198–99 IN Seung-Mi Han, p. 696.

clothing specifically, that Koreans turned into cranes and herons. According to Hyung Gu Lynn, white dress was viewed by the Japanese colonial administration to be a sign of Korean backwardness, viewing the materials as inefficient and irrational, as it was easy to soil, thus requiring frequent laundering, which ‘enslaved women to laundry’.³⁰⁸ Throughout the colonial period, the white hanbok came to imply new categories of differentiation, along class divides with factory workers still donning white hanbok, and rural and urban divides.³⁰⁹ White dress was also said to be associated with prostitution. During the colonial period, ‘travellers from a Japanese anti-prostitution league’ remarked on the “white tops and bottoms” of Korean prostitutes.³¹⁰ The rhetoric of imperialist expansionism through gendered narratives placed men as the colonisers, who needed to spread civilisation, whereas the colonised were to be penetrated. The association of white dress with Korean prostitutes reinforced the gendering between the Japanese coloniser, and the Korean as colonised.

Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie was donated to the V&A by the curator of Japanese textiles, Anna Jackson. In the archive record file, there is a note that states ‘[b]ojagi was made by unknown women for use in their daily life. No records exist about the Min po and it is therefore not possible to track down the name of the person who made the bojagi.’³¹¹ During my interview with the curator which took place on 12 April 2021, she recalled how she purchased the object from the Koryo Museum, a small private gallery in the north of Kyoto. According to Jackson, the broker of the establishment was most likely a Korean man who had lived in Japan, and she described how Korean art was greatly admired in Japan, despite the political relationship between the two countries. The textile, Jackson remembered, ‘appealed’ to her ‘Japanese eye’, as

³⁰⁸ Hyung Gu Lynn, ‘Fashioning Modernity: Changing Meanings of Clothing in Colonial Korea’, *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 11.3 (2004), 75–93 (p. 80).

³⁰⁹ Lynn writes that ‘a 1926 survey by the Government General [Japanese colonial administration] showed that the areas where 50-60% of the population wore white *hanbok* were large towns or suburbs with some industrial facilities and where the main railway lines were easily accessible. In the rural towns far off the main tracks, 70-95% of the people surveyed wore white *hanbok*.’ Lynn, p. 85.

³¹⁰ Yoko Suzuki, *Feminism and Colonial Period Korea* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1994), pp. 86–90 IN Lynn, p. 88.

³¹¹ Justification for Acquisition (Written by Anna Jackson), Object No. FE.303-2011, Korean Gallery, V&A Archive, London, UK.

she read transcultural material histories between Japan and Korea in the bast fibre cloth; ramie was also worn by the Japanese elite.³¹² While she purchased the textile initially for herself, she always had the Korea collection in mind, wondering whether it would be suitable for the museum. After confirming with the V&A Korea collection curators at the time that the textile was appropriate for their collections, she then donated the piece to the museum. This practice of viewing and shaping ‘Korea’ and Korean collections through Japanese specialism is not an isolated practice. In the next section, I highlight the transnational collecting of Korean patchwork through *Wrapping cloth (pojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1) at the HoMA. This does reveal, however, the persisting colonial gaze that reads ‘Korea’ through white ramie, embedding these materials into complicated histories of race-making at the V&A. Histories that Partha Mitter and Craig Clunas define as the ‘way in which imperial ideology assigned a marginal and subordinate, and yet essential, role [...] within the “universal” Western canon.’³¹³ As Clunas explains, these objects in their marginality, defined the British center and nationhood itself through imperial ideas about East Asia.³¹⁴

Kim Brandt’s illuminating account of the role of Japanese cultural criticism and the appreciation of white porcelain from the Joseon dynasty, demonstrates how middle-class Japanese cultural elites sought to define Korean objects through the prism of Western aesthetics.³¹⁵ Foregrounding the work of Yanagi Sōetsu (1889-1961), known for his mingei theory, and the *Shirakaba* set,³¹⁶ Brandt initially maps how colonial opportunities, including the

³¹² Anna Jackson, interviewed by Christin Yu about the acquisition of the *Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie* (Object No. FE.303-2011) at the V&A, 12 April 2021. See Appendix B for transcript.

³¹³ Mitter and Clunas.

³¹⁴ Although Clunas’s essay focuses on unpacking the Chinese and Japanese collections, I situate the reading of Korean objects through the legacies of these imperial relations. Clunas notes that the Samsung Gallery of Korean Art was opened in 1992, and thus its collections also reflect power of commercial interests. Craig Clunas, ‘The Imperial Collections: East Asian Art’, in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. by Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson (London: V&A Publications, 1997), pp. 230–37 (p. 231).

³¹⁵ Also see Sunghye Choi, ‘Re-Thinking Korea Cultural Identities at the National Museum of Korea’, pp. 292–94; Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’, *Cultural Dynamics*, 34.4 (2022), 271–96 (pp. 281–82).

³¹⁶ The *Shirakaba* set refers to the art writers and cultural critics that wrote for *Shirakaba* (White birch), which was published between 1910 to 1923. Yanagi was a founding editor and writer. For further reading see Kim Brandt, ‘Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea’, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, 8.3 (2000), 711–46 (p. 720).

increased accessibility of material goods, saw ‘middle-class intellectuals who browsed the antique shops and markets of 1910s Seoul [drawing] on a much more cosmopolitan, self-consciously modern fund of knowledge to evaluate objects.’³¹⁷ Unable to afford the ceramics that were highly regarded in relation to tea ceremonies at the time, Brandt describes how the middle-class intellectuals started to regard Korean white porcelain, because the objects were ‘cheap and plentiful’,³¹⁸ and they began to inscribe their own aesthetic values onto the forms. These aesthetic values were informed by Western education and modernity, and as Cheng has discussed, such aesthetics were specifically denigrating of the ornamental. As Yanagi’s relevance grew, so did the distinction for Korean ceramics, and critically, Yanagi’s perceptions of ‘Korea’ as defined through white. Brandt writes ‘[h]e observed that Koreans often wore white clothing and interpreted this to mean, again, that Koreans were essentially sad people.’³¹⁹ Japanese cultural theory sought to Orientalise Korean people, often imagining Korean objects as Korean people. This ‘Japanese eye’ that Jackson mentioned, therefore, is a gaze that is embedded in a history of colonial thinking where Koreans are not only imagined as objects, but objects that are imagined as melancholic, sad, and lonely. Although Yeseung Lee and Hyung Gu Lynn highlight how white hanbok has also signified national resistance, the meanings behind white objects and Korea represented through whiteness are nonetheless entangled in colonial frameworks.

Highlighting the material histories of race-making, Anne Anlin Cheng draws on ‘[m]ahogany’s red sheen, glossy black lacquer, translucent white porcelain, and the brilliant colors of indigo, cochineal dyes, and silver ore’ as carrying and producing racial meanings.³²⁰ The colours associated with the material trades of Asia were imbued with histories of racial imaginings.³²¹ Like the prevalence of white moon jar ceramics that reiteratively imagine ‘Korea’

³¹⁷ Brandt, p. 716.

³¹⁸ Brandt, p. 736.

³¹⁹ Brandt, p. 735.

³²⁰ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 93.

³²¹ Also see Stacey Sloboda, whose research explores the relationship between Asian ceramic objects and the exoticised and eroticised Asian woman (and at times, men). Sloboda.

in Korean collections as lonely and melancholic, the abundance of white ramie too serves to reify these narratives of the Japanese colonial period. Whiteness, however, must also be read through the complex imagining of Korea in relation to Christianity and America. That is, this whiteness complicates Cheng's ontologies of yellow womanhood. Neither encrusted, nor decorative, the white ramie patchwork reveals an imagined Asiatic woman whose flesh is defined by fragments of material pieces that have been pieced together, and reconstructed – reassembled through leftover pieces.

Global jogakbo: recontextualised art objects



Figure 25. Unlisted maker. First quarter of 20th C. Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi) (Object No. 9236.1). 108 x 110.5 cm hemp, plain weave, piecing, stitching, patching textile. Photograph of Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi) (Object No. 9236.1). Photograph courtesy of the Honolulu Museum of Art. © Honolulu Museum of Art, all rights reserved.

- i. 'Korea' imagined by the Japanese diaspora: HoMA's hemp patchwork

In global collections of Korean art, histories of coloniality were reinforced through objects that were read through the Japanese gaze, as witnessed through white ramie in the previous section. At the HoMA, *Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1) is a patchwork predominantly constructed from hemp, piece-dyed with natural indigo (*fig. 25*), which expresses not only these complicated entanglements of defining ‘Korea’ through a Japanese gaze, but a Japanese gaze that is also diffused through the lens of US-ROK relations. It is a cloth that is labelled a Korean wrapping cloth, but also references the cultural histories of boro. Belonging to an archive positioned at the intersecting geographies of Asia-Pacific migrations, US-ROK-Japanese relations, it is a transcultural object that complicates, and troubles histories of jogakbo in collections, for it reveals jogakbo as an everyday object. The cloth itself measured 108 x 110.5 cm, and approximately 30 cm from the cloth’s edge there were worn markings where the cross of the wrap and the weft were degraded, pulled apart, separating the weave, and thus opening the threads. Composed of pieced-dyed fragments of hemp cloth that was coloured with indigo and patchworked together, the hue was visibly faded in some sections, and there were additional patches of undyed hemp that were used to mend what were most likely tears or holes (*fig. 26-7*). The patterns of the loosening weave and the fading dye formed around ghostly contents,



L to R: *Figure 26*. Close-up detail photograph *Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1). Unlisted maker. First quarter of 20th C. *Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1). 108 x 110.5 cm hemp, plain weave, piecing, stitching, patching textile. Courtesy of the Honolulu Museum of Art. Photograph is author’s own; *Figure 27*. Close-up detail photograph *Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1). Unlisted maker. First quarter of 20th C. *Wrapping Cloth (Bojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1). 108 x 110.5 cm hemp, plain weave, piecing, stitching, patching textile. Courtesy of the Honolulu Museum of Art. Photograph is author’s own.

marking the materials that the wrapping cloth once held by use and wear. Unlike the seemingly untouched, decorative, ornamental quality of most Korean patchworks that were collected in Korean archives, the materiality of this cloth represented a cloth worn from everyday use, telling the story of its former life.

The HoMa was built on the island of O’ahu in 1882, originally as the house of Anna Rice Cooke (1853-1934) and Charles Montague Cooke (1849-1909). Both members of prominent missionary families, Charles Cooke was a founder of the Bank of Hawaii, and the two created the Cooke Foundation, a charitable organisation serving the community through arts, humanities, and educational grants. Records from the mission house historic archives reveal that when Charles died, ‘Anna travelled to Asia and Canada with her daughter’ collecting ‘painting, drawings, sculpture, porcelain and textiles.’³²² She eventually established the museum on the site of her former house, exhibiting the collected materials to the public. Missionary work in Hawai’i was part of a civilising program defined by Christian modernity,³²³ and thus Cooke’s charity should be framed through these ideological desires. The HoMa was one of the first American museums to establish a Korean gallery, setting up the designated space in 1927.³²⁴

In 2003, the ‘Wrappings of Happiness: A Traditional Korean Art Form’ exhibition was showcased there in conjunction with the Museum of Korean Embroidery, marking the centennial anniversary of the first Korean immigrants to the US, and Hawai’i, specifically. According to Dr. Donald Kim, the President of the Centennial Committee at the time, ‘pojagi’ was used by Korean immigrants in their initial journeys, and migrations; Kim wrote ‘[w]hen the earliest immigrants came to Hawaii, they also carried personal items in pojagi, and many a pojagi

³²² ‘Anne Rice Cooke’, *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*

<<https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/14043>> [accessed 11 September 2023].

³²³ Patricia Grimshaw, ‘New England Missionary Wives, Hawaiian Women and “The Cult of True Womanhood”’, in *Family & Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. by Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 19–44 (p. 31).

³²⁴ Youngna Kim, ‘Whither Art History? Korea’s Search for a Place in Global Art History’, *Art Bulletin*, XCVIII.1 (2016), 7–13 (p. 8).

could be found even taken to the cane fields.³²⁵ Kim was also not a textile historian, but he received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Hawai'i, and worked with the Korean diasporic community in Honolulu until his death in 2018. The accession data on the many bojagi and jogakbo in the collection reveal that most of the textiles were acquired from brokers outside of Hawai'i or otherwise gifted. This includes *Wrapping cloth (pojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1) purchased in Japan from Morita Tadashi, *Pojagi, Pieced Wrapping Cloth* (Object 9498.1) purchased from Lea Sneider in New York in 2001, *Pojagi (Wrapping Cloth)* (Object No. 9499.1) also purchased Lea Sneider in New York in 2001, *Red Pojagi* (Object No. 12643.1) purchased from Chunghie Lee on the occasion of her exhibition, *Crossings 2003* in 2003, and *Wrapping cloth (pojagi)* (Object No. 13784.1) gifted by Mi Young Suh in 2007.³²⁶

Categorised as a Korean textile, *Wrapping cloth (pojagi)* (Object No. 9236.1) was purchased in 2000 by Reiko Brandon, the textile curator at the HoMA between 1984 to 2004, from Morita, an art dealer in Tokyo. Soo-Kyung Kim's research finds that institutionalised jogakbo were more often procured from brokers and not makers, which was reflected in the unknown information of provenance, date, and classification.³²⁷ Morita, the broker of this specific cloth, was a well-known collector of boro. A form of Japanese patchwork, boro 'refers to the state of objects that have been used, broken, or worn to tatters, then extensively repaired and sometimes used far beyond their normal expected life cycle';³²⁸ it has become synonymous with the utilitarian textiles that are defined by mending and repair. Leren Li informed me that 'Morito-san' was the definitive authority in the boro collection field. Known as 'the king of boro', his work over the past twenty years includes several publications and the role of 'authenticating' boro pieces.³²⁹

³²⁵ *Wrappings of Happiness: A Traditional Korean Art Form*, ed. by Julia M. White and Dong-Hwa Huh (Hawaii, USA and Seoul, Korea: Honolulu Academy of Arts and The Museum of Korean Embroidery, 2003), p. 5.

³²⁶ Christin Yu to E. Tory Laitila, 'Archive Records for Textiles', 29 April 2023.

³²⁷ Soo-Kyung Kim, p. 163.

³²⁸ Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada, 'Boro No Bi: Beauty in Humility - Repaired Cotton Rags of Old Japan', in *Appropriation • Acculturation • Transformation* (presented at the Textile Society of America 9th Biennial Symposium, Oakland, California: Textile Society of America, 2004). Also see Li.

³²⁹ Li, p. 266; Christin Yu to Leren Li, 'Tadashi Morita', 26 March 2021.

Once emblematic of poverty, and thus regarded by some as culturally shameful representations, boro seemingly rose to national and global recognition in the 1990s.³³⁰ The patchwork form was often framed through Japanese mingei theory's penchant to embrace folk craft and viewed as a cultural tradition that connoted authentic Japaneseness. However, once displayed in art galleries, the textiles were seemingly disconnected from their everyday histories and recontextualised through the lens of Modernism.³³¹ This familiar story of reimagining textiles through the language of art history effaced the localised histories of its making, and instead read the cloths through universalist aesthetics defined by Western culture. *Wrapping cloth (Bojagi)* and its place in the HoMA's textile collection situates the patchwork textile into an everyday context defined by its proximity to Japanese values. The visible patina of its daily use, highlighted through its mending and repair, tells specific stories of Korean womanhood that are otherwise materially underrepresented in collections of jogakbo. Defined through a transcultural gaze, the wrapping cloth seemingly disrupts the narrative of the Korean woman's ornamental being that has been told through national collections of jogakbo.

Wrapping cloth (Bojagi) corroborates Kim's findings, highlighting the role of the broker as an agent of textile history, while evidencing the complicated entanglements of signifying 'Korea' through Japanese and American values. Sara Oka, the textile curator of the HoMa between 1993 to 2019, remarked during my visit that the cloth seemed to resemble Japanese kaya mosquito netting. Highlighting the functionality of the material, and its commonplace status in Japan, the cloth's materiality deviated from the normative histories of jogakbo. The stained, tattered, worn, rebuilt, and mended details, such as the pale moss-coloured hemp patches that were fixed to different places on the original indigo patchwork, shared a material resemblance to boro, and with it not only the discourses of poverty, but also what Li refers to as a discourse of mottainai. The Japanese word refers to 'the idea that everything in our physical universe has a spirit'.³³² Oka

³³⁰ Li, pp. 21–28.

³³¹ Li, p. 180.

³³² Li, p. 88.

described the cloth's aesthetics as addressing 'contemporary issues of sustainability and wastefulness in affluent throw-away societies.'³³³

The faded hemp textile was defined by transcultural encounters and American-Japanese values. On the one hand, as Oka states, it highlights the possibilities for mending cloth, and upcycling, which were valuable practices that were foundational to Huh Dong Hwa's narratives of jogakbo. Whereas Huh's collections sought to materially define Korean women as decorative, ornamental objects that were unused and seemingly immaculate, *Wrapping cloth (Bojagi)* draws on narratives of boro to assimilate histories of Korean patchwork. In doing so, the cloth invokes a history of colonial violence through Korean women's creative practices, materially representing her survival through use and degradation. The multiple voices that emerge from the cloth and the collection tell the dynamic stories of Korean women and their migrations, from Korea to Japan to the US. In this cloth, the traces of Japanese colonial violence were entangled with the gaze of collectors and curators shaped by Japanese aesthetic values. By mapping these narratives of jogakbo in collections, from the national to the global, the pervasive coloniality of understanding these textiles is illuminated. If reading and understanding jogakbo has been defined by Japanese and Western sensibilities then, so too have histories of Korean womanhood defined by jogakbo. Yet, rather than understand Korean womanhood as a singular concept, I highlight this category of being as constituted by coloniality. Rather than view this positionality without agency, I draw on the borderland thinking of two diasporic artists in the final section of this chapter, to reveal how making patchwork, and performing identities creates alternative communities of belonging: J P 제피 and Zadie Xa.

³³³ Oka, personal correspondence.

ii. Disrupting traditional narratives of jogakbo: collective, diasporic, communal work



L to R: *Figure 28.* Jen Pack, 2012. *An Unlikely Partnership*. Courtesy of Jen Pack and Taylor De Cordoba, Los Angeles. © J P 제피, all rights reserved. *Figure 29.* Willie “Ma Willie” Abrams, c. 1975. *Roman Stripes’ Variation*. William Arnett Collection of the Tinwood Alliance. ©Photo by Stephen Pitkin, Pitkin Studio.

J P 제피³³⁴ is an artist living in ██████ New Mexico who identifies as being ‘bicultural and bigender’.³³⁵ (He)r bicultural identity includes being half-Korean, on (he)r father’s side.³³⁶ I initially came upon J P’s work through (he)r³³⁷ essay, written as Jen Pack in 2015, ‘Appropriation and Authenticity: An Artist’s Statement’. J P’s essay was a response to professor of art history and African-American studies Bridget R. Cooks’ essay ‘The Gee’s Bend Effect’, which describes J P’s artwork as citational and appropriative of the Gee’s Bend quilts (*fig. 29*).³³⁸ Exploring the cultural reverence for the creative practices of Black women from the small rural community of Gee’s Band, Alabama, Cooks’ reads J P’s *Scrap 1* (2010) and *An Unlikely Partnership* (2012) (*fig. 28*) as ‘recall[ing] the improvisational designs of Gee’s Bend quilts, particularly those by Annie Mae

³³⁴ This artist formerly worked under the name Jen Pack. I will refer to their name as J P in this thesis, but note that their essay was published under Jen Pack, and references in Cooks’ essay also note Jen Pack. I interviewed the artist in 2019 as Jen Pack. While citational references denote Jen Pack, I will refer to the artist as J P throughout the prose of the thesis.

³³⁵ J P 제피, ‘This Is the Shape of Me’, *About* <<https://www.jpisfinite.art/about>> [accessed 20 March 2023].

³³⁶ J P 제피, interviewed by Christin Yu about the artist’s practice, Koreanness, authenticity, and hybridity, 27 February 2019. See Appendix C for transcript.

³³⁷ I note this reference to (he)r pronoun as directed by (he)r ‘About’ page. For further reading see J P 제피. “This Is the Shape of Me”.

³³⁸ For further reading see Bridget R. Cooks, ‘The Gee’s Bend Effect’, *Textile*, 12.3 (2014), 346–63.

Young and Willie “Ma Willie” Abrams.³³⁹ Moreover, she argues that J P’s ‘reference to a Gee’s Bend aesthetic is immediate and imposes on the interpretation of her work as appropriation.’³⁴⁰ Cooks’ critique of J P’s work foregrounds the artist’s so-called cultural ambivalence to the textile histories embedded in the aesthetic signifiers of (he)r work. It is a point that J P admittedly wrestled with after the essay was published, for (he)r practice had to evolve to name their positionality instead of assuming that the artworks would speak for themselves.

In (he)r own statement, J P highlights the materiality of cloth as determining the shape of patchwork. Textiles read through the prism of art history and compositional design often overlook the culturally adjacent possibilities and parallels of working with fabrics. By illuminating patchwork as materially bound, J P demonstrates how (he)r work retrieves (he)r own cultural histories. Recalling (he)r process, s(he) describes how initially, the maker must collect the pieces of fabric to compose the patchwork. This collection process is an act ‘associated with frugal necessity, the recapturing of loss and a deep love of the material itself.’³⁴¹ These reflections seemingly reiterate the recorded narratives of jogakbo, establishing connections to Korean textile histories. S(he) then highlights how unlike painting or paints that can be blended, patchwork textiles are bound to specific, formally constituted materialities or simply put, the shape of each fragment determines the final composition. The practice of piecing together and stitching serve as a form of ‘self-construction’ for it is this repetitive motion that ‘creates stability, generates discovery and serves to subsume familial loss and cultural exclusion/denial.’³⁴² Through continued repetition, the artist builds self-representation, in a generative creativity that recalls and retrieves (he)r own cultural histories of textile making through Korean women’s narratives.

J P defines

“[c]reation” in the abstract textile tradition [as] involv[ing] re-patterning, re-positioning, and re-aligning existing colors and shapes so that new sequences and visual occurrences manifest. Stripes and patchwork patterns are dictated by a

³³⁹ Cooks, pp. 351–52.

³⁴⁰ Cooks, p. 353.

³⁴¹ Jen Pack, ‘Appropriation and Authenticity: An Artist’s Assessment’, *TEXTILE*, 13.3 (2015), 252–65 (p. 258).

³⁴² Pack, ‘Appropriation and Authenticity: An Artist’s Assessment’, p. 258.

material's natural inclination and physical properties [...] Given textiles' natural proclivity, it is not coincidental that cultures from around the globe and across time have woven, knitted, and stitched together abstract patterns and forms.³⁴³

These descriptions of process and patchwork as an embodied form of making are seldom referenced in histories of jogakbo that define the textile through visual composition, geometric abstraction, material categories, and its likeness to Mondrian and Klee. While the narratives of needlework as a disciplining practice that enforces gendered labour divisions and recognising the upcycling potential of fabrics is apparent in these narratives, the materially constitutive definition of patchwork itself was often overlooked in Korean art histories, and seemingly underexplored in Cooks' essay.

In a Skype interview held in February 2017, I discussed with J P the pain of being misrepresented, and how (he)r making practices reflected (he)r connections to Korea. Early into our interview, J P stated 'I'll just be totally transparent and say it was very painful for me because I felt erased by [Cooks]. And my cultural background, I felt was erased, and that's a very sensitive thing for me because of being bicultural and not really fitting anywhere.'³⁴⁴ My research of J P and (he)r work initially asked questions about (he)r (patchwork) practice in relation to Korean women's histories. J P formerly worked as the artist Jen Pack, but during the course of this research changed (he)r name to J P 제희, identifying themselves as bigendered. I read and interpret (he)r interview through the lens of this identification. Our conversation unfolded to discuss authenticity, authorship and misinterpretation, identities forged from displacement, diaspora and cultural hybridity, Korea's modernisation, and importantly, a gendered relationship to textiles. J P started (he)r practice with a self-professed naive hope that the artworks could be interpreted without having to discuss how (he)r background or influences shaped the pieces. Yet, after Cooks' criticism, J P found it necessary to speak for (he)r work and to reinforce the influences of (he)r practice, without having it authored by others. Although s(he) initially sought

³⁴³ Pack, 'Appropriation and Authenticity: An Artist's Assessment', pp. 258–59.

³⁴⁴ J P 제희.

to conceal (he)r background and identity as a form of self-protection, s(he) recognised this as ‘a disservice, because by not engaging with those narratives, it allowed someone else to project onto me their own narrative.’³⁴⁵

When I initially interviewed J P, (he)r work combined patchwork practices and wooden structures, specifically patchwork pieces that were mounted onto asymmetrical, uneven, wooden frames that often protruded from the walls or hung from ceilings. While this evolved from the work she was producing in 2012, when she was critiqued by Cooks’, it nonetheless carried a stylistic vernacular, built through patchwork. As an example of (he)r work, *Phonic Borderland* (2017) is formed of a polygonal frame with a multi-coloured striped patchworked pattern stretching across the diagonal width of the frame (*fig. 30-32*). The patchwork itself is an intricate composition of bright, saturated, vivid polychromatic tones that form a visually dominant stripe across the middle of the canvas; it is pieced together with taupe, white, greige and beige materials that border the stripe on either side. The combinations and relations of the varying lengths of



L to R: *Figure 30*. J P 제피, 2017. *Phonic Borderland* (front view). 23 x 28 x 3 inches pieced fabric stretched on wood frame. US. © J P 제피, all rights reserved. J P 제피, ‘*Phonic Borderland*’ (back view), 2017. 23 x 28 x 3 inches pieced fabric stretched on wood frame. US. © J P 제피, all rights reserved.

³⁴⁵ P 제피, ‘On Practice, Koreanness, Authenticity, Hybridity’.



Figure 32. J P 제피, 2017. *Phonic Borderland* (process view). 23 x 28 x 3 inches pieced fabric stretched on wood frame. US. © J P 제피, all rights reserved.

each piece of the varied, saturated hues of fabric creates a dynamic, undulating movement in the composition. Each section seems to resemble a stripe, which when compressed together forms a likeness to sedimented rock layers. The composition could easily be mistaken for another medium – a painting or printing technique, perhaps.³⁴⁶ Yet, J P’s documentation of the work reveals the back of the frame (*fig. 31*) and the processes of the patchworking itself (*fig. 32*), highlighting the labour of patchwork and the distinctive frayed edges that signify the woven processes that shape the materiality of each fragment coming undone.

In *Phonic Borderland*, the patchwork wraps the sculptural frame, stapled onto a designated back to keep the shape of the cloth. By building depth into the frame, the perspective further animates the movement of the patchwork. The piece explores the relations and formal tensions between masculinity and femininity as expressed through woodworking and sewing, respectively, and movement itself. I asked J P about the dynamic quality of (he)r artworks, and s(he) answered

³⁴⁶ Cooks’ argument aims at the use of quilting techniques in Pack’s work, without the utilitarian need for quilting. She writes that ‘Pack’s materials were likely purchased in order to make art, not remnants of clothing disintegrated from use’, therefore Pack’s work seemingly aestheticises poverty, appropriating textiles from the ‘economically poor – but culturally rich – people of color (African-American, Ghanaian, Mexican)’. Cooks omits traditions of Korean jogakbo from these categories. Cooks, pp. 354–55.

that movement and displacement are themes within (he)r work, as s(he) physically ‘moved a lot’ in (he)r own life. (He)r family moved to Korea for a year when (sh)e was six and (sh)e vividly remembered how having a white mother made people stare. S(he) felt the desire to express ‘ambiguity’, not being able to blend in, and a loss inherited from immigrant parents as a feeling of longing that was generationally transmitted through the movement in (he)r work.³⁴⁷

The materials and processes of J P’s work were shaped by a combination of (he)r family’s sewing practices, remembering how (he)r mother and sisters ‘all sewed’ around her growing up, and woodworking skills s(he) learnt in the sixth grade. (He)r neighbour gave (he)r an old sewing machine when (sh)e was attending art school. S(he) described discovering (he)r practice emerging as a form of play:

I just started sewing and playing, and my relationship with fabric, I did have one, even though I had not sewn much before, because my sisters and mom, growing up they all sewed. It was familiar to me. I was a tomboy and I was stubborn, so I didn’t. I learnt woodworking, I started taking shop class from the sixth grade. So I was more interested in building things. It was this weird [familiarity] with fabric, but not from experience. It was this natural transition, but also I came at it from a weird direction. My mom has told me “you sew like a construction worker.” Because everything is cut straight. I’m really uncomfortable with making clothes, because then you have to go onto a body and it’s this whole other ... I remember one of my sisters who sewed a lot was like “I can’t believe you are using this silky thin stuff and stretching it, because it doesn’t make sense, because it’s delicate and rips all the time.” I didn’t pay attention to those things because I had no context. I didn’t know any better basically. It was just a new fun material for me that I was playing around with. It’s funny because I was realising at one point when I was back visiting my mom, and she has this series of small, framed pieces in her bathroom that I had given her when I was in college, and they are all these old pieces of fabric that are mounted on these tiny wood frames. This is the very first inception of [my work]: they’re mounted on these tiny wood frames that I built, and there are these drawings, of me [...] really simple paintings of memories when I was growing up. It’s very much associated with clothing that I remember wearing, like old memories of things. Recently, I went back, and I [thought] this is the inception of me putting fabric on a frame [...] Of course, I’m working within my own context of memories and my association with colour, and my cultural background [...] It’s interesting to think there’s this whole series I did which are all about memory, my own memories.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ P 제]표], ‘On Practice, Koreanness, Authenticity, Hybridity’.

³⁴⁸ P 제]표], ‘On Practice, Koreanness, Authenticity, Hybridity’.

J P's ruminations of (he)r processes reveal the influences of (he)r mother and sisters, family histories shaped by (he)r practice as 'framing' memories, and the cultural associations between gendered forms of making, between woodworking and sewing. Attaching silkiness and delicacy with associations of femininity, and woodworking with masculinity, J P names historically constructed ideas of gender through material practices.

Feminist scholars of textiles and art history, including Francesca Bray, Charlotte Horlyck, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, demonstrate that the weaving of cloth is a gendered practice. Bray's work on the gynotechnics of late imperial China reveals that '[t]hroughout the world the making of cloth has been variously associated with human life and fertility', and thus 'a[s] the quintessential form of womanly work, textile production [...] manufactured femininities as it manufactured cloth.'³⁴⁹ As an intangible cultural heritage, it was not the ramie, but the practice of weaving fine ramie, enacted by Korean women, that was designated significant to national identity. Horlyck, citing the work of Parker and Pollock, argues that not only do material practices have gendered associations, but that these gendered associations reinforce hierarchies of value within discourses of art and craft.³⁵⁰ Korean art history has historically disregarded needlework, not due to its inherent value, but because its mode of production belonged to the domestic sphere, thus it had no clear commercial value.³⁵¹ Through feminist imperatives, the scholars ask us to trouble the associative values between art and craft, mapping a genealogy of their distinction.

In the seminal work of Parker and Pollock, the distinction between art and craft is traced onto the emergence of sexual distinction and categorisation that constituted the male-female binary in the eighteenth century. Hierarchies of value were mapped onto gendered spaces, respectively labelling domestic women's practices as belonging in the private abode versus public

³⁴⁹ Bray, p. 176.

³⁵⁰ For further reading see Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, Bloomsbury Revelations (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021); Horlyck, 'Questioning Women's Place in the Canon of Korean Art History'.

³⁵¹ Horlyck, 'Questioning Women's Place in the Canon of Korean Art History', p. 244.

men's labour, which was viewed as requiring training and a specialist skill set. J P's reflections of learning woodworking and 'sew[ing] like a construction worker' reiterate ideas that have been historically constituted through these gendered distinctions between forms of making. The material observations regarding the thin and delicate nature of silk versus the associations with wood working and construction as male-dominated industries also exemplifies how materials are not only racialised, but they are gendered too. Yet, the artist's work emerges as a collaboration between these material connotations, building needlework in relation to woodwork. In doing so, it manages to escape the control of nationalist ideas about Korean womanhood, existing in a space that holistically encompasses distinctions of gendered work. When I interviewed J P, (he)r identification with being bi-gendered was not explicit, yet it was implicit within our conversations as (sh)e drew on the material traces and practices that defined (he)r practices. (He)r practice explored (he)r relation to Koreanness as a dynamic idea that was formalised in the undulating movements of (he)r sculptural patchworks.

Almost a decade after Cooks' critique of J P, the curator Legacy Russell developed an exhibition called 'The New Bend', which took place as three successive shows at Hauser & Wirth in New York (3 February to 2 April 2022), Los Angeles (27 October to 30 December 2022) and Somerset, UK (28 January to 8 May 2023). Taking the Gee's Bend quilters' contributions to art as a foundational framework, Russell gathered a community of contemporary artists mapping the constellations and relations across raced, classed, and gendered traditions of quilting and textile practices. These conversations were expressed through the show's artworks by Anthony Akinbola, Eddie R. Aparicio, Dawn Williams Boyd, Myrlande Constant, Ferren Gipson, Tomashi Jackson, Basil Kincaid, Eric N. Mack, Sojourner Truth Parsons, Tuesday Smillie, Rachel Eulena Williams, Qualeasha Wood, and Zadie Xa. In this global approach to patchwork, Russell's curations trouble, enrich and complicate Cooks' and J P's dialogue about authenticity, identities, and patchwork traditions, creating a vision of community and collaboration that transcends borders, localities, and genders.

One of the artists of Russell's show, Zadie Xa is a Korean-Canadian artist. According to her website, she 'was born in Vancouver, Canada on unceded, ancestral and continually asserted territories of the x^wməθkwəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations and is now based in London, UK. Her practice focuses on familial legacies, interspecies communication and diasporic worlding.³⁵² Through 2017 to 2023, I viewed the evolution of Xa's practices, which developed through artworks of performance, textile-based and ceramic sculptures, paintings, and installations. Jogakbo and other patchwork forms featured reiteratively as practices that imagined 'familial legacies', and 'diasporic worlding', contributing provocative discussions about gender and tradition in *The New Bend* show.

In an interview we held on 9 February 2018, Xa described her practice as not focused on the design compositions, but rather the act of performing labour itself, which enabled her to conceptualise the liminal spaces of identities by retracing craft practices to access and embody past lives. She relayed:

[m]y interests of exploring or using aspects of traditional Korean craftsmanship or using Korean stories, or formative arts in my work, it's kind of a way where through the physical re-enactment of making certain things, it's kind of like you are retracing memory onto your body in a physical way so its manifested that way. I feel that my relationship to perhaps, my family's history is through that reimagining and reinventing events or space.³⁵³

Her processes echo what Laurel Kendall describes as performance leaving 'its tangible trace on and in material objects'.³⁵⁴ While Kendall explores the indelible traces of embodied experiences and knowledges on the intangible heritage cultures of 'cast metals, ceramics, worked wood, and woven, dyed, and embroidered textiles'³⁵⁵ in Korea, this understanding of intangibility reveals how Xa's patchwork pieces forge relational connections to familial Korean histories

³⁵² 'CV', *Zadie Xa* <<https://www.zadiexa.com/about>> [accessed 5 April 2023].

³⁵³ Zadie Xa, interviewed by Christin Yu about retrieving family histories through performances and artistic practice, 9 February 2018. See Appendix D for transcript.

³⁵⁴ Kendall, 'Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft', p. 543.

³⁵⁵ Kendall, 'Intangible Traces and Material Things: The Performance of Heritage Handicraft', p. 543.



Figure 33. Zadie Xa, 2018. *Ride the Chakdu: 3rd Chamber Part Seven*. 220 x 234 cm hand-sewn and machine-stitched assorted fabrics, faux fur and synthetic hair on bamboo. London: Union Pacific Gallery. Photograph courtesy of Union Pacific Gallery. © Union Pacific Gallery, all rights reserved.

through the embodying of women's work that shapes material forms. Through this understanding of performance, Xa's patchwork practices perform Korean womanhood through the labour of making. Xa's work, and her intentions aim to trouble definitions of 'authenticity' and authentic Korean forms, instead offering powerful reimaginings of 'Korea' and Korean women through transcultural processes.

As part of Xa's 'Homeboy 3030: Return the Tiger 2 the Mountain' exhibition at the Union Pacific Gallery (London, UK) in May 2018, *Ride the Chakdu: 3rd Chamber Part Seven* explored the form of jogakbo as part of her technicoloured future imaginary (fig. 33). The

complexity of its composition, which included a patchworked base with appliquéd yin-yang symbols of multicoloured variations, representations of daggers, furry orbs, and a felted flame burning with a metallic center, re-enacted the labour of making intricate, time-consuming decorative textiles. Xa described embodying histories through the performance of making as incredibly labourious:

[M]y work is always very labour intensive [...] I would never work [solely] with abstract forms, I always have to then build on top. It has taken me literally sixty hours of work to get a base down, whereas normally, I use just one base fabric and stitch the sides, and then I would layer gradually on top, but this thing is like patching a base-thing and then having to re-sew things on top and I'm still not done.³⁵⁶

This description of timely labour is clearly apparent in *Ride the Chakdu*, with approximately seventy-six pieces of fabric as appliquéd overlays, not included in the patchwork itself. In material histories of race-making, labouriousness was often historically associated with Orientalised identities. As previously referenced, Sarah Cheang regards 'highly ornate' Chinese embroideries in British collections as imagining racialised stereotypes of the makers. She writes, '[t]he ability to labour continuously on minute and repetitive tasks, such as embroidery or ivory carving, was a common stereotype of Chineseness [...] Chinese craft-products were therefore also viewed in terms of these so-called racial characteristics, the proof of which could be found in the time-consuming and labour-intensive art of Chinese embroidery.'³⁵⁷ Said's Orientalism theorises how materials turned people into things, and the aesthetic philosophies of modernity maligned and denigrated the ornamental, decorative, aesthetic surfaces as being superfluous, unnecessary, and associated with Oriental identities. In Xa's laboured practices then, she not only re-enacts embodied practices of Korean womanhood, but she embraces the ornamental as an active resistance to the aesthetic morality and austerity of Modernist principles.

According to Francesca Bray, the performance of women's work was key to producing Chinese womanhood. Likewise, for Xa, constructing, cutting, piecing, stitching together gave the

³⁵⁶ Xa.

³⁵⁷ Cheang, 'Dragons in the Drawing Room: Chinese Embroideries in British Homes, 1860-1949', p. 237.

artist access to histories to familial lineages, while producing for her, an embodied understanding of Korean womanhood initially lost through modernisation and her own journeys of displacement. When reading the iconography or performances of Xa's practices, she is not concerned with perpetuating Confucian values, but rather, she foregrounds an exploration of Korean shamanism to explore women through an 'anti-oppressor thinking'.³⁵⁸ Coloniality expressed through Christian modernity rendered the cosmologies of shamanism in Korea as religiously Othered. Xa argued that 'from a Western feminist perspective, [the shaman was the] kind of the archetype for why feminists would be interested in this religion. Through the idea of performance, power structures [push against] the idea of Confucian values, where gender roles are so heavily instilled.'³⁵⁹ That is, the role of the shaman offers an alternative imagining of Korean women in positions of power, as healers and as spiritual leaders. Martina Deuchler names the shaman (*mudang*, *mansin*) and the professional entertainer (*kisaeng*) as two categories of women that have always existed out of the rules and regulations of traditions and norms of Joseon society.³⁶⁰

Ride the Chakdu incorporates appliquéd grey tones and black felt that represent daggers. Such tools are critical for the shamanistic gut ceremonies, representing the iconography of the shaman as a powerful paradigm for Korean women, alternative to normative roles as mother and wife.³⁶¹ The shaman exists in the same world as the witch, who Mignolo describes as the disobedient Other to the compliant and necessary wife.³⁶² While Mignolo maps these gender

³⁵⁸ Xa.

³⁵⁹ Xa.

³⁶⁰ Deuchler, p. 2.

³⁶¹ Laurel Kendall has a wealth of research on this subject. For further reading see Kendall, *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits: Women in Korean Ritual Life*, Laurel Kendall, *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman: Of Tales and the Telling of Tales* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1988); Laurel Kendall, Jongsung Yang, and Yul Soo Yoon, *God Pictures in Korean Contexts: The Ownership and Meaning of Shaman Paintings* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015); Laurel Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2010).

³⁶² Mignolo, 'The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature', p. 158.

histories and categorisations as emerging from the early Renaissance,³⁶³ in Korea, it was under Confucianisation that distinguished the witch from the wife. Yet, these distinctions were not configured through binary oppositions as under coloniality/modernity, but as relational categories of women.

Xa is troubled by the concept of a singular, authentic Korean identity, and firmly positions her work within a diasporic context defined by the middle space, she likens her practices to an interlude in music.

I definitely identify as Korean, I feel like it's a very specific Korean, that's more relatable, you know, to you, you so happen to also be someone who's family is from Korea, but I might also engage with someone who's family is from Bangladesh. It's just the idea that your body has moved through space, crossed over borders and then there is certain cultural information whether it's imprinted on your DNA or memory mass, that you bring with you [...] It's very offensive and extremely hurtful for other Korean people to be dismissive of the experiences or my own idea of myself as a Korean person because I didn't grow up in Korea. I don't actively speak the language, because I grew up in a space where people looked at me with the face that I have, and I was treated as someone who was an Asian person. I grew up my whole life having an Asian face, so it's absolutely absurd to think [about authenticity]. Actually, I think a lot of it comes down to nationalist viewpoints about what is and what isn't, right? To be an authentic Korean is to have grown up in Korea, it's to have grown up with certain borders that the state has demarcated to say this is where this country lies, you have a passport, and therefore you are. I mean those things are just strange to me, but at the same time, of course I respect and understand that my experience is different.³⁶⁴

By illuminating the geopolitical borders that have defined Korea, Xa names both the problem of authenticity through the gaze of nationalism, and I add, as an expression of coloniality. This singular concept of being is a problematic reification of colonial definitions to define and confine Koreanness to borders. Xa explores her identity through her relations to diasporic communities, building her being and belonging through liminality and journeys of displacement.

According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 'diaspora' is a noun which emerges in

1825 in reference to Moravian protestants; 1869 in reference to the dispersion of the Jews; from Greek *diaspora* "dispersion," from *diaspeirein* "to scatter about, disperse," from *dia* "about, across" (see *dia-*) + *speirein* "to scatter" (see *sparse*). The Greek word was used in Septuagint in Deuteronomy xxvii.25. A Hebrew

³⁶³ Mignolo, 'The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature', p. 157.

³⁶⁴ Xa.

word for it is *galuth* “exile”. The earlier word for it in English was Latinate dispersion (late 14c.) Related: *Diasporic*.³⁶⁵

Diaspora traces communities of people that have been ‘disperse[d]’, ‘scatter[ed]’, or ‘exile[d]’.

Noting globalisation as a dynamic that has generated mass migrations, the diasporic studies scholars Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee describe Asian migrations to the Americans as ‘a stage in the trajectory of the modern world capitalist system’ with waves correlating to trade and labour shortages, as well as war and political upheavals.³⁶⁶ Diasporic experiences are defined by displacements, whether voluntary or coercive, and thus imaginings and memories of ‘home’ or homeland have become central to themes to diasporic artists. If, as Quijano contends, globalisation is the culmination of a process defined by the CMP, and deeply entangled with structures of racism and capitalism, then diaspora too must be framed by coloniality. As Xa and

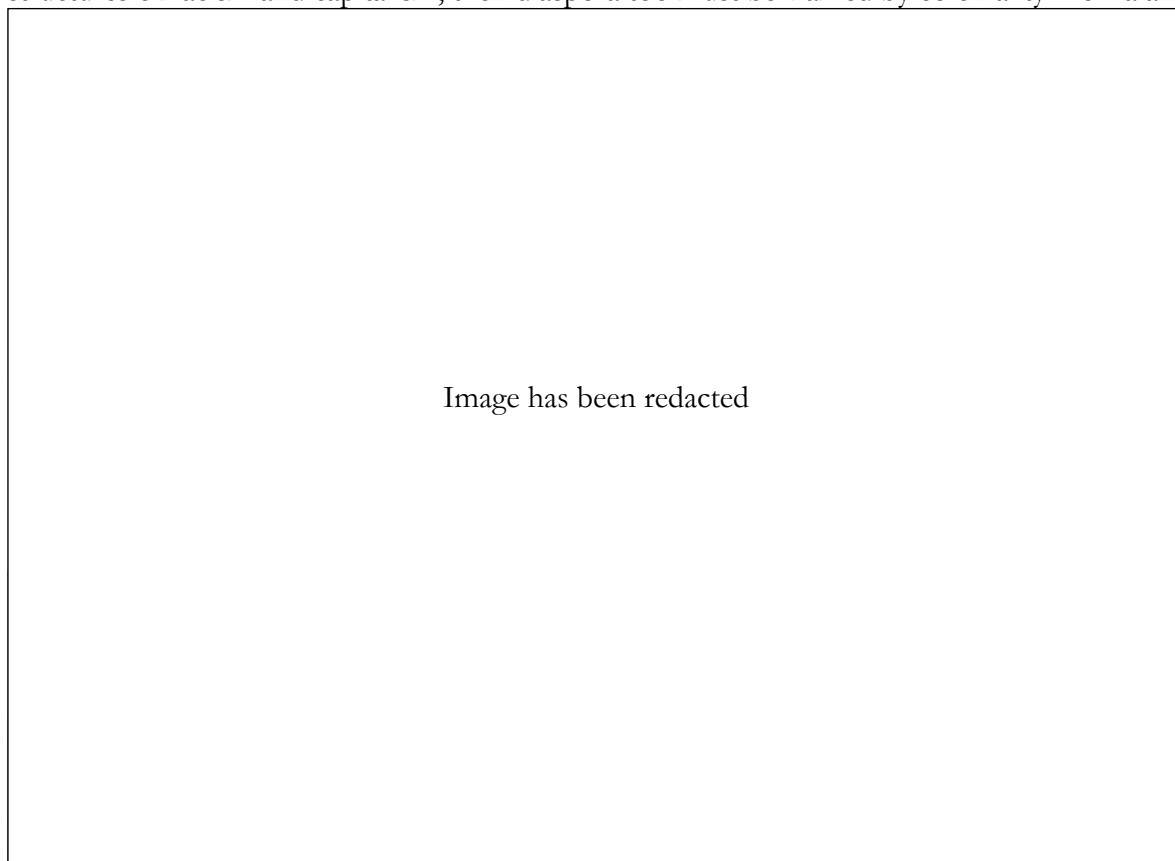


Figure 34. Installation view, “The New Bend,” Hauser & Wirth New York 22nd Street, 2022. © Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, Eric N. Mack, Dawn Boyd Williams, Zadie Xa. Courtesy the artists and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Thomas Barratt

³⁶⁵ ‘Diaspora (n.)’, *Online Etymology Dictionary* <<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=diasporic>> [accessed 7 November 2023].

³⁶⁶ Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee, ‘Asian American Displacements’, in *Displacements and Diasporas: Asians in the Americas*, ed. by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005), pp. 3–23 (pp. 3–5).

J P both articulated how their identities were interrogated, the need to create an inclusive framework for imagining ‘Korea’ through diasporic experiences becomes ever more pressing. Decolonising Korean womanhood through these narratives of jogakbo requires that the regionalism of thinking through national borders is disrupted and troubled to include experiences that define ‘Korea’ through diaspora as well.

Xa’s participation in Russell’s ‘The New Bend’ activates important questions about patchwork and its cultural expressions, particularly as a form that transcends boundaries and borders. During an ‘In Conversation’ presentation held at Hauser & Wirth in London on 28 March 2023, Russell discussed with the designer, Duro Olowu, her motivations and theoretical underpinnings for the show, imagining the radical potential of envisaging women’s work as ‘not cited in a gendered locality’, but through collective practices, co-dependent relations and multiple authorships that acknowledge the many voices within singular practices.³⁶⁷ Across the three

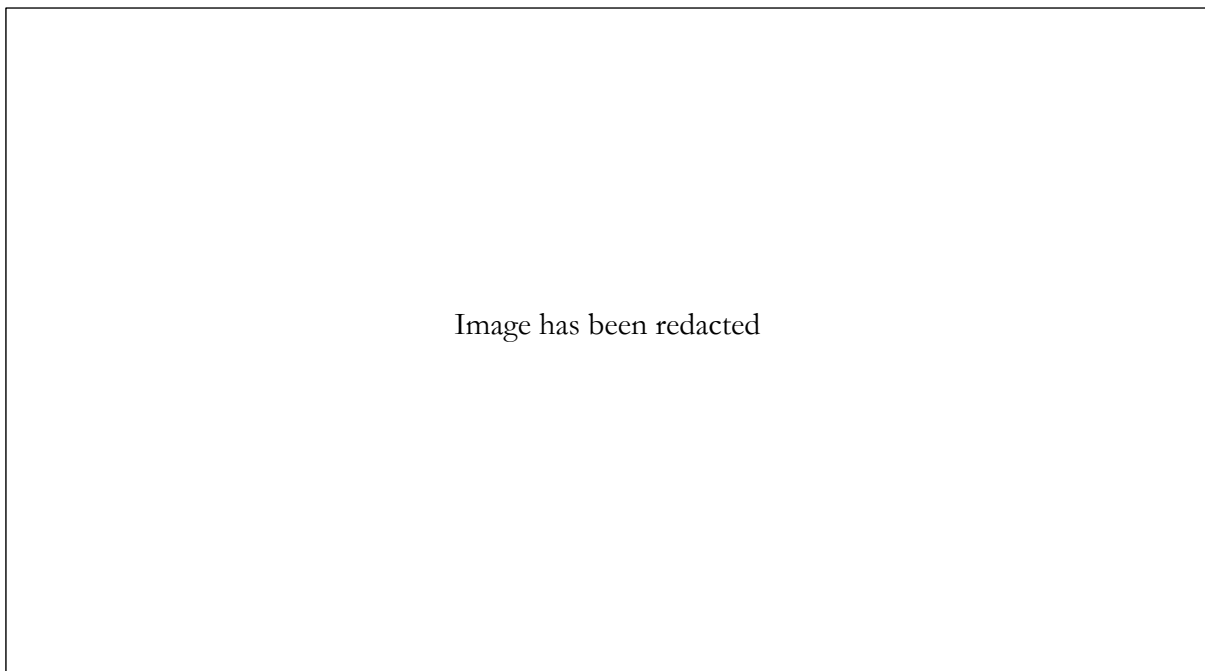


Figure 35. Installation view, “The New Bend,” Hauser & Wirth Somerset, 2023. © Ferren Gipson, Dawn Boyd Williams, Qualeasha Wood, Zadie Xa. Courtesy the artists and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Ken Adlar

³⁶⁷ Legacy Russell and Duro Olowu, ‘In Conversation: Legacy Russell and Duro Olowu’ (Hauser & Wirth, London, 2023).

iterations of the shows, there were two to three iterations of Xa's work in each showcase, with *Ancestor Work: Re-remember/Black Water Tiger* (2022) and *Ancestor Work: Trickster Gift/Re-remembrance* (2022) showcased as hanging from wooden doweling from the ceiling (fig. 34); and *Shrine painting 2: Western Yellowcedar* (2022) displayed on a wooden frame (fig. 35), often in front of natural light sources, where the spectator could view both the front and the back of the artwork. According to Russell's commentary, the curation for the exhibition was shaped as a collaborative process with each artist consulted in the displays of their textiles. Olowu remarked to Xa, who was sitting in attendance, that he was moved by the backlit displays – likening the work to stained glass.

During my visit to the third and final iteration of Russell's 'The New Bend' at Hauser & Wirth Somerset in Bruton, UK, on 4 April 2023, I was able to view both the development of Xa's practice, and her work in conversation with other forms of patchwork. Russell's curation embraced the limitless possibilities of the form, which took as its foundation the influences of the Gee's Bend Quilting Collective. The first of Xa's pieces in the exhibition, *Shrine painting 2: Western Yellowcedar*, was placed directly across from Ferren Gipson's *Culmination I* (2022), a composition of wool, mesh and cotton thread on a linen canvas that was mounted on the white wall. According to Gipson's biography, her textile practice 'explores themes of labor, matrilineal connections, materiality and color.'³⁶⁸ Themes of women's work and matrilineal, ancestral connections cross between both Gipson's and Xa's work. Each artist's compositions were trapped in materials – Xa's abstracted forms of yellow cedar represented by beige and taupe pieced vertical rectangles that were seemingly trapped in a geometric pattern, and Gipson's wool was trapped in mesh. To the right of Gipson's piece was a woven tapestry by Qualeasha Wood called *CTRL+ALT+DEL* (2021) that was also mounted on the wall. The cotton jacquard piece with glass beads seemingly represents a self-portrait of the artist in relation or in a layout on the

³⁶⁸ 'Ferren Gipson', *Viewing Room* <<https://www.hauserwirth.com/viewing-room/ferren-gipson-3/>> [accessed 28 August 2023].

ubiquitous Apple desktop platform; it is a piece that seems to reference digitality, which is materially manifested in the process of weaving itself. Discourses of cybernetic feminism demonstrate that the jacquard loom was one of the first pieces of digital technology, a precursor to the computer, that was directly related to women's work.³⁶⁹

Although Russell declares the conversations of her artists as 'not cited in a gendered locality', Parker and Pollock argue that for feminist historians, these instances of erasure have been apparent throughout art history's denigration of women's work. As previously highlighted in their descriptions of the Navajo blanket, this eliding over gender reinforces the hierarchical classifications of art itself. The scholars reference Patricia Mainardi's work, highlighting how some have defined needlework as 'women's "true cultural heritage"'; Mainardi claims that needlework arts 'are a universal female art form transcending race, class and national borders. Needlework is the one art in which women controlled the education of their daughters and the production of art, and were also the critics and audience ... it is our cultural heritage.'³⁷⁰ Yet, for Pollock and Parker, it is the very development of gendered binaries, and an ideology of femininity, that emerged to coincide with and to reinforce the distinction between art and craft in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.³⁷¹ Troubling the assumption of a universalising paradigm of womanhood and needlework, the scholars map the historical origins that defined these gendered divisions in European art history. This gap between Russell's motives to locate these artworks in a non-gendered place and Chunghie Lee's and Huh Dong Hwa's descriptions to define jogakbo as women's work reflect political, historical, geographic, and importantly, generational differences. Lee and Huh shaped and were shaped by desires to define 'Korea' and thus Korean womanhood from a nationalist perspective that was driven by the need to mobilise a singular identity of statehood. Russell's curations, and importantly, Xa's artworks are framed by

³⁶⁹ Sadie Plant, 'The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics', *Body & Society*, 1.3–4 (1995), 45–64.

³⁷⁰ Patricia Mainardi, 'Quilts: The Great American Art', *Feminist Art Journal*, 1973, p. 1 IN Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p. 58.

³⁷¹ Parker and Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, p. 59.

transcultural, transnational identities constituted by global connections and conversations that imagine jogakbo in relation to the Gee's Bend. In both cases, patchwork serves as a material expression of communities engaged in forms of worldmaking through their creative practices.

This chapter has explored how jogakbo *became* Korean, mapping the constellations between institutional collecting, national archives, global museums, and international art exhibitions. Museums are crucial institutions that serve the coloniality of knowledge, and thus, the coloniality of being. According to Mignolo, such institutions are European inventions, derived from the Greek Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, and are 'instrumental in building Western civilization's profile and identity.'³⁷² Acting as repositories of memory, the material cultures accumulated in museums have forged knowledge about people and their cultures, and thus have constituted their being. Decolonial thinking requires an analytic that reveals the very processes that have built this knowledge, and thus defined being. In this chapter, the imperative of defining 'Korea' and Korean womanhood through patchwork was initially identified through Christian missionary work.

As the first patchwork collected in a museum archive, *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, was most likely collected as part of the 'Missionary Exhibition 1900'. Exhibited for missionary audiences to imagine the possibilities and environments of their work on the field, the patchwork was then acquired by the AMNH and became crucial as ethnographic knowledge of 'Korea'. Once absorbed by the Asian Ethnographic Collections, the archive records of the object revealed the many voices and some misrepresentations of the textile. Knowledge in the museum was shaped by political agendas, ideological alliances, and other fields of expertise, namely a Japanese gaze, that misunderstood and underrepresented the local histories of Korea. *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* is a seemingly anomaly in early twentieth century collections, for Korean patchwork was not widely collected in institutional settings until the last quarter of the century. For the 'Missionary

³⁷² Mignolo, 'Eurocentrism and Coloniality: The Question of Totality of Knowledge', pp. 198–99.

Exhibition', the textile was an everyday item that was collected amongst other garments and household objects.

Jogakbo *became* Korean through the seminal work of Huh Dong Hwa, a curator and collector of Korean textiles and embroidery. This is not to argue that jogakbo did not exist before Huh's work, but rather that his work officiated the cloth as a valued cultural tradition, while documenting its histories into written record. By imagining the decorative, ornamental cloths as unknown Korean women, whose creative practices rendered them anonymous due to the oppressive circumstances of Confucianism, Huh sought not only to build a voice for Korean womanhood, but also to recognise their work as art. Decontextualising the textiles from their everyday setting, and recontextualising them through a proximity to Modernism, Huh's practices emerged from a national imperative to reconstruct identities through cultural traditions. In doing so, his authorial voice resonated and resonates in the histories of bojagi, and specifically jogakbo, defining its uses, categorising its decorative aesthetics, and regulating its histories. Evoking narratives of women's work to ignite nationalist imaginings, Huh spoke on behalf of these Korean women makers whose voices were lost in the processes of collecting, confining their practices to decorative ornamental objecthood that was to be looked at. The posthumous donations of Huh's collection to the SeMoCA has sought to resituate the textiles in an everyday setting, contextualising the bojagi in their daily life, while simultaneously building an understanding of the textiles through Huh's career.

In the work of Chunghie Lee, J P 제피, and Zadie Xa, the reverence of jogakbo as a Korean form emerges in the global imaginary. Lee, whose work I continue to unpack in the upcoming chapter, is an artist whose career and creative practices, including the establishment of the KBF, has reinforced and co-constituted the official histories of jogakbo alongside Huh. Developing and reifying the narratives of jogakbo as wrapping cloths made by unknown women, Lee's own authorship and indeed, authority, has permeated global collections. By being collected, her narratives were also collectively remembered as the official histories of the wrapping cloths,

as were her assumptions about Korean women. Her artworks reinforced the relationship between jogakbo and art, creating and solidifying the cultural economy of jogakbo vis-à-vis Korea. Although Lee was a trailblazer of Korean textile art on a global stage, and undoubtedly set a critical foundation for seeing jogakbo internationally, it is necessary to contextualise her work through nationalist imperatives which positioned women in roles that supported the rise of the androcentric nation-state. The singular and linear history that connected jogakbo to the Joseon dynasty supported the desire to identify and construct an authentic national identity for the ROK; yet, the voices of the makers were largely lost, and supplanted, instead replaced with the representations of Korean womanhood.

J P 제피's and Xa's work with jogakbo presented the complicated predicament of defining Korean patchwork on a global stage, particularly as the citational references aligned it to conversations with the Gee's Bend makers. Drawing from diasporic perspectives, both artists used patchwork self-reflexively in their practices to navigate cultural identities and questions of authenticity. While J P saw (he)r work as emerging from a bi-gendered, bi-cultural space that embraced the overlapping binaries between geographic regions, and gendered identities, Xa worked through journey, migration, and displacement through performative labour as creative practice. Our conversations were not fixed on the narratives and histories of the ROK, but rather focused on how each artist made sense of their worlds through the materiality and form of patchwork – as a citational reference in their practices.

Critically, this chapter reveals the alternative ontology imagined by Cheng's Ornamentalist framework: the ghostly emanations of yellow womanhood that we encounter in the dangling ties illustrated on an object card and photographed from exhibitions, that resemble the hanging limbs of bodies. The bejewelled, lustrous fragments pieced together as decorative spectacular surfaces represent yellow womanhood as immaculate, intricate, and ornate, alongside the white ramie and indigo-dyed hemp fragments that respectively construct a particular yellow womanhood that has been racialised, subjugated, and denigrated within genealogies of

yellowness. With the voices of real Korean women makers largely missing from the institutional archives, save for the contemporary artists mentioned above, Cheng reminds us that the absence of real women from the archive ‘is a critical and constitutive part of Asiatic women’s lived experiences.’³⁷³ The yellow woman’s lived presence is forged through representation, which is entangled with real life. We encounter in these wrapping cloths, *jogakbo* as Korean women.

³⁷³ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. xiii.

Chapter Two. Piecing, sewing, styling: patchwork wrapping Korean women

"Through their participation in transnational circuits of commodities and capital, women as consummate consumer-subjects fracture totalized cultural identities through the fissures of the foreign into the national body.

Consequently, it is they who must also figure the reconstitution of domestic identity; they who must stitch together its fragments.'

- Dorinne Kondo, *About Face*³⁷⁴

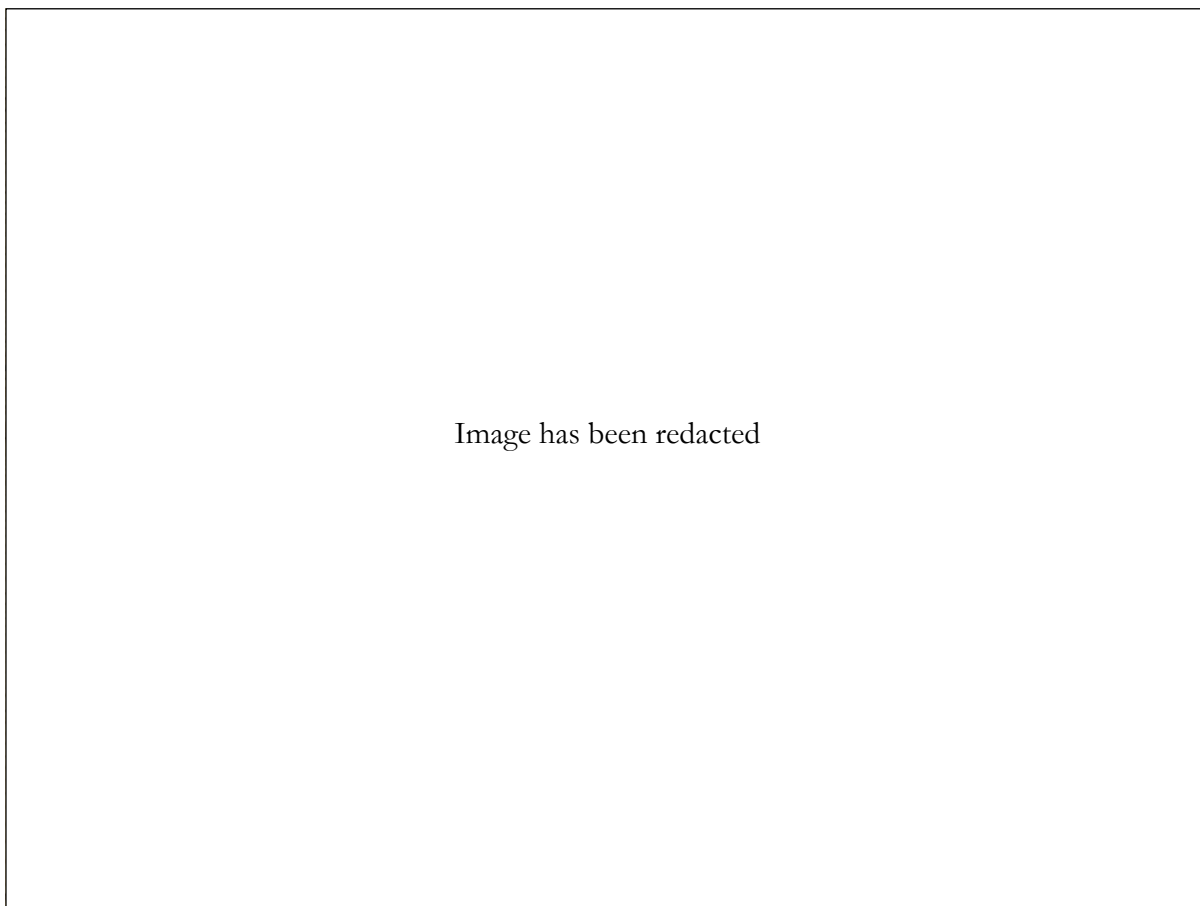


Figure 36. Souvenir photograph of Myunghee June Yu. Unknown photographer, 1989. *My mother in Amsterdam*, 15 x 10 cm photograph, London: In possession of the author. Photograph of photograph courtesy of the author.

This tourist souvenir photograph (*fig.* 36) was purchased by my mother, Myunghee June³⁷⁵ Yu, on my parents' European vacation in 1989. Wearing a khaki-colour cotton-gabardine double-breasted long Burberry trench coat, which was buttoned up but unbelted, dark navy Gucci loafers, a sage silk Hermes scarf with a printed ivory and beige pattern fastened with a

³⁷⁴ Dorinne Kondo, *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), p. 80.

³⁷⁵ June became my mother's Anglicised name when she began studying English after her arrival to Canada in the 1980s. She recalled that the difficult pronunciation of her Korean name to non-Korean speakers encouraged her to take a new name. June was what her English as a Second Language classmate named her.

classic knot, a leather-banded gold-plated watch, a gold ring around her left ring finger – a wedding ring, a tanned leather handbag on her right shoulder, and petrol blue cotton twill trousers that bunched around her ankle, my mother chose to remember this moment of embarking on an Amsterdam canal cruise as a reportable event in her life, a reiterable memory embedded in this ‘object of nostalgia.’ Susan Stewart reminds us that the souvenir is an object that originates at the point of consumption, and not its making. Belonging to the narrative of the tourist, it acts as a touchstone of private memory that bridges the past, and the present, confirming the interiority and authenticity of the possessor’s life.³⁷⁶ While interior and authentic states of being are not necessarily universally lived, this photograph marked the emergence of my mother’s new liberal subjectivity. Wearing recognisable signifiers of luxury fashion, and hair shorn short referencing the look of Diana Spencer at the time, I imagine my mother selecting each piece of clothing for her excursion abroad and purchasing this photograph to confirm the memories of her journeys. This photograph represented an event in my mother’s narrative as a modern Korean woman.

Patchwork is an amalgam of separate pieces. By joining together different fragments, a new form is created through the assemblage of various parts. In the first chapter, I mapped how the objective history of jogakbo was forged and reinforced through institutional collecting practices. Museums sought to create an objective worldview by collecting, categorising, and analysing material cultures. As Western inventions, these institutions were instrumental to the coloniality of knowledge, building knowledge about ‘Korea’ from the universalising lens of Eurocentric systems, particularly as the ROK’s nationalist programs were built from and continued the legacies of imperial frameworks. This chapter pieces together material histories alongside embodied and familial memories of being, foregrounding relationality. In doing so, I explore the potential of patchwork as a decolonial method, suturing together global stories of

³⁷⁶ Stewart, p. 136.

Korean patchwork through material histories of archives, artworks, photographs, inventories, and curators' narratives, alongside my family histories and souvenirs to form a history and ontology of Korean women through patchwork. Deploying the autoethnographic, I disrupt the epistemic totality of jogakbo in nationalist narratives, expanding and testing the potential of its material form to wrap bodies.

When discovering my mother's souvenir photograph amongst her private archive of belongings, along with the 'Congratulations on Your New Baby' cards she had kept since my brother and my births, I began to piece together another version of my mother that I had not known. While her sentimental keepsakes confirmed the importance she regarded for her identity as our mother, she also saw her role as a woman, whose desires and motivations were shaped by goals separate from raising her children. My mother grew up during a stage of rapid transition, witnessing the South Korean economic development defined by General Park Chung Hee's authoritarian military dictatorship, the subsequent rise of new experiences of consumerism defined by global capitalism, and the democracy movements of the ROK. Transitioning from colonial-modern to postmodern identities in the short span of the twentieth century, Korean women were shaped by new roles that saw each successive generation experiencing conflicting subjectivities from the previous one. Cho Haejoang describes this friction as women who 'refuse[d] to live like their mothers,'³⁷⁷ arguing that the neo-Confucian values that bound women to family-centred social order shifted with the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the 1950s and 1960s. Women grew beyond their relational roles as mothers and wives to identify themselves as individuals, defining their emerging identities through new opportunities for consumption,³⁷⁸ and work.

³⁷⁷ Cho Haejoang, 'Living with Conflicting Subjectivities: Mother, Motherly Wife, and Sexy Woman in the Transition From Colonial-Modern to Postmodern Korea', in *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea*, ed. by Laurel Kendall (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p. 167.

³⁷⁸ Cho Haejoang, p. 187.

This chapter explores histories of patchwork wrapping bodies, and Korean women framed by (post-)modernity. By mapping the development of modernity in Korea through fashion systems, I explore how everyday style-fashion-dress practices constructed bodies and identities. From the sumptuary laws of the Joseon period which saw uses of colour and materials to identify social position and marital status³⁷⁹ to the introduction of the yangbok (Western dress) as a marker of (colonial) modernity, dress in Korea has served as a visible sign of differentiation, marking gender, age, class, and nationality. Michel Foucault reminds us that the body and the subject are produced by disciplinary regulations.³⁸⁰ While he does not analyse fashion practices specifically, his approaches lend a lens to view how regulations in dress and everyday dress practices have historically disciplined Korean bodies. Western garments, such as the tailored suit, were initially introduced to Korea during the Open Port era. This period that succeeded the Treaty of Ganghwa Island was significant in its introduction of modernised material cultures to Korean people,³⁸¹ and as explored through *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* in Chapter One, included the imports of industrially manufactured cottons and the sewing machine – a technology that profoundly shaped the history of the ROK’s industrialisation and Korean women’s labour and domestic life.

Debates in Korean fashion and textile histories often unfold to reveal the tension between modernity and tradition in binary relation, a relation underpinned by Korea’s coloniality. Cultural tradition, as explored in the previous chapter, was used to signify an ‘authentic’ Korean identity that was crucial for the nationalist project. A number of scholars have researched the signification of hanbok and national identities, including Hyung Gu Lynn, Jungtaek Lee, Min-Jung Lee, Min-Ja Kim, Yeseung Lee, and Rebecca Ruhlen. In Lynn’s findings

³⁷⁹ Horlyck, ‘Colour in Korean Textiles’.

³⁸⁰ For further reading see Michel Foucault, ‘Docile Bodies’, in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, 2nd edn (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. 135–69; Jane Tynan, ‘Michel Foucault: Fashioning the Body Politic’, in *Thinking Through Fashion: A Guide to Key Theorists*, ed. by Agnès Rocamora and Anneke Smelik (London, UK: I.B. Tauris & Company, Ltd., 2019), pp. 184–99.

³⁸¹ Jungtaek Lee, ‘The Birth of Modern Fashion in Korea: Sartorial Transition between Hanbok and Yangbok through Production, Mediation and Consumption’, p. 184.

of clothing systems in Korea under colonial modernity, the scholar argues that ‘a new “language” of clothing [...] emerged and diffused’ during the Japanese occupation, which reflected and reinforced shifting paradigms of power, creating a binary system that associated ‘traditional’ Korean hanbok with Korean identities versus Westernised garments associated with modernisation. The term, ‘hanbok’ itself, meaning ‘Korean dress’, only emerged in the late nineteenth century to distinguish itself from Japanese and Western dress.³⁸² While Jungtaek Lee demonstrates that the binary association between traditional hanbok and modern yangbok reductively reinforces the assumption that local dress systems were unchanging and timeless, Lynn highlights how hanbok was understood as a symbolic signifier of Korean identities and ushered new codes of differentiation to Korea.³⁸³

According to both Lynn and Yeseung Lee, during the early period of modernisation, sumptuary laws and colonial mandates discouraged white clothing for Koreans and encouraged Western dress. Hanbok, and specifically white hanbok, became a marker of ethnic identity; used by both the colonial administrators and the national resistance to construct and mobilise Korean identities.³⁸⁴ It functioned for some as a sign of inferiority; Western dress signified one’s acceptance toward the prevailing social norms, which included the colonial and capitalist hierarchies through clothing.³⁸⁵ During the minjung movement of the 1980s, the white hanbok became an ‘ambiguous symbol representing communist agitators, idle student unionists, or the people’s will as sovereign’.³⁸⁶ Exploring feminist activists in Korea in the 2000s, Rebecca Ruhlen finds that the activists ‘deploy[ed] hanbok essentially as costumes in a public performance of

³⁸² Minjee Kim, ‘Hanbok: Dress of Korean Identity’ (presented at the Korean Heritage Symposium, Korean Cultural Society of Boston, 2021) <https://fb.watch/95_79loLFB/> [accessed 25 August 2023].

³⁸³ Jungtaek Lee, ‘The Birth of Modern Fashion in Korea: Sartorial Transition between Hanbok and Yangbok through Production, Mediation and Consumption’, *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 4.2 (2017), 183–209; Lynn.

³⁸⁴ Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’.

³⁸⁵ Several scholars explore the relationship between white hanbok and national resistance. For further reading see Lynn; Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’; Min-Jung Lee and Min-Ja Kim, ‘Dress and Ideology during the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries Korea, 1876-1945’, *International Journal of Costume and Fashion*, 11.1 (2011), 15–33.

³⁸⁶ Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’, p. 273.

political identity'.³⁸⁷ Wearing newer styles of hanbok, the clothing signified a veiled anti-Western critique in the wake of the Asian economic crisis. Ruhlen argues that the meanings of wearing hanbok were complicated by the nationalist agenda which sought to reify Confucian values of women's sexuality onto concepts of beauty and ideals of Korean womanhood.³⁸⁸ In 2013, the Korean government initiated a campaign that allowed tourists free entry into the royal palaces in Seoul when dressed in hanbok. This proliferation of hanbok in modern tourism is described by Millie Creighton and Elias Alexander as 'contemporary Korean identity projections, serving to mediate past, present, and future by positioning the present in relation to a presumed past, while reaffirming that Korean-ness will persist into the future.'³⁸⁹ I understand this to mean that this use of hanbok, forged as a symbol of Koreanness, connects Korean cultural identity and style-fashion-dress to a historical past narrative, while aiming to ensure that that Koreanness (through hanbok) survives in the future.

Building on the previous chapter, which explored official narratives and cultural memories of Korean women through jogakbo, I explore patchwork wrapping bodies through the hanbok and yangbok, exploring the fashion industries, and importantly, the patchwork style-fashion-dress of Korean women. Style-fashion-dress, Carol Tulloch explains, considers the relations in a system of concepts as a practice of precision that 'signifies the multitude of meanings and frameworks that are always "whole-and-part" of dress studies.'³⁹⁰ The term allows us to think about the complicated and multiple interactions between individual agency and collective identities through these relational processes, which necessarily trouble previous prescriptions of 'F'ashion as a Anglo-European system that was distinct from local dress

³⁸⁷ Rebecca N. Ruhlen, 'Korean Alterations: Nationalism, Social Consciousness, and "Traditional" Clothing', in *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress*, ed. by Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkovich, and Carla Jones (London, UK: Berg Publishers, 2003), pp. 117–39 (p. 118).

³⁸⁸ Ruhlen.

³⁸⁹ Millie Creighton and Elias Alexander, 'Hanbok and Korean Identity: An Anthropological View', in *Dress History of Korea: Critical Perspectives on Primary Sources*, ed. by Kyunghee Pyun and Minjee Kim, Digital (London, New York, Oxford, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2023), pp. 188–98 (p. 195).

³⁹⁰ Carol Tulloch, 'Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black', *Fashion Theory*, 14.3 (2010), 361–86 (p. 275).

practices.³⁹¹ Furthermore, it locates agency in the consumption and styling of clothing as well as the production. By mapping the global flows of Korean communities, makers, consumers, and materials during the development of the ROK, I foreground iterations of patchwork style-fashion-dress to explore how the act of wrapping bodies in patchwork and patchwork styles disciplined, constructed, and performed new Korean identities, and to ask how histories of women's domestic and industrial labour contributed to the ROK's national development. I piece together narratives of women's labour and consumption alongside my own family histories to develop patchwork as a decolonial method, suturing together the fragments of cultural memory, contributing, enriching, and identifying new histories of Korean womanhood. I examine how jogakbo adapted to forms of hanbok and yangbok in the growth of the modern fashion industry. Through case studies of Lee Young Hee (1936-2018), Lie Sang Bong, Chunghie Lee, and Chanel, I explore how the use of jogakbo established and symbolised 'traditional' Korea as national narrative, while also highlighting its multiple meanings. Importantly, I foreground the collaborative processes of design, naming the backstage actors that helped shape and produce the cultural memory of patchwork, exploring what Arjun Appadurai describes as the life of commodities.

This chapter also explores the relation between the real and the imagined Korean woman, as I piece together the national narrative of the ROK's reconstruction with the realities of Korean women through my family histories, and the stories of making through the textile and garment industries. Chapter One focused on Korean patchwork in the archive, to map and illustrate how public memory was shaped and constituted by the creative labour of Korean woman and how public, and national memories imagined Korean womanhood. In the

³⁹¹ The 'global turn' in fashion and dress studies includes scholarship that troubles and rethinks the canon of scholarship that located the capital-'F'ashion industry. For further reading see *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*, ed. by Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010); *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity Through Fashion*, ed. by M. Angela Jansen and Jennifer Craik (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2016); *Rethinking Fashion Globalization*, ed. by Sarah Cheang, Erica De Greef, and Yoko Takagi (London, UK: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021).

polyphony of the multiple encounters and voices introduced in the previous chapter, I argued that the form of patchwork itself serves as a potent counter-narrative to nationalist versions of womanhood that have placed women in supporting roles. The history of the ROK was affected by Japanese colonialism, Cold War antagonisms, and the neo-imperial agendas behind US-ROK relations, and thus decolonising womanhood necessarily needs to unsettle the borders and the boundaries of the ROK itself. In exploring the realities of Korean women through style-fashion-dress, this chapter asks how the decorative, protective wrapping of patchwork can be configured on bodies, and asks how patchwork wrapping bodies constitutes Korean womanhood.

Teaching patchwork and values of motherhood

i. Disciplining the ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother’ through sewing

Modernisation during the Open Port period was shaped by the arrival of new technologies, including the sewing machine and industrially woven cottons, which according to Kirk Larsen encouraged the development of local textile industries. Alongside these new machines and materials formed from machine processes, new ideological beliefs were ushered into Korea by the multiple encounters with modernity, including Christian missionaries who brought education and health reforms to the country. The first girl’s school in Korea was founded in 1886 by Mary F. Scranton, a Methodist missionary from the US.³⁹² The school, Ewha Haktang started to provide college courses in 1910, becoming Ewha Women’s University in 1925 (formerly Ewha College). Scranton also established a clinic for women within the Haktang in 1887, which was the first women’s medical institution in Korea.³⁹³

Hyae-weol Choi’s history of Korean women through Christian missionary work traces the development of women’s education reform, revealing how Scranton initially struggled to build her first classroom. Although she sought out upper class women to educate, the tradition of neo-

³⁹² Hyae-weol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 87.

³⁹³ Ji Yeon Byun and Ryung-Ah Lee, ‘The Beginning of Medical Education for Women in Korea: Boguyeogwan’, *The Ewha Medical Journal*, 38.2 (2015), 59–62 (p. 60).

Confucian seclusion prevented them from attending the school. Her first classroom, instead ‘comprised children from impoverished families, daughters of widows, or the children of Koreans who worked for American missionaries.’³⁹⁴ Eventually, as the school became increasingly trusted in the community and publicly recognised, the classroom transformed from a ‘lodging for poor or abandoned children’ into a classroom of ‘widows, concubines, entertainers, and a few palace women’.³⁹⁵ This transformation is significant for histories of Korean womanhood, because missionary schools were initially locations for the impoverished and disenfranchised, but with their growing influence, turned into highly regarded institutions that were filled with the daughters of families with economic means. As the Korean schooling system grew, the ladies of the royal courts and the Korean women of the upper classes educated in missionary schools went on to establish and teach in the local Korean schools. Choi argues that while the first generation of missionaries did establish the first schools for Korean women, it is necessary to examine institutional education as an ideological system engaged with disciplining rituals.³⁹⁶ That is, the belief that education reform necessarily equated to the progressive liberation of women must be critiqued and deconstructed by mapping the ideological agendas that were perpetuated in the schooling itself. Importantly, as outlined in the previous chapter, Choi argues that Korean women were disciplined to become dutiful mothers, and obedient wives, aligning the goals of Christianity with Korean patriarchal values through domestic labour.

Kim Sook Dang’s *Joseon jaebong jeonseo* (*Compendium of Joseon Sewing*), first published in 1925, was a textbook that taught sewing, and handicraft skills as part of the developing curriculum for women’s education. Kim was an educator from the upper classes, who at the time of the publication was a former Pyongyang Girls’ High School teacher and a Sookmyung Girls’

³⁹⁴ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 91.

³⁹⁵ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, pp. 92–93.

³⁹⁶ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways*, p. 3.

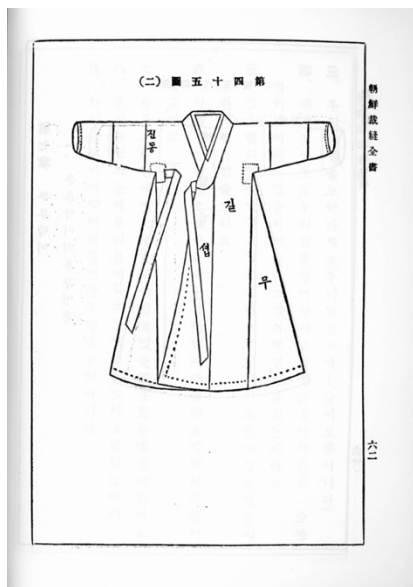


Figure 37. 'Durumagi (front)' in Sook Dang Kim, *Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo*, Reprint (ROK: Minsogwon, 2007) © Jaryojegong minsogwon, all rights reserved.

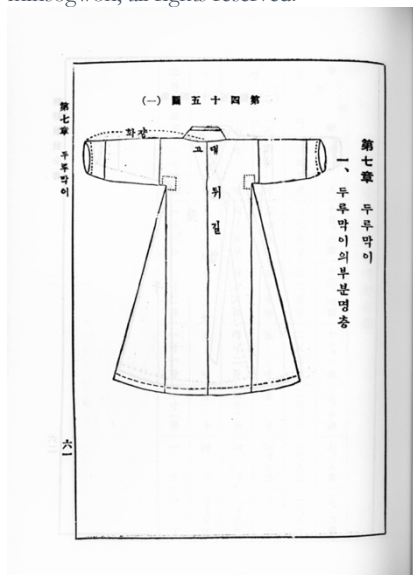


Figure 38. 'Durumagi (back)' in Sook Dang Kim, *Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo*, Reprint (ROK: Minsogwon, 2007) © Jaryojegong minsogwon, all rights reserved.

High School teacher.³⁹⁷ According to professor of fashion design Jaeyoon Yi, new education reforms and this particular text published under the Japanese colonial government reinforced the ideology of the 'Good Wife, Wise Mother', thus 'home economics', including dressmaking and handicraft, became an important subject in school curriculum; it also served as vocational training for Korean women to work in the garment industry.³⁹⁸ The education reforms drove the modernist project, teaching skills related to the technologies of modernisation. In this textbook, which was displayed in the SeMoCA's *'Bojagi, Embracing Daily Life'* exhibition, there were instructions for making jogakbo and patterns for sewing hanbok, with blocks for durumagi (man's overcoat) (fig. 37, 38), jeogori (woman's jacket), chima (woman's skirt), alongside Western garments. The exhibition displayed the specific page instructing the making of jogakbo, as part of the wrapping cloth showcase.

Soon-Young Kim and Jung Ha-Brookshire define the hanbok as '[m]ultiple pieces of square- or rectangular-shaped fabrics [...] sewn together' versus the yangbok, which they

describe as outfits with 'tight-fitting silhouettes, with curved pieces of fabrics utilizing darts for three-dimensional effects when worn.'³⁹⁹ In the textbook's layout of the adult durumagi, which includes two illustrations of the front and the back of the finished garment (fig. 37, 38), and

³⁹⁷ Sook Dang Kim, *Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo*, Reprint (ROK: Hanguk minsokhag jaryo chongseo, 2007).

³⁹⁸ Jaeyoon Yi, 'Textbooks and Textiles: Fashion in East Asia, 1920-1945', *International Journal of Costume and Fashion*, 15.1 (2015), 87-102 (p. 89).

³⁹⁹ Kim and Ha-Brookshire, p. 156.

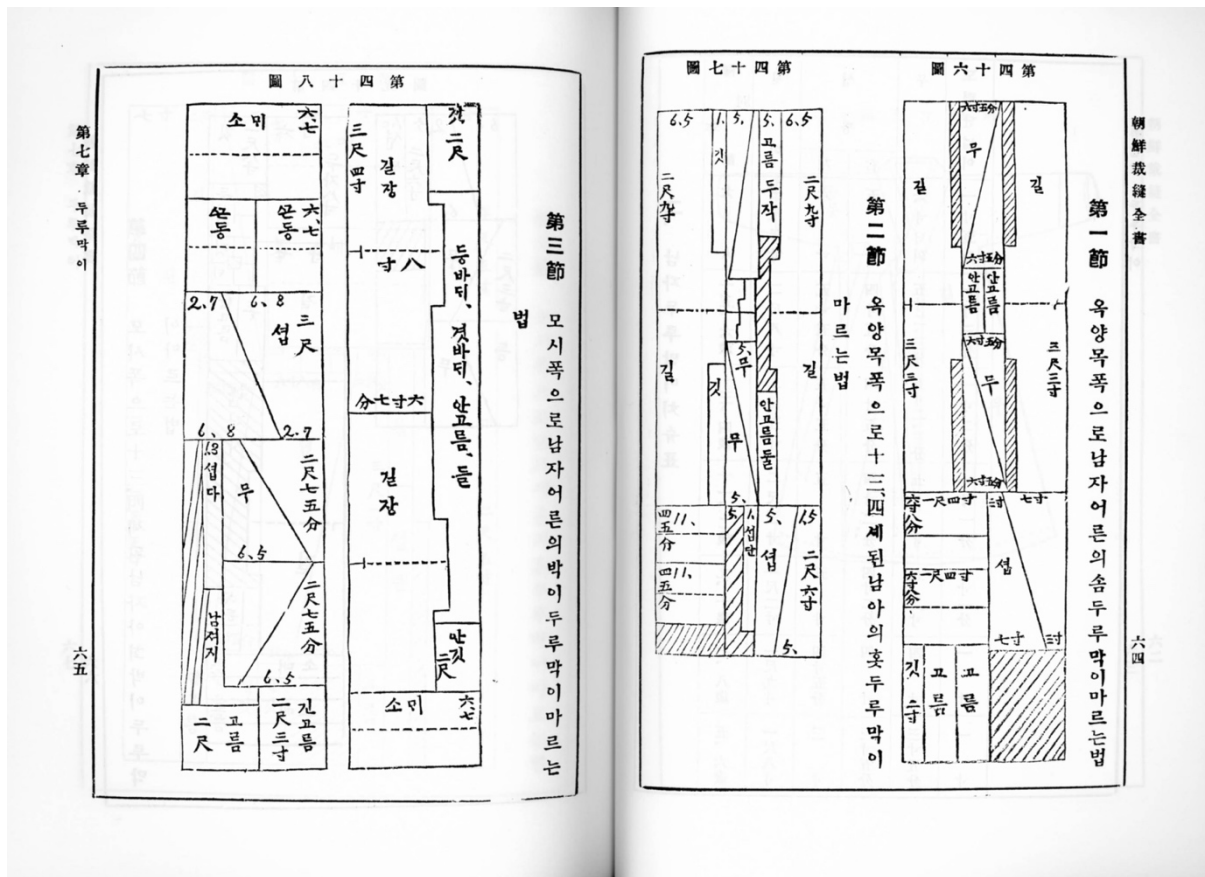


Figure 39. Blocks from R to L: ‘Ogyangmong pogeuro namjae oreunui som durumagi mareuneunbeop (Calico width! adult man’s cotton overcoat instructions)’, ‘Ogyangmong pogeuro sim sam sa syedoen namui hon durumagi mareuneunbeop (Calico width 13-14 year man’s overcoat instructions)’, ‘Mosi pogeuro namjaeoreunui bagi durumagi mareuneunbeop (Ramie width adult man’s outer overcoat instructions)’ in Sook Dang Kim, Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo, Reprint (ROK: Minsogwon, 2007) © Jaryojegong minsogwon, all rights reserved.

several layouts for the necessary pattern pieces using a calico lining and a ramie outer layer (fig. 39, 40), the patterns reveal that the multiple pieces used to make the garment were comprised of predominately rectangular, square, and triangular pieces, corroborating Kim’s and Ha-Brookshire’s definition. While there were some variations to these shapes, such as rectangles with cut-out pieces and other quadrilateral variations, all the pattern pieces were formed of polygonal shapes with no curves. Diagonal lines marked successively together designated the areas of the textile that were not used in the garment’s construction; these pieces were mostly unlabelled. The dashed lines demarcated the folded or creased pieces, that is, pieces that did not need to be cut, but rather folded over on the dashed markings.

In comparison to the yangbok’s tailored jacket, which is defined by pattern pieces that curve and darts that cinch the fabric to mould to the form of the wearer’s body, hanbok

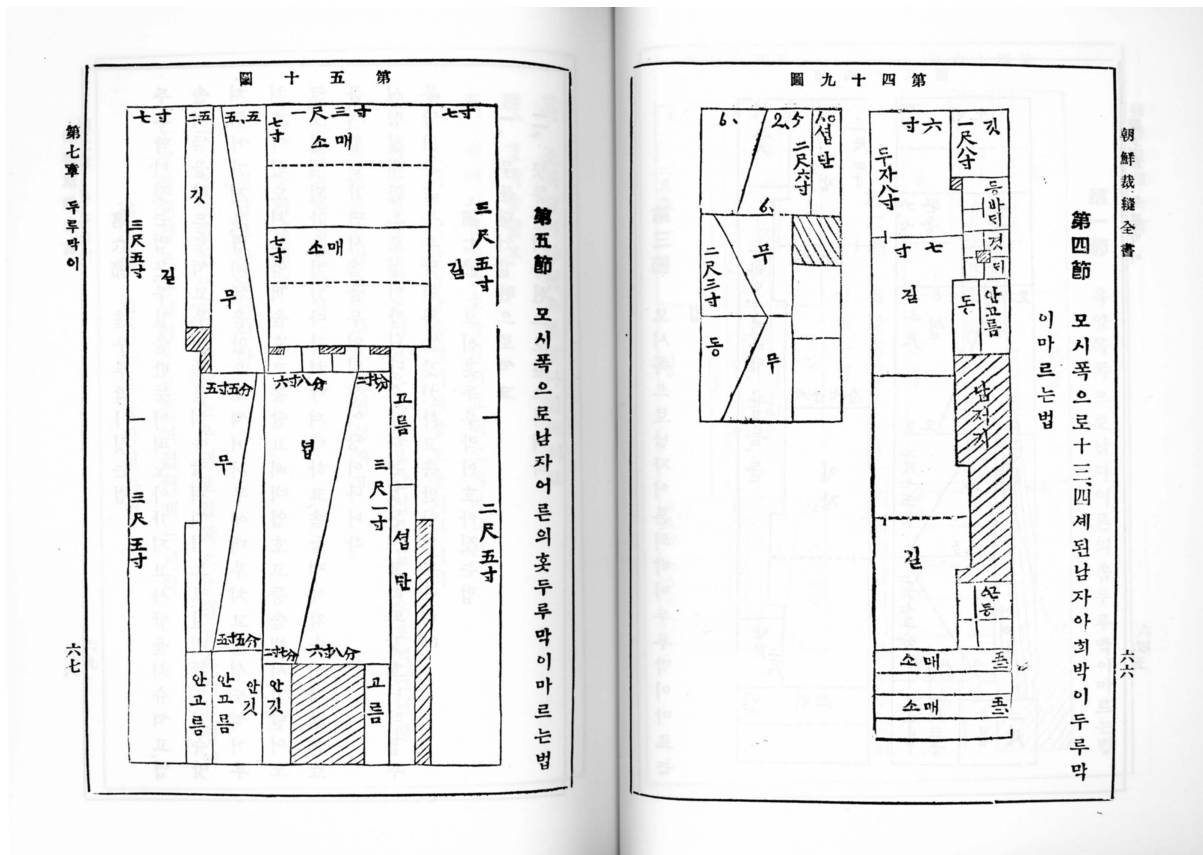


Figure 40. Blocks R to L: ‘Mosi pogeuro sim sam sa syedoen namjaahoe bagi durumagi mareunbeop (Ramie width 13-14 year man’s outer overcoat instructions)’, ‘Mosi pogeuro namjae oreunui hot durumagi mareunbeop (Ramie width adult man’s summertime overcoat instructions)’ in Sook Dang Kim, *Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo*, Reprint (ROK: Minsogwon, 2007) © Jaryojegong minsogwon, all rights reserved.

garments were constructed with polygonal shapes sewn together. Historically, tailoring has been concerned with the human body, and defined body ideals through normalising sizes. Alison Matthews David’s study of nineteenth century tailoring in France reveals how the introduction of statistical data as a science produced a concept of the average man as a body ideal. While in dressing ‘actual, not ideal’ bodies, the role of the tailor adapted garments to consider the ‘quirks of the asymmetrical human being’ and ‘abnormal deviations’ that were labelled such due to the systemic sciences of averaging measurements, the output was a fashionable silhouette that through the standardisation of sizes, standardized body ideals.⁴⁰⁰ Accordingly, ‘[a] mathematically precise fit was central to the marketing of tailoring as an “exact” science.’⁴⁰¹ Simply put, tailoring

⁴⁰⁰ Alison Matthews David, ‘Made to Measure? Tailoring and the “normal” Body in Nineteenth-Century France’, in *Histories of the Normal and the Abnormal: Social and Cultural Histories of Norms and Normativity*, ed. by Waltraud Ernst (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 142–64 (p. 142).

⁴⁰¹ Matthews David, p. 143.

reinforced a system of body ideals through the standardisation of measurements. Tailoring thus, was marketed as a science, but in reality, the tailor had to adapt and adjust their craft to suit the

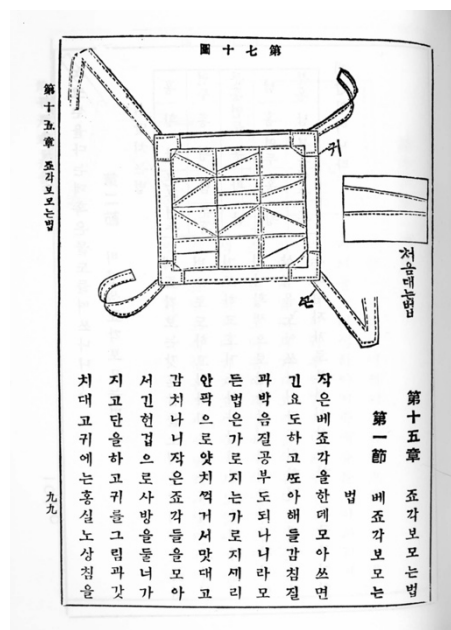


Figure 41. 'Jogakbo moneun beop (How to Collect/Make Jogakbo)' in Sook Dang Kim, *Joseon Jaebong Jeonseo*, Reprint (ROK: Minsogwon, 2007) © Jaryojegong minsogwon, all rights reserved.

asymmetries and deviations of real bodies. In contrast to yangbok, the shapes composing hanbok were defined by geometries related to the woven fabric.

There is a paucity of research exploring the relationship between hanbok cutting and sustainability, but it is clear from the pattern layouts that there was little waste in cutting these garments. Instructions for making jogakbo in *Compendium of Joseon Sewing* was listed under a section of accessories related to dress. The patchworked cloth was used for both storing clothing and as an instruction of how to learn sewing. The two-page

instructions include 'Jogakbo moneun beop (How to Collect/Make Jogakbo)' (fig. 41) and 'Bidansaeng jogakbo mandeuneun beop (How to Create Silk-Coloured Jogakbo)', with a diagram of a finished iteration of jogakbo and three pieces to the right on how to pattern the individual pieces. Each piece on the jogakbo was illustrated with dashed lines to mark the visible stitching as decorative ornamentation.

The instructions demonstrate how to gather small pieces of leftover fabric together, illustrating various sewing and stitching exercises that could be taught to children, with the methods not only involving how to align the edges of fabric together, but different sewing techniques, including using different colours for embroidered embellishments. An additional page includes a diagram for placing colours that both follow and teach compositional harmonies derived from Confucianism. These instructions reveal that making jogakbo was a tool to teach children how to sew. In discussing the gynotechnics of weaving, Francesca Bray argues that through women's work, 'women produced not only objects of [material and social] value but also

persons of virtue. Learning textile skills inculcated the fundamental female values of diligence, frugality, order, and self-discipline.⁴⁰² In other words, the practices of weaving, and making textiles shaped and disciplined women through ritualised labour practices, that not only taught material skills, but social values related to persistence, conservation, regulation and restraint.

In early missionary education, Korean women were taught domestic duties, reflecting, and reinforcing the ideology of the ‘Wise Mother, Good Wife’. Framed through Christian modernity, Hyaeweol Choi maps the development of modern Korean womanhood through a complicated interaction between Korean patriarchal values from the neo-Confucian period, Japanese coloniality, and Christian gender ideals of Victorian womanhood.⁴⁰³ While it was believed that American Protestant values liberated women from the so-called oppressive confines of neo-Confucian regulations, Choi argues that the ‘Wise Mother, Good Wife’ trope was a transcultural modern construction shaped by Victorian ideas of domesticity,⁴⁰⁴ and as Yi contends, an ideology also espoused by Japanese colonial education. As mapped in the previous chapter, Christian women were taught to be the role models of Christian households, shaping the family through domestic labour and the desire for motherhood. The sewing machine, as evidenced in the stitching of *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork* from the AMNH then, and the entries from Mattie Noble’s diaries reveal the introduction of mechanised technologies during the Open Port period that transformed the shape and texture of cloth itself. These technologies were likewise critical to the colonial project, for it was imperative to shape Korea through modernisation.

ii. Memories of my mother/my mother’s memories

In the summer of 2019, I was back in Toronto, to help my mother unpack around twenty to twenty-five cardboard boxes that were stored in the seldomly seen spaces of my

⁴⁰² Bray, p. 189.

⁴⁰³ Hyaeweol Choi, ‘Ideology: “Wise Mother, Good Wife”’, in *Gender Politics at Home and Abroad: Protestant Modernity in Colonial-Era Korea* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 36–72 (p. 39).

⁴⁰⁴ Hyaeweol Choi, ‘Ideology: “Wise Mother, Good Wife”’, p. 41.

parents' furnace room, in order to sort, order, discard, and archive their contents. My parents were moving into a smaller space, despite previously upgrading to a larger abode after my childhood and adolescent home, thus they needed to cull the excess materials. These boxes were a combination of my belongings from my early twenties, which included accumulated kitchenware, (text)books, clothing, accessories, and DVDs from my various residences during university, as well as the not-yet-placed things from our previous home. Some of these material memories were easy to categorise and mostly discard: the mass-produced Ikea products, the vintage 50s A-line dresses I no longer wore, the copies of *In the Mood for Love* and *Badlands* that I could no longer watch (due to my lack of DVD drive), and the many books that were too heavy to transport and I thought I no longer needed. These were already disposable items that I had left behind (when I moved to London in 2007). But as we stood amongst the unpacked contents of the not-yet-placed materials, I only now realise, that we were sorting through a section of our family's archive.

There were childhood journals with scrawled, illegible writing and school notebooks with fading multi-coloured covers, varieties of painted and drawn illustrations of dinosaurs, animals, and families on newsprint paper with frayed edges, browning and tattered report cards, small plastic trophies that resembled precious metals from my brother's various years in baseball little leagues, a lemon-yellow ribbon badge marking my time at a summer camp stored in a silver foiled shoebox that I had made for a diorama project, and other artefacts that had accumulated a light patina of dust. At the time, I did not deem these materials to be of any significance, and I started to pile them into a black plastic refuse bag. Yet now, as I write this reflection five years later, I recognise that this was not only a portion of my family's archive, but it was a collection defined and shaped by my mother's sentimental memories as our mother. These were everyday objects, the ordinary things of our lives, which represented a 'hermetic world'⁴⁰⁵ of our⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ Stewart, p. 152.

⁴⁰⁶ I reference here my brother and I.

childhood, untouched by our leaving home. She protested as I designated materials to discard. I had a difficult time in my childhood, and such souvenirs of my past revealed a time I chose to forget. Or perhaps this was the hubris of youth or an imperative of modernity – imagining the possibilities of a future disconnected from the past. I recall her saying that it was my personal archive for when I was older, she was the custodian of such keepsakes because they belonged to the history of my life.

The Family Archive: Exploring Family Identities, Memories and Stories through Curated Personal Possessions project⁴⁰⁷ explored ‘how individual families maintain their own “archives” outside institutional structures, and the meanings with which these archives are imbued.’⁴⁰⁸ The project’s findings argued that the personal meanings and family attachments associated with everyday objects can build a meaningful form of heritage that can complicate and enrich our understanding of histories beyond official narratives and institutions.⁴⁰⁹ These intimate materials cannot be objectively read through the institutional frameworks that define museum knowledges or expertise, these things belong to a decolonial life praxis that recognises that knowledge is not an objective truth, but an experience of the personal and the private that cannot be transferred.⁴¹⁰ In these experiences, these microhistories of Korean womanhood through my mother’s and my memories, constitute the ontologies of our re-existence. The project’s definition of family included ‘any grouping of people with a shared bond or identity, whether as friends, housemates or blood relatives, living in the same space or geographically dispersed.’⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ This was an AHRC-funded project initiated by Elizabeth Gloyn, a reader in the Department of Classics, from 2014 to 2015.

⁴⁰⁸ Anna Woodham and others, ‘We Are What We Keep: The “Family Archive”, Identity and Public/Private Heritage’, *Heritage & Society*, 10.3 (2017), 203–20.

⁴⁰⁹ Woodham and others, p. 204.

⁴¹⁰ I reference here Humberto Maturana’s foundational article on the biological foundation of cognition quoted in the last chapter of *On Decoloniality*: ‘Man knows and his capacity to know depends on his biological integrity; furthermore, he knows that he knows. As a basic psychological and, hence, biological function *cognition* guides his handling of the universe and *knowledge* gives certainty to his acts; *objective knowledge* seems possible and through *objective knowledge* the universe appears systematic and predictable. Yet *knowledge* as an experience is something personal and private that cannot be transferred’. For further reading see Humberto Maturana, *Biology of Cognition: Biological Computer Laboratory Research Report BCL 9.0* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1970) IN Walter D. Mignolo, ‘Closing Remarks’, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), pp. 227–44 (pp. 239–42).

⁴¹¹ Woodham and others, p. 206.

While I note that these explorations through my family archives, using autoethnography maps a microhistory of my blood relatives, the potential inclusivity of this definition recognises the radical potential of imagining the collective experiences of Korean womanhood and the Korean diaspora as one of familial bonds.

Amongst the boxes of our family belongings, my mother had kept neatly folded in a large clear vacuum-packed storage bag both my brother and my baby blankets. Protected from dust and vermin, my familiar soft pink quilted blanket with two representations of sheep appliquéd to the center sat folded on top of the bigger patchwork quilt beneath, encased in the plastic bag. I recall Svetlana Alpers's argument here, for she notes that the glass cases of museums transform cultural objects into art, and the museum's gaze is one that privileges seeing.⁴¹² The sight of our blankets, displayed in this clear bag, triggered memories of my childhood, and particularly memories of touch – of being swaddled, carried, cared for, attended to, and protected as a baby and young child. Francesca Bray reminds us that (the making of) cloth has long been 'associated with human life and fertility'⁴¹³, in many ways, as I suppose art does, the presentation of these blankets allowed me to engage in a form of world-making that was a representation of reality, and perhaps not necessarily reality itself.

When I opened the bag – several years later and not in front of my mother – there was an overwhelming putrid, chemical stench that emerged from the bag. I speculate that this was the accumulation of the toxic smells of naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene, common pesticides that are found in mothballs.⁴¹⁴ This odour clung to the blankets as I lifted them out of the sealed bag, swaddling the textiles in a poison used to protect them against vermin, and now from further use. My brother's baby blanket was a 128 x 145 cm rectangular quilt with a patchworked

⁴¹² Alpers.

⁴¹³ Bray, p. 176.

⁴¹⁴ For further reading see *What You Should Know About Mothballs: Protecting Your Children and Educating Childcare Providers*, Department of Health and Hospitals (Louisiana: The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, 11 June 2021) <https://web.archive.org/web/20210611152526/https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Center-EH/envepi/Pest/Documents/Mothball_Fact_Sheet.pdf> [accessed 9 August 2023].

hexagonal pattern that was enclosed in two 6 cm thick borders on the front and was faced with a cornflower blue with white polka dot piece of fabric that was 128 x 145 cm (fig. 42).



Figure 42. Photograph of *My brother's baby blanket* taken in 2023. Toronto, Canada: Yu Family Archive. Photograph by Mikael Cosmo. © Mikael Cosmo, all rights reserved.

The fabrics were predominantly composed of machine-woven cotton-poly blends, with patterns that were printed with what was most likely a cylinder process and screen print. The quilt was machine-stitched together and stuffed with a wadding that I could imagine was most likely a cotton-poly blend – although I did not open the contents of the quilt to confirm this. The front of the blanket was composed of a patchworked hexagonal pattern that used thirty-nine multicoloured hexagons that were each pieced together with six pieces of various geometric, floral and polka patterns sewn to each solid-coloured hexagon to resemble flowers. Each flower was then pieced together with white hexagons between. On the underside of the quilt, there were

visible machine-stitched lines composing a 6 cm rectangle from the border, another 12 cm from the border, and there were also visible machine-stitches around each hexagonal flower. This is where the quilting was reinforced. On the front side, top corner, there was a small label attached which spelled ‘Penggwon Ibul’ (Penguin Blankets) with the subtitles noting ‘isangeogin ibul’ (fig. 43), which translates to ‘ideal’ or ‘reliable blanket’ and the name of the design company: ‘Beomasa’.

Bojagi, according to O’Young Lee,⁴¹⁵ was used for carrying around babies. In Joy Hendry’s *Wrapping Cultures*, she references Lee’s work through her exploration of ‘furoshiki’, highlighting how the wrapping cloths ‘contrasted with pushing prams’ as a practice of carrying that had recently spread to the Western world.⁴¹⁶ This ready-made, commercially-produced blanket, which was gifted to my mother by her mother, was a transcultural iteration of the wrapping cloth tradition, shaped by technologies of industrialisation and forms that descended



Figure 43. Close-up photograph of My brother’s baby blanket taken in 2023. Toronto, Canada: Yu Family Archive. Photograph is author’s own.

from eighteenth century British patchwork patterning.⁴¹⁷ The blanket also traces a genealogy of motherhood forming textile memories through textiles gifted from mother to daughter that ‘trac[e] a female genealogy in a patrilineal culture.’⁴¹⁸ Preserved in my mother’s family archive, it was a keepsake, a

⁴¹⁵ This is most likely Korea’s first Minister of Culture, O-Young Lee, who wrote about the wrapping cloth culture in Huh Dong Hwa’s *Bojagi’s Simple Elegance*. For further reading see previous chapter and O-Young Lee, ‘On Wrapping Cloths’.

⁴¹⁶ O’Young Lee, *Smaller Is Better: Japan’s Mastery of the Miniature*, ed. by R.N. Huey (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984); Joy Hendry, *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation, and Power in Japan and Other Societies* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 34.

⁴¹⁷ According to the Illinois State Museum Society, the earliest known hexagon quilt ‘was made in England in 1770. Hexagon became one the most popular patterns in England by 1830.’ For further reading see ‘Pieced Quilts: Hexagon’, *Keeping Us in Stitched: Quilts & Quilters*, 2000

<https://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/art/htmls/ks_piece_hex.html#:~:text=History%20of%20Hexagon%20patterns,block%20called%20the%20Hexagon%20pattern.> [accessed 28 August 2023].

⁴¹⁸ Bray, p. 176.

souvenir of her private emotional memories as our mother.

The sociologist, Sherry Turkle, describes evocative objects as ‘underscoring the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things.’⁴¹⁹ By viewing our material worlds through the connection between intellectual and emotional observations, Turkle draws on the non-instrumental descriptions of things to explore the multiple and fluid roles that objects play in our lives. When the director of the History of Material Texts at the University of Pennsylvania, Peter Stallybrass, lost his friend, Allon White, he ruminated on the power of textiles – clothes specifically – to ‘receive the human imprint’, to be ‘shaped by our touch’.⁴²⁰ Describing how the smell of people permeate clothing and cloth, Stallybrass illuminates how our clothes contain our literal embodiment, carrying ‘the absent body, memory, [and] genealogy’.⁴²¹ To be clear, my brother is alive, but these objects (my blanket included) are imbued with the memories of our childhood. After airing the bag and the blankets out, the diffused scent also became familiar – moth balls that reminded me of my grandparents’ closets; it is certainly strange to associate memories of them with what I now recognize as toxic pesticides. As I lifted and cradled the blankets carefully to observe them, I noticed that there were no visible alterations or stains to the quilts, although there was some consistent pilling on the fabrics – little balls of fabric matter, collecting together. Together, my brother and my blankets, in their blue and pink palettes respectively, served as a record of gendered colour histories of the late twentieth century.

iii. *Paeja (baby’s vest)* at the SeMoCA

Paeja (baby’s vest) (Object No. 2018-D-~~3~~-2417) was donated to the SeMoCA as part of Huh Dong Hwa’s collection. The garment was labelled with a different name in Huh’s various

⁴¹⁹ Sherry Turkle, ‘Introduction: The Things That Matter’, in *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*, ed. by Sherry Turkle (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 3–10 (p. 5).

⁴²⁰ Peter Stallybrass, ‘Worn Worlds: Clothes, Mourning and the Life of Things’, in *The Textile Reader*, ed. by Jessica Hemmings (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), pp. 68–88 (p. 69).

⁴²¹ Stallybrass, p. 74.



Figure 44. Overhead photograph of *Paeja* (Baby's Vest) (Object No. 2018-D-^㉔-2417). Unlisted Maker, c. 19th century. *Paeja* (baby's vest) (Object No. 2018-D-^㉔-2417). 27 x 34 cm patchworked silk and calico lining. Seoul, ROK: Huh Dong Hwa collection, Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA). Photograph is author's own. Courtesy of Seoul Museum of Craft Art (SeMoCA). © SeMoCA, all rights reserved.

publications, including as *Baby's CHOGLAK jacket* in *The Wonder Cloth*.⁴²² The design was composed of a checkerboard pattern composed of one hundred and seventy-four pieces of multi-coloured silk with a taupe calico twill lining, a black calico twill forming a piping on the vest and the collar which formed the body of the vest, there were two pieces of red in woven silk forming fastening bands which tied to two small taupe calico twill tabs, and an appliquéd red silk label on the back with embroidered text that read 'Man Many Precious Wealth Life' in Korean hanja (*fig. 44*). Each of the squares was approximately 3 x 2.5 cm. The front of the vest measured 12 x 25 cm, and the back panel 26 x 30 cm, with the collar measuring approximately 2 cm in depth. The red straps measured 4 x 38 cm, and each one was folded and seamed from the inside.

Each stitch seemed to be hand-sewn, with no evidence of the taut, precise mechanical finishing of machine technology; the embroideries – specifically, the hanja script and the small triangles that composed on the border of the collar – were sewn using a hand-stitching

⁴²² Huh, *The Wonder Cloth*, p. 66.

‘KkoJipKi’ or ‘KkoGepKi’ technique⁴²³ in lustrous silk threads. This style is similar to a satin stitch technique, which uses hand embroidery stitches to fill patterns. According to design historian Soon-young Kim, triangle shapes were often found as decorative motifs on the edges of bojagi, and specifically on the decoration of children’s dresses, as they were thought to be protective symbols against evil.⁴²⁴ The translation of the script on the vest implied that it was most likely made for the celebration of a male child.

Confucianism was introduced to Korea during the seventh century, but it was not until the twelfth century that ‘Korean scholars had begun to internalize a Confucian worldview’.⁴²⁵ The Confucianisation of Korean society, that is, the use of Confucianism as a civilising process, evolved during the Joseon dynasty, when ‘the patriarchal family structure combined with strict patrilineality’ was shaped by orthodox Confucian views.⁴²⁶ While feminist scholars of Confucian womanhood have argued that women were active agents in the negotiations of these constricting ideologies, the desire for a son was a clear reflection of this social order. In patrilineal societies, the family is structured through a recorded genealogy from fathers to sons. According to the historian, Mark Peterson, Confucian ritual texts listed the offense of not bearing a son as a listed reason for divorce, thus women who could bear no children or only daughters were shamefully sent back to their families.⁴²⁷ Prior to the seventh century, daughters were able to inherit properties, and family genealogies were recorded according to the order the child was born, but during the Confucianisation of Korea, daughters were eventually excluded from these practices. As the androcentric nationalism in the ROK sought to retrieve an ‘authentic Korea’ through a

⁴²³ Chunghee Lee translates this technique as ‘raised embellishment’. There is a spelling discrepancy in her book between ‘KkoJipKi’ and ‘KkoGepKi’. She describes this technique as a “pinched” decoration’. For further reading see Chunghee Lee, *Bojagi & Beyond II*, p. 118.

⁴²⁴ Soon-young Kim, ‘Korean Wrapping Cloths as a Decorative Art’, *Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, 33.12 (2009), 1883–96 (p. 1886).

⁴²⁵ Ko, Haboush, and Piggott, pp. 9–12.

⁴²⁶ JaHyun Kim Haboush, ‘Versions and Subversions: Patriarchy and Polygamy in Korean Narratives’, in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. by Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Joan R. Piggott (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 279–304 (p. 279).

⁴²⁷ Peterson, pp. 33–34.

lineage to neo-Confucian values, the desires for sons in the ROK remained as a preference for parents until the 2000s.⁴²⁸

While I read the relation between the *Paeja* (*baby's vest*) and my brother's baby blanket as a celebration for sons, I also read the gifting of the blanket from my grandmother to my mother as textiles that can trace a female genealogy.⁴²⁹ Francesca Bray argues that the passing down of a wedding dress from mother to daughter records women's histories. Importantly, I foreground this *Paeja* (*Baby's Vest*) alongside my brother's baby blanket to reflect on the importance of motherhood and family memories represented and kept through textiles. Patchwork expresses the time and care for making and constructing garments.⁴³⁰ Youngmin Lee, the bojagi artist, emphasised to me that making these forms were a labour of love with 'every single hand-stitch [representing] wishes for someone's happiness.'⁴³¹ As there were no acquisition records for *Paeja* (*Baby's Vest*), except for a note that lists its making during the nineteenth century, it was difficult to discern whether it was the child's mother, family members, or perhaps servants in the household who made the garment. Yet, the laboured practice of making itself expressed care and celebration for the life that it adorned in the hand-crafted stitchwork. These patchwork objects were the souvenirs of motherhood.

Material memories of modernisation

i. Industrialisation and the garment industry

⁴²⁸ Demographic research on 'son preference' in the ROK reads the sex ratio at birth (SRB), and the statistics of sex-selective abortions. In Eleanor Jawon Choi and Jisoo Hwang's 2020 essay, 'Transition of Son Preference: Evidence from South Korea', they found that in 2007 the SRB experienced a decline toward son preference, reaching a 'natural range.' The statisticians found that sex-selective abortions declined in the 2000s, and they argue that '[e]conomic growth, policies promoting gender equality in education and the labor market, the extension of public pensions, and family planning policies would have all played a role in reducing the child gender effect' in the ROK. For further reading see Eleanor Jawon Choi and Jisoo Hwang, 'Transition of Son Preference: Evidence from South Korea', *Demography*, 57.2 (2020), 627–52.

⁴²⁹ Bray, p. 176.

⁴³⁰ Soon-young Kim, 'Korean Wrapping Cloths as a Decorative Art', p. 1886.

⁴³¹ Youngmin Lee, interviewed by Christin Yu about jogakbo and bojagi practices, 28 October 2020. See Appendix E for transcript.

The consequence of the geopolitical partition of Korea in 1945 was not only the division of geographies, but it also resulted in the fragmentation of families. My father's father left his family to serve as a guerrilla fighter for the north, not knowing of the consequences of his actions, nor that he would not return. His two younger siblings remained behind with my grandmother, who at the time was pregnant with my father. Bruce Cumings writes about the partition of Korea as a US military strategy. In his essay, 'A Murderous History of Korea' he maps the military logic that unfolded 'the day after Nagasaki was obliterated, [when] John J. McCloy of the [US] War Department asked Dean Rusk and a colleague to go into a spare office and think about how to divide Korea. They chose the 38th parallel, and three weeks later 25,000 American combat troops entered southern Korea to establish a military government.'⁴³² Two US military officials imagined a border, tracing a line across a map, that then enacted the division of Korea – a country being torn into two geopolitical fragments. This imagining of partition became a lived reality for Korean people, whose families were separated, including my own.

As my father grew up, he recalled how he was indebted to the women around him, who protected, worked, and supported him. Cho Haejoang describes Korean women of my grandmother's generation as women following traditional Confucian values that followed patrilineal ideals, where '[w]omen were expected to be wise, hardworking, and competent in taking care of the extended family and orchestrating communal living, but their self-sacrificing was recognized and appreciated [...] the mother was at the center of the family, taking care of everything from supporting the family to educating her children, all while preserving her husband's face.'⁴³³ The societal expectation shouldered women with the burden of preserving androcentric values, while serving the ROK's nationalist idealism through their labour. Of my grandfather's remaining siblings, my great-aunt, Kim Bong Kyu's memories serve as a record for the development of the textile industries in Seoul in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴³² Cumings, 'A Murderous History of Korea', p. 18.

⁴³³ Cho Haejoang, p. 171.

In an interview I conducted with my great-aunt in February 2022, she recalled the lack of other opportunities that led her to jobs in different garment factories, which required no formal education. She remembered how her unni (older sister/friend)⁴³⁴ in her community invited her to work as a sewing machine technician. While she did not know how to sew initially, she remembered practicing on the machine at her friend's house during lunch breaks. She recalled:

It wasn't using a step pedal, but it was motorised. If you made a mistake, you could cut your hand open, so I initially I wasn't allowed to do it. But I tried it slowly, and it worked. I began to practice on trouser hemlines, then she encouraged and taught me further. I learnt from there, and then went on to bigger factories. So then I worked, from that first step, learning little by little. I did not make clothes, but soldiers' hats, because it was war time.⁴³⁵

The cease fire treaty was signed in 1953 to halt the fighting of the Korean War, but in the decades after, the ROK was governed by a succession of military regimes, which saw the development of the country as a militarised state. My great-aunt was seventeen when she began working as a garment worker in 1957.

She continued

[i]t was an incredibly difficult time to live. I had no brother,⁴³⁶ your grandmother took your father and went to live with her family. When [your father] was really young, we were all together, but as he grew older, your grandmother took him to live with her family in the countryside for many years. I could not make a living, but I had to eat and live. We rented a room in a share house, and I went to work. We still could not make rent, even though I was working. I also had to get your great uncle educated. If he wanted to go to school, we had to make money. Education was not free, even middle school you had to pay for it. I worked so I could send your great uncle, my younger brother, to school. In the past, women could work and stay at home, whereas men should be educated. It was not just me, but many women worked so they could educate their brothers. Men went to school, then they went to the military, and women had to work. Even our mothers, they were in the markets selling goods.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ While the literal translation of unni is sister, according to Confucian relational norms in language, it also refers anyone of the same gender who is in the age range of an older sister.

⁴³⁵ Kim Bong Kyu, interviewed by Christin Yu about sewing work and plastic surgery experiences, 13 February 2022. See Appendix F for transcript.

⁴³⁶ In the interview she refers to having no grandfather, although in the context of the conversation she seemed to be referring to my grandfather, her older brother.

⁴³⁷ Kim Bong Kyu.

Built from anti-Communist and anti-Japanese policies, South Korea initially adopted an ideology of militarised nationalism to legitimise its authoritarian rule.⁴³⁸ During Syngman Rhee's leadership, under the First Republic (1948 to 1960), the Korean Military Academy was established.⁴³⁹ Seungsook Moon described the state nationalism as '[a]ndrocentrism tinted with militarism'.⁴⁴⁰ That is, it was a national identity constructed around the community of men, where women's lives were governed under a hierarchal order enforced by traditional Korean values of Confucianism that were further solidified through military conscription for men. My great-aunt's experiences and practices reflected a national ideology that served to challenge the emerging democratic movement. While she never expressed her explicit beliefs in these gender norms regarding education, she did refer to the lack of opportunity for her own schooling.

In 1961, after the military coup d'état that overthrew the democratically elected government that succeeded Rhee in 1960, General Park Chung Hee began his three decades of ruling as a military dictatorship. During this time, rapid industrialisation served as a priority for national economic development. Industrialisation was viewed as a national imperative, which could support the building of a strong state to counter North Korean antagonism. The rise of the garment and textile industries in the 1960s grew from export-centered products that were vital for the ROK's reconstruction and reindustrialisation, reintroducing Korea to a capitalist world system dominated by American policies.⁴⁴¹ Dennis McNamara and Carter Eckert map the origins of Korean capitalism to the Japanese colonial occupation.⁴⁴² Eckert names the Gyongsong Spinning and Weaving Company as the first publicly opened company. It opened in

⁴³⁸ Seungsook Moon, 'Begetting the Nation: The Androcentric Discourse of National History and Tradition in South Korea', in *Dangerous Women: Gender & Korean Nationalism*, ed. by Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), pp. 33–66 (p. 35).

⁴³⁹ Moon, 'Begetting the Nation: The Androcentric Discourse of National History and Tradition in South Korea', p. 44.

⁴⁴⁰ Moon, 'Begetting the Nation: The Androcentric Discourse of National History and Tradition in South Korea', p. 44.

⁴⁴¹ Dennis McNamara, p. 392.

⁴⁴² For further reading see Dennis L. McNamara, *Colonial Origins of Korean Enterprise 1910-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eckert.

1919 and most likely sold cords and belts for hanbok, which were woven from cotton yarns.⁴⁴³ Once under American suzerainty, however, the textile industries saw their reestablishment through ‘a shift toward American markets for raw materials, credit and consumer and intermediate goods [...] and South Korean textile exports.’⁴⁴⁴ The protectionist policies of the newly formed South Korean regime conflicted with the open market economics of American politics, but the ROK’s textile industries were nevertheless reformed under the assistance of American aid bureaucracy, which had little intervention from American business.⁴⁴⁵

Having worked during this early period of industrial development, my great-aunt described her long days as moving from one factory to the next on a piece-based income:

It’s become a habit, so I still wake up at five am. I would wake up at dawn and walk to work before six am. I walked four to five kilometres to work, at least one hour. The ones that lived farther [from the factory] would have to walk further. If we didn’t arrive by 8 am, we couldn’t work. We got paid per piece. If we made 10, we got paid for 10. We went early and worked late. We had to pack our lunches, we didn’t have time to eat before we left, so we were hungry. We ate a little on our breaks. It was a hard life, and it wasn’t just me. This younger generation is fortunate because they don’t have to work like that, they have parents that supported them. They are fortunate to not be hungry.⁴⁴⁶

Gaeksong, which translates to self-employed contract workers,⁴⁴⁷ comprised the majority of the labourers in the export-centered manufacturing period of the 1970s and 1980s. Seo Young Park’s research foregrounds how this precarious labour system ‘made it impossible for garment workers to secure stable employment with benefits and insurance, as well as to claim legal protection.’⁴⁴⁸ My great-aunt’s experiences contribute to Korean labour histories that saw women working to support their brothers, sons, and nephews in an effort to reconstruct the nation, creating the foundation for the development of the Dongdaemun textile industries, and labour movements that eventually propelled the democracy movements. While gendered and nationalist

⁴⁴³ Eckert, pp. 28–29.

⁴⁴⁴ Dennis McNamara, p. 330.

⁴⁴⁵ Dennis McNamara, pp. 392–332.

⁴⁴⁶ Kim Bong Kyu.

⁴⁴⁷ Seo Young Park, *Stitching the 24-Hour City: Life, Labour, and the Problem of Speed in Seoul* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2021), p. 55.

⁴⁴⁸ Seo Young Park, p. 55.

narratives have identified such women as ‘industrial warriors’ whose bodies were mobilised as cheap labour,⁴⁴⁹ my great-aunt’s story also articulates an ambivalence toward these opportunities, and a resolve for her life that was conditioned by her circumstances. Through her sewing, she could survive, forming a life from what remained behind after the partition and war. It is a fragment of this history of patchwork that sews together leftover pieces, which not only reflects the stories of creativity, but also of women’s labour and survival.

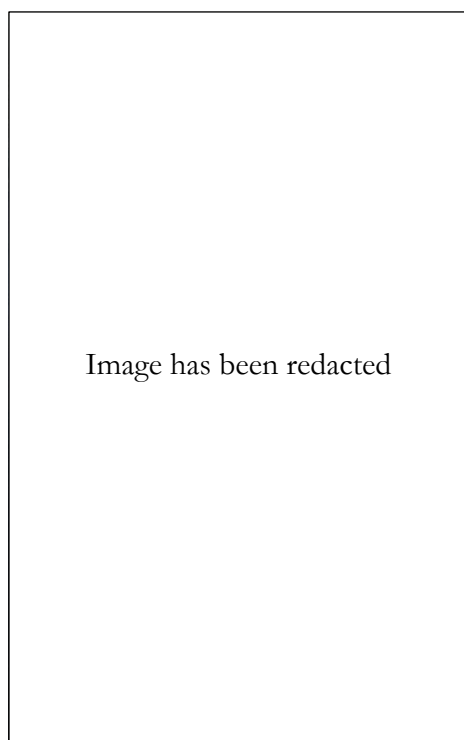
The Dongdaemun textile industries, including the Changsin-Sungin home factory area, are remembered in national memory as supporting the rapid economic development of the ROK. Women’s labour and their bodies supported the economic recovery, driving the industrialisation, growth and national rebuilding of the ROK, particularly under the authoritarian governments between the 1960s to 1980s. They were also a significant stage for labour movements. During my research trips between 2018 to 2022, I identified this area as a significant location for cultural tourism that signified the national memory of the ROK’s industrial development and modernisation. The multiple tourist destinations included the Dongdaemun Design Plaza and Park (DDPP), the Gwangjang Market, the Dongdaemun Fashion Market, and the Iumpium Sewing History Museum. Analysing the urban regeneration of the Changsin-Sungin Area, development research by Jiyoun Kim and Mihye Cho argues that the renewal of the area promotes a ‘sewing village narrative [that] symbolizes both the spatial proximity and coeval existence between industrial and post-industrial Seoul.’⁴⁵⁰ I understand this to mean that the space is occupied by the physical locations of production, and simultaneously, the symbolic histories of cultural memory which serve as tourist attractions. By the late 1980s, South Korean firms and foreign companies producing in the ROK began to move and outsource their factories

⁴⁴⁹ Hagen Koo, ‘The Dilemmas of Empowered Labour in Korea: Korean Workers in the Face of Global Capitalism’, *Asian Survey*, 40.2, 227–50; Seung-Kyung Kim, *Class Struggle or Family Struggle? The Lives of Women Factory Workers in South Korea* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997) IN Park, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁰ Jiyoun Kim and Mihye Cho, ‘Creating a Sewing Village in Seoul: Towards Participatory Village-Making or Post-Political Urban Regeneration?’, *Community Development Journal*, 54.3 (2019), 406–26 (p. 420).

regions outside of Seoul and to other countries such as China and Vietnam.⁴⁵¹ The growth of the culture industries in the ROK were shaped by government strategies to invest in forms of soft power to secure continued economic and national development.

ii. Generational learning: styling through tailoring and dressing chic



A portrait of my mother's father, Jongha Kim (1917-2000) was taken in the late 1950s, after the Japanese colonial occupation, geopolitical partition, and the end of the Korean War (*fig. 45*). My grandfather⁴⁵² would have been in his forties, a father to six children, and a husband to my grandmother, Okrang Park (1921-1999). In this photograph, he appeared to be wearing a tailored jacket, although any recognisable edges of a lapel or collar disappeared into the indistinguishable darkness that formed the shadows where his shoulders should be. I imagined the jacket because of the visible white dress shirt, polka dot tie, and knitted placket that was most likely attached to a cardigan layered underneath. Such

things were styled together as material signifiers of the dandy.

Exploring the development of the woollen textiles in East Asia, Kyunghye Pyun maps the adoption of a modernised lifestyle through the tailored suit. Pyun argues that during the first quarter of the twentieth century, a form of 'hybrid dandyism' developed due to the visibility of men in public spaces. Defined as a 'mixing and matching of modernized clothing and accessory

⁴⁵¹ Seo Young Park, p. 14.

⁴⁵² Confucian values that are encoded in Korean language systems define communication through relational formalities. As a result, I foreground my own relation to the subject. For further reading see June Ock Yum, 'The Impact of Confucianism on Interpersonal Relationships and Communication Patterns in East Asia', *Communication Monographs*, 55.4 (1988), 374–88.

items', Pyun highlights how government reforms, the influx of tailoring shops, and department stores shaped the gendered adoption of modern dress, with photographs from the colonial period often representing men in yangbok and women in hanbok.⁴⁵³ For men, conspicuous consumption grew from the colonial regime, with Korean citizens both in Japan and Korea recognising the importance of looking modern. Conspicuous consumption, Thorstein Veblen defines, is the act of displaying ostentatious wealth to gain status and reputation in society.⁴⁵⁴

It was these kinds of clothing pieces that form the images I have of my grandfather in my memories, and while I did not grow up with this photograph, I did grow up with his style. My grandfather often wore a woollen blazer on hot days to casual outings to the mall or to the tourist attractions we visited after my grandparents immigrated to Canada in the mid-1990s. His leather dress shoes always seemed polished, and he kept a comb in the chest pocket of his shirts. I can vividly recall him wearing a white, window-paned check cotton short-sleeved button-up collared shirt, and pleated grey light wool trousers in his room when he was terminally ill with lung cancer. My mother often emphasized how important it was for her father to always look clean and presentable.

Several times a fisherman, and once a Velcro salesman, my grandfather had many jobs over the course of his life. He was born during the Japanese occupation of Korea, when style-fashion-dress was an important signifier of status. Korean historian Hyung Gu Lynn maps the complicated and often contradictory beliefs associated with colonial modernity that were represented through clothing. Though there were shifting political associations between Korean national identity and the hanbok, Lynn writes that during the colonial period '[a] Korean walking in the streets of Tokyo in *hanbok*, upon encountering discrimination, might understand his or her clothes as one of several markers of ethnic identity.'⁴⁵⁵ In the complicated racialisation of Korean

⁴⁵³ Kyunghee Pyun, 'Hybrid Dandyism: European Woolen Fabric in East Asia', in *Fashion, Identity, and Power in Modern Asia*, ed. by Kyunghee Pyun and Aida Yeun Wong (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 285–306 (pp. 289–98).

⁴⁵⁴ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Open Road Integrated Media, Inc., 2016), pp. 53–75.

⁴⁵⁵ Lynn, p. 81.

identities, who were construed as ‘both *different* – as [O]thered [...] and potentially the *same*’ in doctrines of Japanese imperialism,⁴⁵⁶ dress was a visible sign of a constructed Otherness. The Western-style suit defined the body in new ways, serving as a sign of modernity, capitalism, and camouflaged middle- and upper-class Koreans who could afford it.⁴⁵⁷ It also signified generational differences and geographic divides, the tailored suit was the uniform of the modern dandy, a young, urban denizen concerned with looking ‘right’.

Lynn highlights that the suit was a sign of coloniality, remarking that wearing suits signalled the ‘acceptance of the prevailing social norms, perhaps imbibing the myth of social mobility or expressing their aspirations.’⁴⁵⁸ Thus the choices for Western tailoring were the signposts and embodied iterations of coloniality, which reinforced capitalist hierarchies. While my grandfather’s specific whereabouts during the occupation were not known to me through my family’s memories, this history of modern dressing contextualised his style. Born into a regime where Korean bodies were discriminated, and racially subjugated, he understood clothing as a material armour or disguise to perform modernity and reappropriate his agency. By wearing the suit, one could mimic the coloniser, thereby fulfilling, as Homi K. Bhabha famously wrote, the ‘desire for a reformed, recognizable Other.’⁴⁵⁹ Yet, while Korean bodies could perform these modernities, by adopting these fashionable practices and desires for consumption, as colonised subjects, they were ‘*subject[s] of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.*’⁴⁶⁰ That is, Koreans could look the part, but still not gain the same political and institutional equalities and opportunities as the Japanese during the colonial period.

When the partition divided Korea, my maternal grandfather remained in the ROK, working in different professions to provide for his family. My mother’s early childhood

⁴⁵⁶ Jini K. Watson argues that Japanese imperialism formed racial epistemologies in East Asia that revealed Koreans constituted as Othered, according to Orientalist strategies of Othering through scientific discourses, and simultaneously the same, in order to justify the annexation of Korea. Watson, p. 177.

⁴⁵⁷ Lynn, pp. 83–87.

⁴⁵⁸ Lynn, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, UK: Routledge Classics, 2004), p. 122.

⁴⁶⁰ Bhabha, p. 122.

memories recalled her father owning an import and export business of commercial products that were purchased from Japan and sold to the Donghwa department store. Formerly known as the Mitsukoshi, the complex was the first commercial enterprise of its kind in Korea.⁴⁶¹ As an expression of colonial modernity, the store was initially built and managed by the Japanese until 1955, when it was renamed the Donghwa Department Store after Samsung's acquisition.⁴⁶² This was where my grandfather sold his goods. In 1963, Donghwa was renamed Shinsegae,⁴⁶³ which remains in the Myeongdong district of Seoul today. By the time my grandfather's portrait was taken, the tailored suit was not uncommon for men to wear. From an early age, through my grandfather's conspicuous consumption and this business of selling consumer goods, my mother experienced the allure of capitalism through the clothing and products that her family sold and purchased. Chungmoo Choi describes such materials as part of a capitalistic modernisation project that was 'irresistibly seductive and at the same time repulsive,'⁴⁶⁴ for to consume and appreciate such goods was to reinforce the power relations between the coloniser and colonised.

Capitalist modernity is a system of coloniality that shaped new opportunities for consumption, in turn shaping new ideals for womanhood in Korea. In mapping the succession of three generations of women who developed from the ROK's period of colonial modernisation, modernisation, to its post-industrialisation, Cho Haejong highlights the tension between these generational ideals. Accordingly, the women who were born in 1965, were 'the first generation to enjoy the fruit of the economic miracle without the effort of sowing and harvest,' although these women would have been aware of their parents' hardships, and also have participated or witnessed the prodemocracy movements of the 1980s, which 'would have prevented or at least postponed [their] full acquiescence to consumer capitalism.'⁴⁶⁵ My mother

⁴⁶¹ Brenda Sternquist and Byoung-ho Jin, 'South Korean Retail Industry: Government's Role in Retail Liberalization', *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 26.9 (1998), 345–53 (p. 394) <<https://doi.org/10.1108/09590559810237881>>.

⁴⁶² Pyun, p. 297.

⁴⁶³ Sternquist and Jin, p. 394.

⁴⁶⁴ Chungmoo Choi, 'Nationalism and Construction of Gender in Korea', p. 10.

⁴⁶⁵ Cho Haejoang, p. 169.

was born prior to this generation, and left the ROK at the beginning of the protest movements of the 1980s, but would have been shaped by the realities of living under military dictatorships, while witnessing the encroaching pleasures of commodity fetishism and Americanisation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. By experiencing the precarity of wealth, she understood the importance of managing one's appearance as a performance of class identity that could signify (upward) mobility and agency. I read this simultaneously as the expressions of colonial mimicry, and style-fashion-dress used as a mode of survival. My grandfather's style heavily influenced my mother's look; she inherited her father's sensibilities and instincts for camouflaging herself. When she moved to Canada in 1981, her instincts drove her toward a similar tactic of 'code-switching' her style, and managing her Koreanness by adopting an Anglicised name, June. Code-switching was developed as a sociolinguistic term to describe the phenomena of bilingual speakers switching languages as 'a strategy to influence interpersonal relations.'⁴⁶⁶ As language itself can become a cue for basing an interpersonal judgment, marginalised and racialised groups have deployed code-switching to assimilate into cultures of Whiteness (or dominance).⁴⁶⁷ I configure this linguistic terminology to conceptualise style-fashion-dress for marginalised identities. If code-switching is an adaptation of language, then when applied to appearances, it names the desire to assimilate into local trends and aesthetics. My mother's desire to dress chic through a language of luxury labels filtered into my own understanding of style.

In my adulthood, I moved to New York then London, as soon as I could. Chungmoo Choi describes this 'longing for metropolis' as inscribed in the everyday language of postcolonial

⁴⁶⁶ Carol Myers-Scotton, 'Code-Switching', in *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, ed. by Florian Coulmans (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997), pp. 217–37 (p. 217).

⁴⁶⁷ Lisa M. Koch, Gross, and Russell Kolts, 'Attitudes Toward Black English and Code Switching', *Journal of Black Psychology*, 27.1 (2001), 29–42 IN Taryn Kiana Myers, 'Can You Hear Me Now? An Autoethnographic Analysis of Code-Switching', *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 20.2 (2020), 113–23.

Koreans,⁴⁶⁸ which inevitably shapes our desires. When I began working as a print and textile designer in luxury fashion, dressing chic became an embodied aesthetic inherited from my mother's and my grandfather's style-fashion-dress. Chic is a French word, an adjective that translates to 'stylish and fashionable'.⁴⁶⁹ Compounded with other categories, it has spawned several trends from the emaciated models of the early 90s under 'Heroin Chic' or the Orientalising 'Asian Chic',⁴⁷⁰ but as a standalone concept, it inevitably evokes the refined effortless, coolness of Paris. As the capital of luxury fashion, Paris's mythological status traces back to the courts of Louis XIV and Queen Marie Antoinette. According to the fashion historian Frédéric Godart, Antoinette opened the field of fashion design through the promotion of labels, including her own personal dressmaker, Rose Bertin.⁴⁷¹ Under France's political power in Europe, and its large textile industry, the city became the capital of fashion: which was further solidified through the advent of the haute couture industry, the figure of 'la Parisienne' (the Parisian woman), the establishment of luxury fashion houses and now, as the corporate headquarters for the fashion conglomerates that dominate the luxury industry today. Dressing chic signifies aesthetic codes that map histories of power and domination defined by French tastes and capital.

While working in the luxury industry, dressing chic became not only a tactic of survival, but a strategy to perform an authority and a sense of entitlement to compensate for my own feelings of being out of place. Accumulating valuable pieces in my wardrobe, I dressed in tones of black and neutral shades, in textures of silks, wools, and linen variations, clean-lined silhouettes with little ornamentation, and often a polished black shoe with a single chunky metal feature; through fashion, I felt that I could code-switch my being into belonging. While it is apt

⁴⁶⁸ Chungmoo Choi, 'Transnational Capitalism, National Imaginary, and the Protest Theater in South Korea', p. 238.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Chic' (Cambridge Dictionary) <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/chic>> [accessed 21 April 2023].

⁴⁷⁰ For further reading see Rebecca Arnold, 'Heroin Chic', *Fashion Theory*, 3.3 (1999), 279–96; Ann Marie Leshkovich and Carla Jones, 'What Happens When Asian Chic Becomes Chic in Asia', *Fashion Theory*, 7.3–4 (2003), 281–99.

⁴⁷¹ Frédéric Godart, 'The Power Structure of the Fashion Industry: Fashion Capitals, Globalization and Creativity', *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 1.1 (2014), 39–55 (p. 41).

to read my distaste for adorned things as belonging to a culturalisation of modernist minimalism, where the ornament was maligned and denigrated due to its association with the feminine and the Other,⁴⁷² I illuminate the politics of pleasure that drove me to perform my multiple identities through the sensuous joy for fashion and beauty cultures. Dorinne Kondo calls fashion in the realms of pleasure a site that is both complicit and contestatory; she argues that ‘[h]ow we dress, how we move, the music that accompanies our daily activities and that we create and refashion out engagement with – and not simply the passive consumption of – media or commodities, do matter and can be included in a repertoire of oppositional strategies.’⁴⁷³ I take this to mean that my choices of style-fashion-dress are not just acts of colonial mimicry, but rather my choices are embedded in a performance of my subjecthood that both reifies and complicates my racialised gendered being through the pleasure I gain from dressing. Most days we adorn ourselves in fragments of cloth, which were cut, sutured, and seamed together to form single garments, and on our bodies, we form a patchwork style of references that can represent and reflect the histories of our lives. In my wardrobe, there are inherited accessories, there are gifted items, there are purchased pieces, there are even some stolen goods: my closet is a collection narrated by my tastes and experiences, a composite representation of my many identities that I perform.

K-Fashion in the global imaginary

The rise of Seoul as a center for fashion is indelibly linked to the ROK’s economic and cultural policies. Fashion capitals, as previously defined, are not only symbolic sites, but places of decision-making. In post-industrialised societies, distinct fashion identities are not necessarily defined as localities of manufacturing, but as centers knowledge and innovation, or as Norma M. Rantisi puts it ‘by the localized capabilities that produce new styles or redefine old ones [...]

⁴⁷² For further reading see Loos; Llewellyn Negrin, ‘Ornament and the Feminine’, in *Appearance and Identity: Fashioning the Body in Postmodernity* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 117–28; Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 14–17.

⁴⁷³ Kondo, p. 13.

includ[ing] the presence of industry activities – production, design, marketing and distribution’ to produce a ‘network of relations’ between local and global actors.⁴⁷⁴ In the previous section, I explored the rise of the textile and garments industry in the ROK, foregrounding Dongdaemun and the Changsindong home factories district as crucial for the nation’s economic development, and labour movements through women’s work.⁴⁷⁵ I also highlighted new configurations of Korean womanhood that were based around consumption, with the development of department stores and the introduction of luxury fashions that were coupled with ideals of motherhood. As the ROK developed, it sought to de-industrialise using the creative industries as an economic driver and a form of soft power. Under the imperatives of globalisation directed by the West, and namely, America’s neoliberal free-market trade capitalist policies, the rise of K-Fashion, as part of the Korean wave, was part of a national agenda to develop the local economy while building global influence through culture and tourism.

The Korean Wave, also known as the ‘Hallyu’, ‘Hanryu’, or ‘K-Wave’ is a term associated with the rise of global popularity in Korean cultural products, including television, music, fashion, design, and food. The term initially emerged in mass media publications, noting the remarkable popularity of Korean music and dramas in China, and then shortly after, the Asia-Pacific. As a reflection of its global branding, South Korean culture is now more ubiquitously known as ‘K-Culture’ and there is a wealth of research that explores this phenomenon, emerging from cultural studies, music studies, ethnography, sociology and cinema studies.⁴⁷⁶ Notably, this emergence and global distribution of Korean cultural products was supported by the ROK’s policies, which were initially implemented in the early 1990s when the ‘Kim Young-Sam regime

⁴⁷⁴ Norma M. Rantisi, ‘The Prospects and Perils of Creating a Viable Fashion Identity’, *Fashion Theory*, 15.2 (2011), 259–66 (p. 261).

⁴⁷⁵ For further reading see Seo Young Park.

⁴⁷⁶ For further reading see Cho Hae-Joang, ‘Reading the “Korean Wave” as a Sign of Global Shift’, *Korea Journal*, 45.4 (2005), 147–82; Doobo Shim, ‘Hybridity and the Rise of Korean Popular Culture in Asia’, *Media, Culture & Society*, 28.1 (2006), 25–44; *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave*, ed. by Chua Beng Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi (Hong Kong and London: Hong Kong University Press, 2008); *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture: Hallyu Unbound*, ed. by Valentina Marinescu (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014).

adopted globalization as a national agenda to survive the global capitalist system.⁴⁷⁷ Ju Oak Kim explains that the government's acknowledgement and strategies to produce culture as economic development, helped to export Korean cultural content, building the ROK's national image in the global imaginary and community, and K-Fashion was developed as a key cultural sector. According to a 2009 study conducted by Korea's Presidential Council on Nation Branding, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, and the Korean Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), fashion was the seventh leading industry in 'determining the country's image.'⁴⁷⁸

Fostered in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout, Cho Hae-Joang recognises the K-Wave as reflecting Koreans entering a 'new stage of subject formation', where Koreans 'living in the semi-periphery of the world system' developed new senses of Korea, globalisation, the culture industry, and Asia.⁴⁷⁹ These senses, however, reflect how the ROK remains entangled and shaped by coloniality, for globalisation, Quijano contends, was established through a system of colonial capitalism, which incorporated colonial dominance into a world-system governed by Anglo-America.⁴⁸⁰ Fundamental to this model of power, is and was the construction of race, which was instrumental to colonial domination, fixing its center in the West, or the Anglo-European world. The Asian Financial Crisis and the IMF were and are the expressions of a system that supports and reinforces this center.⁴⁸¹

This section explores the development of K-Fashion in the global imaginary as an analytic of coloniality, mapping how 'Koreanness' interacts with global capitals of fashion, namely New York, Paris, and London. By tracing the constellations of Korean patchwork

⁴⁷⁷ Ju Oak Kim, 'Korea's Blacklist Scandal: Governmentality, Culture, and Creativity', in *Labour, Policy, and Ideology in East Asian Creative Industries*, ed. by Teri Silvio and Lily H. Chumley (Oxon: Routledge, 2020).

⁴⁷⁸ Kim Hong Ki, *K-Fashion: Wearing a New Future*, Korean Culture, No. 7 (Republic of Korea: Korean Culture and Information Service, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2012), p. 10.

⁴⁷⁹ Cho Hae-Joang, pp. 147–49.

⁴⁸⁰ Quijano.

⁴⁸¹ Bruce Cumings demonstrates that the Asian crisis was a reflection of American hegemony in East Asia, reading the period as an American attempt to intervene on the 'late' development of the Japanese-Korean type, and dismantle the alternative models of capitalism. For further reading see Cumings, 'The Korean Crisis and the End of "Late" Development'.

design, I connect Chunghie Lee's work at the V&A to the transferability of 'Korean tradition' as a cultural trope in Lie Sang Bong's work to the donation of Lee Young Hee's archive to a French museum to the showcase of 'Korea' through to the cultural imaginary of the Chanel Resort 2016 show, in order to define and contextualise the rise of K-Fashion, while exploring its implications for Korean womanhood through forms of jogakbo wrapping bodies. In this section, as in the previous chapter, I explore how these patchwork designs resemble and constitute Cheng's Ornamentalist claim of 'things [that] have been taken for persons',⁴⁸² thus complicating and enriching genealogies of yellow womanhood through Korean materials.

i. Chunghie Lee at the V&A

In April 2001, the V&A's 'Fashion in Motion' program invited artist and designer, Chunghie Lee to showcase her work by highlighting her creations of jogakbo as fashion. Lee's career was not defined as being a fashion designer, and thus her inclusion in the showcase reveals the role of curators and the agendas that shaped categories of fashion at the museum, including the Korean art curator at the time, Charlotte Horlyck. The V&A's showcase took place in the same year as the fifty-year commemoration of British participation in the Korean War, and in the same year that the UK designated their first diplomat to the DPRK, Dr. James Hoare.⁴⁸³ In the aftermath of the 1997 IMF bailout, the agenda of the ROK's government under Kim Dae Jung sought to build stronger inter-regional connections between the ROK and the DPRK to encourage economic recovery, defined as the Sunshine policy.⁴⁸⁴ Simultaneously, the ROK's second largest car manufacturer, Daewoo, was close to bankruptcy in 2000, solidifying the

⁴⁸² Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 19.

⁴⁸³ Alastair Morgan CMG, 'United Kingdom Engagement with North Korea', *Asia Pacific Bulletin Number 630*, 2023 <[⁴⁸⁴ Once the Bush administration took power in 2001, the US policies toward the DPRK substantially shifted to view the country as an antagonistic regime with nuclear power, further eroding possibilities for regional reconciliation. For further reading see Haksoo Paik, 'Assessment of the Sunshine Policy: A Korean Perspective', *Asian Perspective*, 26.3 \(2002\), 13–35.](https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/united-kingdom-engagement-north-korea#:~:text=However%2C%20the%20United%20Kingdom%20did,Embassy%20in%20Pyongyang%20in%202001.> [accessed 1 September 2023].</p>
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decline of the country's industrial sector.⁴⁸⁵ While 2001 marked the initial year of the K-Wave boom in the Asia-Pacific, in the early 2000s, most news coverage in the UK regarding South Korea was related to either the potential unification, the financial marketplace and sports, but little was known about its culture. With the 2002 World Cup taking place in South Korea and Japan, the V&A's showcase of Chunghee Lee was a significant opportunity to display 'Korea' to a British and global audience.

'Fashion in Motion' is a program and department at the V&A, which was first instigated by Claire Wilcox in 1999. The productions initially included the experimental performances of models walking through the V&A's corridors, but it has since settled in the established site of the Rafael Gallery, where the showcases are now presented as conventional runway shows open to public audiences. Over the twenty years of producing its program, the department has displayed the archives of global fashion designers, including Alexander McQueen, Jean Paul Gaultier, Carla Fernandez, Yohji Yamamoto, and Missoni. When the concept of the program was initiated, it was imagined as an opportunity to transform the elitist, closed doors of fashion shows into a democratic opportunity for anyone to see for '*free*', moreover it was a valuable occasion to display the overarching archive of a designer's work, not just a seasonal collection.⁴⁸⁶ In a podcast hosted by the program's current curator, Oriole Cullen, Wilcox described how she was determined to display fashion *in* motion, moving, and animated, which was often lost in the static quality of fashion photographs and still image recordings.⁴⁸⁷ This sentiment is echoed by Dorinne Kondo's work, who argues that the ephemerality of the performance of a runway show 'can never fully be captured by text, the camera, or the word'.⁴⁸⁸ The happening of the fashion show, including the performance of the catwalk and the atmosphere of the event, is nearly

⁴⁸⁵ Jonathan Watts, 'Daewoo Motor Runs out of Road', *The Guardian* (London, 24 October 2000), section Finance, p. 27; Ray Heath, 'Seoul Starts to Topple Debt-Ridden Dinosaurs', *Evening Standard* (London, 10 November 2000), section Business, p. 43.

⁴⁸⁶ This emphasis is reiterated made by Claire Wilcox in her podcast with current curator, Oriole Cullen, discussing the 20 years of Fashion in Motion. For further listening see Oriole Cullen and Claire Wilcox, '20 Years of Fashion in Motion', V&A Museum <<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/20-years-of-fashion-in-motion>> [accessed 21 July 2021].

⁴⁸⁷ Cullen and Wilcox.

⁴⁸⁸ Kondo, p. 20.

impossible to capture in its unique spectacularity and momentary singularity. This kind of display does not necessarily focus on the representation of the clothes themselves, but it demonstrates the specific way the clothes interact with bodies that performs identities, and in the case of the V&A's initial programs, includes encounters with the audiences. While perhaps video recordings and moving images could better capture the fashion performance, there were no such recordings of Lee's show. There was one DVD in the library catalogue of the London College of Fashion which was listed as missing.⁴⁸⁹

Memories of the show were instead gleaned through the collected objects that were donated to the museum, photographs, and an interview I conducted with Charlotte Horlyck on 26 May 2022. Recalling the events leading up to the showcases, Horlyck explained:

when the V&A launched the 'Fashion in Motion' scheme, I believe it was within the first year of it being in place, my department had, by then, already hosted, had already organised one 'Fashion in Motion' event, and that was featuring the designer, Vivienne Tam. That was organized by Andrew Bolton. Then, I put in a bid to the 'Fashion in Motion' team suggesting that we host an event featuring the artist, Lee Chunghie.⁴⁹⁰

The event itself was a cross-departmental collaboration between the department of Asia and the 'Fashion in Motion' team, which was originally part of the Contemporary department. At the time, the museum was focused on building contemporary histories, driving 'curators and departments to forefront projects, object acquisitions and so on, regarding contemporary art.'⁴⁹¹

The decision to invite Chunghie Lee was partially motivated by the artist's previously established relation with the Korea department, as 'a number of her pieces in the collection [...] had been acquired by Beth McKillop through the support of Pak Youngsook.'⁴⁹² McKillop was the Keeper of the Asia collections at the V&A between 2004 to 2011, and Pak was an Emerita Reader of

⁴⁸⁹ I contacted the 'Fashion in Motion' department, and Chunghie Lee, respectively, but neither the V&A, nor the artist had a recording of the show.

⁴⁹⁰ Charlotte Horlyck, interviewed by Christin Yu about Chunghie Lee's 'Fashion in Motion' show in 2001, 26 May 2022. See Appendix G for transcript.

⁴⁹¹ Horlyck, 2022.

⁴⁹² Horlyck, 2022.

Korean Art History at School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, who was tangentially affiliated with the V&A.

Archive records from the V&A show initial correspondences between Chunghie Lee and Lisa Bailey, the assistant curator of the Far Eastern Collection in 1994, who was introduced to Lee's work through Myung-ok Jeon, a correspondent of the *Arts and Crafts Monthly* magazine.⁴⁹³ The first acquisitions for Lee's objects include *Shoe – Decorative Jogakbo Shoes* (Object No. FE.280:2-1995), *Jacket* (Object No. FE.281:1-1995), *Trousers* (Object No. FE.281:2-1995), *Shoe – Decorative Jogakbo Shoes* (Object No. FE.280:1-1995) by Lisa Bailey. Two objects were donated by the artist after the 'Fashion in Motion' show: *Skirt* (Object No. FE.137-2002), and *Durumagi* (Object No. T.238-2001). *Three-piece ensemble* (Object No. FE.104-2017) was donated by Pak Youngsook in 2017. Each object is a clothing garment composed of patchwork techniques.



Figure 46. Photograph of 'Fashion in Motion: Chunghie Lee' (27 April 2001). London: Victoria & Albert Museum, photograph courtesy of Charlotte Horlyck. © Charlotte Horlyck, all rights reserved.

Objects in archives are often observed through their material compositions and technical constructions, but they are seldomly viewed in their animated movement. Yet, fashion particularly is illuminated by material relations to bodies – where movement and volume is expressed by the wearer's body. As a moving showcase, the 'Fashion in Motion' programme illustrated important insights about how patchwork wrapping bodies constructs specific ideas of (Korean) womanhood. It was imperative for spectators to view clothes that moved, Horlyck emphasised, the show 'was all about having persons, whether mortals or not, wearing the garments, and walking *through* the

⁴⁹³ Lisa K. Bailey to Chunghie Lee, 'Correspondance from Far Eastern Collections', 6 December 1994, V&A Archive Records.

galleries.⁴⁹⁴ For Lee's specific show, there were budgetary limitations that also shaped the potential of the exhibition. Lee 'was not a fashion designer, she's an artist', Horlyck explained, and originally the shows were not the catwalks that 'Fashion in Motion' has now become, but rather 'the concept was not a fashion show. It was all about the fashion *in* motion.'⁴⁹⁵ Although the program has now evolved into the conventional fashion catwalk show, when it was initially instigated, it sought to exhibit the movement of fashion in relation to the museum's collections. Horlyck highlighted Lee's creative vision and how Lee often wore her own creations in her interactions with the curator, thus justifying her reasons to select the textile artist.

When 'Fashion in Motion' first started, there was no established vision for the showcases, nor did the museum have any formal policies that governed the archiving of the materials from the shows. While there is now a practice of video recording established for the more recent events, the problem of documenting performance and the performance of fashion moving is something to consider. Horlyck remembered that the day itself unfolded as

three shows in one day [...] The first one would be at eleven o'clock, and the next one, maybe at three, and then on later on in the evening, early evening. There were three shows, and until then, all the 'Fashion in Motion' events had repeated the same show three times, so the garments had been the same. But [Lee] was extremely ambitious, and decided that she would do three different shows. Each of these three shows, the concept behind the garments was slightly different. The garments were made of different materials, but the music was, I think the music was essentially the same. She, of course, had commissioned her son to do the music, because he was a music student [...] she then got introduced to two young music students who were playing flute [...] Her son walked first, and basically set the beat with two wooden sticks. The kind of type of wood sticks you use in Korean percussion music. And then those two young British musicians, [...] a young man and young woman, they then played the music. Maybe he also, at one point, played the flute as well, I think he actually did. And then we had five models. I use the term 'model' loosely, because of the budget, of course, you know there wasn't money to hire any professional models and so on. But what happened in the past was that when the museum had reached out to very well-known designers, for example, Vivienne Tam, they simply provided their own models. This project was one that, at the time, was very much built on expectations of goodwill, on behalf of the artist [...] Lee Chunghie didn't have the funds [...] so what happened was that I roped in my sister, who would do it for free, and she had taught in Finland for a while. So in fact, one of her Finnish students flew to London, and volunteered to participate. And then we were introduced to another two models through a

⁴⁹⁴ Horlyck, 2022.

⁴⁹⁵ Horlyck, 2022.

friend of a friend. They were all women, young women, and there were four, and then Lee Chunghie, herself, also wore different garments that then matched the concept of each particular show [...] The first one was where all the models were wearing garments made of hanji. So they were quite subdued colours. And the last one was where each of the models were wearing colours based on the oh bang saek – the five primary colours. Lee Chunghie was standing at the front wearing all five colours, whereas each of the other models behind were each wearing one colour. That was the concept of it.⁴⁹⁶

Describing the events as a collaboration between a thematic showcase of Korean traditional tropes of design with traditional Korean music, Horlyck highlighted the backstage activities that went into shaping the events, while mapping the cultural displays presented on the day.

Budgetary constraints restricted the casting of professional models; thus, the clothes were worn on everyday people, including Lee herself (*fig. 46*). Horlyck detailed that the models were young, and pretty, highlighting how their bodies seemingly reinforced conventional standards of beauty.

While the program itself was meant to showcase an archive of a designer's collection, Horlyck



Figure 47. Photograph of 'Fashion in Motion: Chunghie Lee' (27 April 2001). London: Victoria & Albert Museum, photograph courtesy of Charlotte Horlyck. © Charlotte Horlyck, all rights reserved.

⁴⁹⁶ Horlyck, 2022.

implied that each garment for Lee's events were made for the day. She elaborated that the event itself, while not a formal procession, saw the musicians leading the models through the galleries.

In those initial shows, there was an informality and an interaction that occurred between the visitors and the models, who walked through the lobby, the sculpture galleries, the Korean and Chinese galleries, then out into the garden (*fig. 47*). Those first showings sought to trouble the distinction between the elitist fashion showcase, visitors, and the experience of viewing objects. Horlyck remembered that the programs

were targeted around interaction [...] to break down the barriers between objects and visitors. That here you had, what could essentially be seen as museum objects, even though of course, they hadn't entered the museum collection at the time, but they were artefacts that could be considered museum objects. But people could actually, if they wanted to, they could actually touch them. They could go up to the models, look at them very closely, take pictures, and see the objects in a different light outside glass cases.⁴⁹⁷

Outside of the glass cases, on figures moving, the objects were expressed in ways that are otherwise imperceptible through observing the same garments in displays, or even in the archive, where I was able to view the garments.

During my archive visits to Clothworkers Centre for the Study and Conversation of Textiles and Fashion at Blythe House, and then the V&A's storage and observation rooms in 2019 and 2021, respectively, I was able to view several of Lee's designs, including *Durumagi* (Object No. T.238-2001), alongside *Skirt* (Object No. FE.137-2002) and *Jacket* (Object No. FE.281:1-1995), *Trousers* (Object No. FE.281:2-1995), and *Three-piece ensemble* (Object No. FE.104-2017). I foreground my observations of *Durumagi* to explore how 'Korea' and Korean women through Lee's work were signified through her designs, importantly asking how patchwork itself expressed her vision. *Durumagi* is an iteration of a hanbok man's overcoat, composed of black silk gauze pieces that were patchworked together using a machine-stitched gekki flat-fillet technique (*fig. 48*). Threads trailed off the edges to emphasise the stitch-work,

⁴⁹⁷ Horlyck, 2022.



Figure 48. Overhead photograph of *Durumagi* (Object No. T.238-2001). Chungie Lee, 2001. *Durumagi*. 135 cm length, 124 cm bust, black and red silk, patchworked. London: Textiles and Fashion Collection, V&A. Photograph author's own. Courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum.

with some seams further illuminated by a decorative topstitch of red that created a dense line of colour. This contrast of red on black was further emphasised by triangular shards of crimson red woven damask silk that were decoratively sewn onto the seams to protrude from the patchwork back body. The crimson red material matched the material of the collar and placket on the front side. As the garment was unlined, the differences in the colour tones between red and black were also emphasized by the material compositions. The damask silk reds were opaque against the translucent blacks.

Feminist art historian Julia Skelly explores the intersection between skin studies and critical craft studies to study how contemporary artists interrogate violence against women through textiles. By highlighting Nadia Myre's *The Scar Project* (2005 to 2013), which uses thread and canvas to represent scars, symbolising the violence against Indigenous communities in

America, Skelly argues that there is a ‘specific power of “craft” materials to speak both of violence and healing for Indigenous peoples.’⁴⁹⁸ Skelly also highlights how the colour red in Myre’s and Rebecca Belmore’s artworks depict the ‘corporeal violence’ of coloniality.⁴⁹⁹ Sitting at an intersection between art and fashion, Lee’s *Durumagi* signifies jogakbo as the national body. Reflecting the trauma of colonial occupation and the geopolitical partition, the patchwork represents ‘Korea’, as the red shards emphasise the violently brutalised and cut skin surfaces of the nation and people. Notably, these shards were not incorporated into the body of the patchwork, meaning that they were not constitutive of the patchwork itself, but they were pieces that extruded, ornamenting the form. The red pieces were used to symbolise the corporeal violence of the Korean people, superfluous to the unified patchwork body composed solely of black silk gauzes. In the decorative red topstitch, there was a symbolic connotation of scarring, healing, and survival. Although Lee’s *Durumagi* references hanbok commonly worn by men, she layers the garment with the signification of colonial violence and survival as sutured together by a woman’s creative practices.

This case study of Chunghie Lee’s patchwork constructions traced materiality through garments worn on bodies, and garments that lay in archive boxes and white surfaces in viewing rooms. Despite being temporarily animated on the bodies of young women during the ‘Fashion in Motion’ showcase, the spectrality of the yellow woman nonetheless resonated in the ornamental garments – the pieces were wearable art and one-off constructions worn on the body exclusively for the duration of the showcase. Unlined, and delicate, the fragments of silk gauze pieces, sutured together with decorative and embroidered threads thickening the seams, and damask silks further ornamenting the pieces, patchwork served to metonymise the Korean woman. Cheng’s observations of the *China: Through the Looking Glass* exhibition, which took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2015, finds that the objects of the exhibition, particularly

⁴⁹⁸ Julia Skelly, *Skin Crafts: Affect, Violence and Materiality in Global Contemporary Art* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2022), p. 341.

⁴⁹⁹ Skelly, p. 345.

in the Blue Willow room ‘invite neither wearability nor usage. Instead of objects that function as appendages to the human [...] what we find here instead are objects that reference other objects.’⁵⁰⁰ Detailing the decorative grammar of delicate fashion pieces composed of shards of porcelain, Cheng’s observations illuminate how Lee’s patchworks too serve to reference the particular objecthood and material history of jogakbo. Lee’s fashionable objects imagine Korean womanhood through patchwork, building the decorative grammar of jogakbo as Korean womanhood – an element reiteratively used in Korean fashions.

ii. Lie Sang Bong: reimagining signs and narratives



Figure 49. Photograph of Korea Gallery at the V&A in 2021. L to R: Lie Sang Bong, 21st C. *Cocktail Dress from New Romancer Collection* (Object No. FE.62-2012). Laser-cut, polyester organza; Unlisted maker. c. 1940. *Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie or Monochromatic jogakbo* (Object No. FE.303-2011). 96 x 96 cm ramie; Cho Yong-Won, 2014. *Tea tray* (Object No. FE.76-2015). Ash wood, wood stain, varnish; Chang Yeon Soon, 2010. *Matrix II 201025* (Object No. FE.97-2013). 132.5 x 26.9 x 12.3 cm manilla hemp, abaca, wood, sewing. London: Korea Gallery, V&A. Photograph is author’s own, image taken on 16 July 2021.

⁵⁰⁰ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 96.

Lie Sang Bong's cocktail dress was exhibited in the Korea gallery at the V&A during July 2021 as part of a display of objects that showed three iterations of jogakbo, which included *Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie* or *Monochromatic jogakbo* (Object No. FE.303-2011), a jogakbo made from undyed ramie and Chang Yeon Soon's *Matrix II 201025*, (Object No. FE.97-2013), which used jogakbo techniques. Placed in the long corridor of the Korea gallery, the display case presented different iterations of jogakbo. As explicated in the previous chapter, the museum placed a placard that noted the history of jogakbo, defining these objects as interpretations of 'creative upcycling', which aligned to the museum's program of sustainability.⁵⁰¹

Noting how the tangible and intangible cultural assets defined by the ROK's Cultural Heritage Association has hindered the development of contemporary Korean design, the V&A's curator of Korean art, Rosalie Kim, explores the question of 'Korea' and defining Korean design in her curation. 'What is Korea?' she poignantly asked,

[it] is not just a question of looking at the geographical border, we know where Korea is, we know where South Korea is, the question is more to do with the sponsorship. The sponsorship and the establishment of Korean galleries are mostly supported by South Korean government or businesses, so there is a sort of tacit understanding that you will champion that part of Korean productions, which is quite a difficult way to interpret the Korean collections [...] And also now with generations of artists working abroad, studying elsewhere, and being interested by different materials and different techniques, than those in Korea, new types of materials are coming to the fore.⁵⁰²

This question of 'Korea' is a key theme in Korean design history, Yunah Lee explains, for issues of cultural authenticity are underpinned by colonial and post-colonial histories in East Asia. Korean traditions, on the one hand, were used to mobilise nationalism against Japanese colonial rule, while simultaneously, used as symbols signifying obstacles to modernity.⁵⁰³ As South Korean globalisation policy in the early 1990s encouraged local designers to showcase their collections in Europe and America, Lee highlights how '[t]raditional Korean elements, techniques, materials and crafts' were incorporated into Korean dress and fashion as the country

⁵⁰¹ *Jogakbo Display*. London: V&A Korea Gallery.

⁵⁰² Rosalie Kim, 'On Curating Korea'.

⁵⁰³ Yunah Lee, 'Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia: Part 3 Korea', pp. 98, 100.

vied in the competitive global marketplace.⁵⁰⁴ Jogakbo expressed in this triptych relationship of design curation expresses transcultural interpretations of Korean patchwork, situating *Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie* as a signifier of Korean cultural tradition with contemporary adaptations of the form. Although, as I argued in Chapter One, this particular signification was bound to geopolitical relations and imperial histories, defined by a Japanese gaze.

The description underneath *Cocktail dress from the New Romancer collection* (Object No. FE.62-2012) stated ‘this dress is a unique reinterpretation of the traditional *jogakbo*’s structure to build a sculptural garment from flat patterns. Numerous organza discs are laser-cut then sewn together along their edge as an open-page book. These “pages” gently move with the wearer’s movement, creating a bold voluminous yet light silhouette that wraps the wearer’s body.⁵⁰⁵ Composed of polyester organza, the garment was donated to the V&A in 2012, following a catwalk show for the designer in the museum’s Rafael Gallery as part of the Korean Cultural Centre UK’s (KCCUK) ‘Korea Shining Bright/All Eyes on Korea’ celebration. The celebration was organised in collaboration with the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism to coincide with festivities alongside the London Summer Olympics. As an opportune time to promote awareness of Korean culture, while London itself was a stage for global audiences, the show was part of a three-month cultural campaign that began with a street campaign titled ‘All Eyes on Korea: Shining Bright, Korea Through Korea’ on 26 June 2012, thirty days before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. The promotional campaign included posters designed and displayed in thirty underground stations, promotional souvenirs handed out at major venues across the city, and invitations to fifty Londoners to attend various cultural events around the city, while wearing t-shirts designed by Lie.⁵⁰⁶ Significantly, since the previous showcase at the

⁵⁰⁴ Yunah Lee, ‘Fashioning Tradition in Contemporary Korean Fashion’, *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 4.2 (2017), 241–61 (pp. 246–48).

⁵⁰⁵ Lie Sang-bong, *Cocktail Dress from the New Romancer Collection*, 2008, V&A Museum no. FE.62-2012.

⁵⁰⁶ Do Je-hae, “‘All Eyes on Korea’ Campaign Launched in London”, *The Korea Times* (Seoul ROK, 19 June 2012), Online edition, section Entertainment & Arts
<https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2023/09/398_113353.html> [accessed 6 September 2023].

V&A, the geopolitical union defined by the Sunshine policy was declared a failure by the ROK's government in 2010, and the new leader of the DPRK, Kim Jong Un gained power following his father's death in December 2011. Despite the uncertainty of geopolitical relations defining the peninsula, the ROK's global cultural promotion campaign continued inviting, and encouraging tourism to the country.

As British news coverage in 2012 focused on the volatile politics of the DPRK and their new leader, the ROK gained press through its culture industries and the growth of its financial markets. Reports about Seoul's green cityscape, South Korean psychedelic rock music, Park Chan-wook's English-language debut film, a film and television fund supported by the ROK's government, the acclaimed South Korean literature scene, South Korea's technology, Korean food, competitive sports teams, expanding fashion markets, and South Korean theatre performance, marked a quantifiable rise in content regarding South Korean culture in the year before the cultural campaign in 2016.⁵⁰⁷ A rise that is, in comparison to the year of the V&A's Chunghie Lee show. As the DPRK was increasingly alienated from global politics due to the perceived volatility of their new leader, and their antagonistic approach to US foreign policy, the ROK was described as an economy that had rebuilt themselves since the financial crisis, and a desirable place to visit with a growing consumer market, and a reputable culture industry.

Suzy Kim asks us to recognise how the category of women has been shaped by Cold War politics, arguing that 'the Cold War's binary frame served to reinforce the gendered binary, so

⁵⁰⁷ Laura Chesters, 'Versace Shows a Clean Pair of Heels on Catwalk and in the Boardroom', *The Independent* (London, 1 April 2012), section Business, p. 86; Laura Chesters, 'Silicon Valley Here? No Way', *The Independent* (London, 4 February 2012), section Business, p. 58; Nick Goodway, 'Ted Baker Boss Can Go up the Aisle in Style', *The Independent* (London, 22 March 2012), section Business, p. 60; Susan Griffith, '48 Hours in ... Seoul', *The Independent* (London, 28 April 2012), section Independent Traveller, p. 12; Stuart Kemp, 'Korea Opportunities', *The Independent*, 6 January 2012, section Film, p. 11; Jonathan Romney, 'Spielberg Leads the Charge', *The Independent* (London, 1 January 2012), section Film, pp. 54–55; Boyd Tonkin, 'In the Heart of Seoul', *The Independent* (London, 7 January 2012), section Independent Traveller, p. 9; Boyd Tonkin, 'Following Stars in the East', *The Independent* (London, 13 January 2012), section Books, p. 23; Tim Walker, 'A Good Korea Move', *The Sunday Telegraph* (London, 6 May 2012), section Arts, p. 24; Bee Wilson, 'The Kitchen Thinker', *Sunday Telegraph* (London, 5 February 2012), section Food, p. 57; Barbara Zitwer, 'Finding Sanctuary on High', *The Sunday Telegraph* (London, 29 April 2012), section Travel, p. 11; 'Export Markets in the Bag', *The Daily Telegraph* (London, 2 April 2012), section Business Thinking, p. B8.

that neither the Cold War nor feminism can be divorced from one another in their historical unfolding.⁵⁰⁸ Illuminating how the role of neoliberal policies shaped perceived differences between women of the so-called developed and developing world, Kim highlights how histories of women in the second and third world were stripped of their own feminist histories under the hegemonic discourses of Western feminism. Although it is not the discourses of feminism that I seek to excavate in this section, I situate this case study in the renewed Cold War antagonisms that shaped the Korean peninsula under Kim Jong Un, to explore how these cultural representations of 'Korea' sought to reinforce and redefine division.

Alongside festivities at the Barbican and the South Bank Centre, which included performances of contemporary adaptations of traditional Korean music,⁵⁰⁹ Lie Sang Bong's designs were presented in two catwalk shows, featuring sixty outfits, during the Minister's Reception dinner, which took place in the Raphael Gallery of the V&A on 30 July 2012. The event was attended by British and international government officials, Olympic Committee members, cultural figures, and other high-profile guests.⁵¹⁰ Although *Cocktail dress from the New Romancer collection* was interpreted in the V&A's Korea gallery displays as a reinterpretation of traditional jogakbo, and for the gala reception dinner as an expression of Korean cultural tradition, the dress was originally designed as part of the 'New Romancer' collection, which was presented as Lie's Spring/Summer 2008 show.

The show's notes articulate how '[m]ultiple triangles, circles and rectangles – the basics of a Bauhaus movement – were placed onto the body of a female model to create a colourful

⁵⁰⁸ Suzy Kim, 'Cold War Feminisms in East Asia: Introduction', *Positions*, 28.3 (2020), 501–16 (p. 502).

⁵⁰⁹ For further reading see Philip Gowman, 'All Eyes on Korea: Consistent Investment in the Performing Arts Brings Its Rewards', *London Korean Links*, 2012 <<https://londonkoreanlinks.net/2012/08/29/all-eyes-on-korea/>> [accessed 5 September 2023].

⁵¹⁰ 'Korea Shining Bright at the V&A', *Korean Cultural Centre UK*, 2012 <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kccuk/7684198086/>> [accessed 1 September 2023].

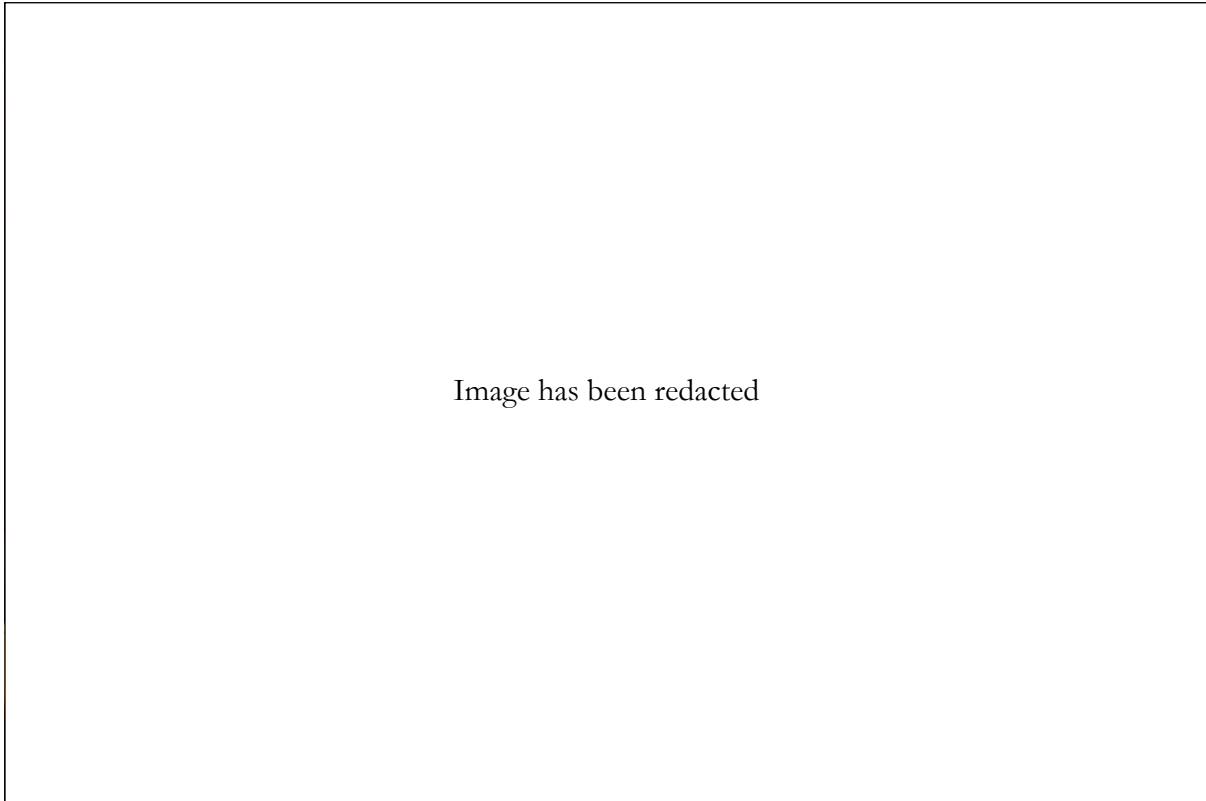


Figure 50. Photograph 'All Eyes on Korea' event (30 July 2012). Featuring Lie Sang Bong, c. 21st C. Evening Dress from New Romancer Collection. Laser-cut polyester organza. London: Raphael Gallery, V&A. Photography courtesy of <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koreanet/7689308828/> [Accessed on 30 May 2022]

three-dimensional silhouette. The collection was inspired from the color and silhouette of the clothes in the Triadic Ballet, a masterpiece by choreographer Oskar Schlemmer associated with the Bauhaus school.⁵¹¹ Images from the Triadic Ballet reveal the disc shapes and orbs that seemingly influenced Lie's cocktail (fig. 40) and evening dresses (fig. 50). Less than a decade later, these influences were seemingly concealed or diluted, for the garments were resignified to represent definitively Korean traditions. Echoing the narratives of Huh Dong Hwa, where Mondrian and Klee were seen in the authentically Korean jogakbo, the transferable semiotics of Lie's dress reveals the instability and Orientalising concept of Korean tradition itself, while simultaneously aligning the ROK's representations of nation through Westernisation. By

⁵¹¹ Lie Sang-bong, *The Truth of Lie*, 1st ed. (Gyeonggi-do, ROK: Kyobo Book Centre, 2011), p. 231.

mapping the connections between jogakbo, fashion and Bauhaus modernism, I ask how Lie's *New Romancer* collection enunciates Cold War divisions.

According to Dorinne Kondo, the success of Japanese fashion designers in the early 1980s, including Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons, forced the world 'to recognize Tokyo and Asia more generally as sites of creation'.⁵¹² Yet, while Japanese showcases in Paris indexed, on the one hand, the status of Japan as an advanced capitalist power, they simultaneously, perpetuated Orientalising discourses, enforcing the racialisation and essentialisation of Japanese aesthetics and bodies.⁵¹³ Exploring the transnational circuits of capital, labour, and material exchanges that define the fashion industry, Kondo highlights how geopolitics and colonial histories were nonetheless mapped onto definitions of 'Japanese' fashion. The 1990s marked the initial migrations of Korean designers showing in Paris. Icinoo and Lee Young Hee were said to be the first Korean designers to display their collections in the fashion capital; they began showcasing in 1992, followed by Jin Te Ok and Hong Mi Hwa in 1993.

Lie Sang Bong's first Paris showing was his Fall/Winter 2002 collection named 'Lost Memories', which featured black garments on a striking red background.⁵¹⁴ Situating the rise of Korean fashion designers during this time through the South Korean government's policies toward globalisation, Yunah Lee maps how the 'quest for authentic Korean culture and style' saw designers such as Lie, incorporating elements of traditional Korean art and culture into his designs.⁵¹⁵ But as designs that were initially said to be inspired by Schlemmer's Triadic Ballet paraded down the runway decorated with ornaments referencing the stylings of Korean architecture, dancheong, particularly in the colours and the patterns, on the evening celebrating Korean culture for 'Korea Shining Bright/All Eyes on Korea' gala reception dinner, I read this

⁵¹² Kondo, p. 55.

⁵¹³ Kondo, p. 56.

⁵¹⁴ Lie, *The Truth of Lie*, p. 219.

⁵¹⁵ Yunah Lee, 'Fashioning Tradition in Contemporary Korean Fashion', p. 246.

resignification not as a display of hybridity, not as transcultural designs, but through the lens of the Cold War, which positioned the ROK in relation to Western cultural identities. That jogakbo was once again defined through Modernism speaks less about Korean authenticity, but rather it



Figure 51. Photograph of Lie Sang Bong's *Cocktail dress* from the *New Romancer* collection. Originally published in *Plaza Sweden* (September 2010). © Copy from *Plaza Magazine*, all rights reserved.

illuminates how the ROK was shaped by Western hegemony.

This same *Cocktail dress* from the *New Romancer* collection was featured in a fashion editorial for *Plaza Sweden* in September 2010. In the editorial shoot, a white model – a Caucasian woman – was wearing Lie's cocktail dress, while gesticulating with her two arms perched out in a three-quarter length portrait shot (fig. 51). Placed on her head were the recognisable feathers, beads, leather hide headband and fur trims that together referenced the headdresses of North American indigenous communities.

The headdress has become a popular accessory of hipsters and the fashion community alike. Coining the look as 'Pocahontas chic', Jessyca Murphy argues that the hipster demographic's use, and consumption of Native American imagery attempts 'to manifest revolutionary identities and assuage white imperialist guilt, and in doing so relies on hegemonic ideologies about race, conquest and [O]therness.'⁵¹⁶ That is, while hipsters continue to co-opt cultures to disassociate themselves from normative whiteness, they in fact perpetuate hegemonic systems of power and dominance by their acts of cultural

⁵¹⁶ Jessyca Murphy, 'The White Indian: Native American Appropriations in Hipster Fashion', in *Unsettling Whiteness*, ed. by Lucy Michael and Samantha Schulz (Oxford, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014), pp. 127–40 (p. 128).

appropriation. For Indigenous communities, the headdress holds a ‘deeply spiritual significance’, as a symbol of strength and bravery,⁵¹⁷ the trend of using the headdress as an accessory or a costume is a flagrant case of appropriation that traces a long history of Indigenous dress-up.⁵¹⁸

In the *Plaza Sweden* editorial, the model, adorned in the headdress, Lie’s dress, a glistening set of metallic armbands around both elbows, and covered in lettering drawn on her skin with black body paint, represents the luxury fashion customer in a stylised cosplay. With Lie’s garment representing the luxury fashion garment, and the other elements signifying the ‘Pocahontas chic’ appropriation, Lie’s work is positioned in relation to hegemonic values, illuminating how the ROK’s shifting geopolitical policies toward globalisation and its neo-imperial relations with the US perpetuate and reify ideological values regarding race, conquest, and Otherness. That *Cocktail dress from the New Romancer collection* was initially designed as a reference to Schlemmer’s Triadic Ballet, then resignified to represent Korean jogakbo, highlights the ROK’s coloniality through its nationally imagined cultural traditions. Jogakbo in Lie’s work, especially as it was narrated through *Cocktail dress from the New Romancer collection*, reveals the instability of Korean authenticity as the ROK became a capitalist global power aligned to the US vis-à-vis the Cold War divide. Globalisation, as a condition or culmination of coloniality/modernity, through the commodification of Korean luxury products here, not only reinforces the ROK’s coloniality, but also commands Korean culture to serve and support the CMP.

iii. Lee Young Hee and the French archive

In this next case study, I explore globalisation through the archive, and specifically how Korean luxury fashion shaped and represented ‘Korea’ in the French national imaginary. Lee Young Hee (1936-2018) was a globally renown hanbok designer, who opened her own hanbok

⁵¹⁷ ‘Headdresses & Warbonnets’, *Say Magazine*, 26 August 2015 <<https://saymag.com/headdresses-warbonne/>> [accessed 14 September 2023].

⁵¹⁸ For further reading see Murphy, pp. 130–32.

shop in 1976, after graduating from Sungshin Women's University. Her studies at the school focused on dying techniques, and her early career as a designer saw her working in collaboration with Seok Ju-seon, a specialist in the history of Korean dress, reconstructing garments from the Joseon period.⁵¹⁹ As part of this recreation process, she developed silk fabrics that were supposedly identical to the original references, deploying natural dyeing, hand-sewing, and embroideries.⁵²⁰ Lee was said to be influenced by 'watching her mother work as an embroiderer' and developed her natural dying techniques from Buddhist monks.⁵²¹

In 1993, Lee made her Prêt-à-Porter Paris debut with her collection, 'Clothes of Wind', reinventing the classic hanbok. This showcase was well-remembered in the cultural memory of the ROK for it was said to introduce Korean hanbok to a global stage. According to an article on Korea.net,⁵²² the show 'garnered rave reviews across France, like, "It has the most modern, at the same time, the most Korean of looks," and "It's a combination of free and elegance as if it embraces wind all over," [but] it was denounced here at home as "an ambiguous garment of no nationality and no traditionalism."⁵²³ Lee's designs profoundly shaped the identity of hanbok on the global fashion stage, and the global imagination, while simultaneously being criticised in the ROK for her contemporary designs.

Situating hanbok and the resurgence of hanbok culture in the 2000s' ROK as a nationalist reaction to the 'anti-Western shadow' that emerged after the Asian economic crisis of 1997/1998, Rebecca Ruhlen recalls Lee's designs in the exhibition of the National Folk

⁵¹⁹ Sophie Makariou, 'Introduction', in *L'étoffe Des Rêves de Lee Young-Hee (The Stuff of Dreams of Lee Young-Hee)* (Paris: Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet; Éditions de La Martinière, 2019), pp. 10–13 (p. 10).

⁵²⁰ Makariou, p. 12.

⁵²¹ Alice Pfeiffer, 'Traditional Korean Style Gets a Forward Spin', *The New York Times*, 18 November 2010, Online edition, section Special Report: A Cut Above <<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/19/fashion/19iht-acaghan.html>> [accessed 23 August 2023].

⁵²² The online website is produced by the Korean Culture and Information Service, and accordingly, 'represents the voice of the Korean government and which promotes Korea online'. For further reading see 'About Korea.Net' <<https://www.korea.net/AboutUs/KOCIS>> [accessed 25 August 2023].

⁵²³ Kang Gahui and Sohn JiAe, 'Lee Young-Hee Brings Modern Touches to Globalized Hanbok', *Korea.Net*, 21 May 2018, section Culture <<https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Culture/view?articleId=159174>> [accessed 25 August 2023].

Museum's 'Globalized Images of the Hanbok' exhibition, which took place in Autumn 1998.⁵²⁴ The narrative of the exhibition unfolded to map the transformation of Korean clothing from the turn of the twentieth century through Japanese occupation, then displayed contemporary hanbok designs. According to Ruhlen, '[t]he final display in this section' exhibited the designs of Lee Young Hee, and while Lee sought to design hanbok as a global garment, Ruhlen recognises that '[g]iven how deeply hanbok is embedded in nationalist discourse, however, [she] suspect[ed] the mental image of non-Koreans dressed in hanbok might not come easily to many Koreans.'⁵²⁵ Reading the use of hanbok as a co-operative promotional program between the government and the fashion industry to critique Westernisation and the West, the global presence of Lee's fashions were indicative of the shifting national initiatives to promote culture as soft power.

As Lee opened the Lee Young Hee Museum at 2 West 32nd Street in New York in 2004 to showcase traditional Korean culture to American audiences, the project of commercialising and commodifying 'Korea' and K-Culture was also developed nationally. Lee's career and her collections were not solely focused on reconstructions of hanbok, but her designs also incorporated traditional dyeing and embroidery techniques to non-hanbok blocks. In an article from *Women's Wear Daily* (WWD), an industry standard for fashion journalism, the writer describes 'a white silk organza embroidered blouse with silk satin pants, a white silk dress with yellow trim and a white silk halter dress with an organza bolero'⁵²⁶ as part of Lee's showroom in New York as an example. When Lee's archive then was posthumously donated to the Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet (MNAAG) in 2019, the question of 'Korea' in the global imaginary asked us to consider how Paris was configured in Korea's national directive, and moreover, what Paris signified to the ROK.

MNAAG claims to hold the world's largest collection of Korean textiles outside of Korea. While this was largely attributed to the posthumous donation of Lee Young Hee's textile

⁵²⁴ Ruhlen, p. 126.

⁵²⁵ Ruhlen, pp. 126–27.

⁵²⁶ 'Lee Young Hee Taps NYC Rep', *WWD: Women's Wear Daily*, 28 September 2004.

and garment collection, donated in 2019 by the designer's daughter after her mother's death in 2018, this rhetoric from the museum, nonetheless, reflects the hallmarks of colonial worldbuilding. During my visit to the collections in April 2022, the full inventory of the donations had not been fully processed. It was sitting in the Musée d'Ennery, which was an ancillary site and collection that was part of the MNAAG, throughout COVID due to the national restrictions that prevented the work necessary to archive the materials. Lee's designs were displayed in the MNAAG's exhibition, 'L'étoffe des rêves de Lee Young-hee (Lee Young-hee's Stuff of Dreams)' between 4 December 2019 to 9 March 2020, shortly before the global lockdowns. While the designer had no previous work shown at the MNAAG, nor established any cultural relations there, the donation solidified Lee's long-standing connection to Paris where she began showing her collections as part of Paris Fashion Week in 1993.

Now belonging to a French national archive, Lee's donations ask critical questions about Eurocentric discourses of fashion and defining the Asian imaginary through the colonial gaze. Museum studies scholar Shuchen Wang highlights how the MNAAG's origins from a private museum displaying religions to a universal museum of art expressed the coloniality of the museum space through its white-cube aesthetics.⁵²⁷ Wang focuses on the displays of Asian religious objects, charting how the museum turned into a nationalised establishment under the Third Republic, then after WWII, it became a department of the Louvre. When it became an art institution, the universalising worldview of the museum sought to erase the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the objects displayed. The once 'naturalistic and realistic way' the artefacts and people were displayed using the ethnographic *mise-en-scène* was reconstructed into a uniform, open, airy space of natural light.⁵²⁸ Lee's donations at the museum offer an important case study in understanding 'Paris' in the Korean national imaginary as a site of taste, culture, and

⁵²⁷ Wang defines the 'white-cube' space through the work of Irish art critic, Brian O'Doherty, as a gallery aesthetic invented by Bauhaus in 1923 to give modernist aesthetics a physical form, displaying objects not bound to historicism. For further reading see Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1976); Wang.

⁵²⁸ Wang.

aspiration. Moreover, the exhibition and the collection defines ‘Korea’ and the Korean woman, through the collection predominantly composed of women’s wear.



Figure 52. Installation view of ‘L’etoffe des rêves de Lee Young -hee’ exhibition (4 December 2019 to 9 March 2020). Paris, FR: Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, photograph courtesy of Phillip Gowman from <https://londonkoreanlinks.net/2020/03/24/exhibition-visit-lee-young-hees-stuff-of-dreams-at-the-guimet/> [Accessed 24 Aug 2023]. © Phillip Gowman, all rights reserved.



Figure 53. Installation view of ‘L’etoffe des rêves de Lee Young-hee’ exhibition (4 December 2019 to 9 March 2020). Paris, FR: Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, photograph courtesy of © MNAAG (Paris)/ Thierry Ollivier.



Figure 54. Installation view of 'L'etoffé des rêves de Lee Young-hee' exhibition (4 December 2019 to 9 March 2020). Paris, FR: Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, photograph courtesy of © MNAAG (Paris)/ Thierry Ollivier.

According to Philip Gowman's Korean arts and culture blog, *London Korean Links*, the exhibition was divided into three sections: her reconstructions of historical garments, her hanbok collections, and her haute couture ensembles.⁵²⁹ Views from the exhibition reveal the first installation to include 'a large number of rolls of fabric and some traditional tools related to dressmaking',⁵³⁰ next to a mannequin dress in an ochre hanbok set on a straw mat, and what appeared to be hanging rolls of fabric; the colourful display seemed to reference Lee's background in dyeing techniques (*fig.* 52). In this purview into a room that references the traditional hanok house, the exhibition cites the museum's own histories as an ethnographic museum. Wang reminds us that the museum once sought to display the artefacts and people in

⁵²⁹ Gowman is a long-standing member of the British Korean Society. He launched the website *London Korean Links* in 2006. For further reading see Philip Gowman, 'Exhibition Visit: Lee Young-Hee's Stuff of Dreams, at the Guimet', *London Korean Links*, 2020 <<https://londonkoreanlinks.net/2020/03/24/exhibition-visit-lee-young-hees-stuff-of-dreams-at-the-guimet/>> [accessed 26 May 2022].

⁵³⁰ Gowman, 'Exhibition Visit: Lee Young-Hee's Stuff of Dreams, at the Guimet'.

an ethnographic mise-en-scène, which imagined material cultures returning to their original settings. In these unfolding exhibitions there was a distinct narrative that juxtaposed the ‘traditional’ hanbok iterations, which were displayed as hanging garments in glass encased presentations (*fig. 53*), and the couture garments which were dressed on mannequins with figurative faces (*fig. 54*).

On the one hand, distinguishing these two categories of Lee’s collections articulates two narratives in her career, but they also reinforce the distinction between couture and hanbok, or in Orientalist terms: us and the Other. Viewing the couture on mannequins asks the viewer to imagine the person, and the viewers, wearing the clothing, but the hanging hanbok, without any recognisable bodies, seems to recall what Cheng defines as the ‘affinity between racialization, imagined personhood, and synthetic invention.’⁵³¹ Yet, in the interplay between the naturally dyed linen, and ramie fibres, patchworked together as ornamental construction, the spectrality of the yellow woman appears with or without the mannequins underneath. The collection of fashion garments, once defined through their wearability and utilitarian nature, transform into a uselessness that recalls the history of ornamental things, or at least Modernist assumptions toward ornamental things.

Viewing Lee’s garments in the Musée d’Ennery as pieces hanging in various garment boxes that were then laid on a fabric covered floor for closer inspection and documentation, I was reminded of Svetlana Alpers’s definition of the museum’s gaze as one that privileges sight, transforming cultural objects into art.⁵³² As Hélène Gascuel, the curator of collections of Chinese textiles, carefully placed each garment on the ground, I also recalled the animate objectness of Huh’s displays of bojagi and the particular description of artist Li Xiaofeng’s *Beijing Memory No. 5* by Cheng who demonstrates how the ceramic pieces of ‘domestic and collectible things’ assembled together as a body of a Ceramic Woman ‘congealed and fractured domesticity,

⁵³¹ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 92.

⁵³² Alpers.

offering repurposed purposelessness, transcend[ing] its own quotidianness to lay claim to art.⁵³³ Li's work, which used ceramic fragments that were found from archaeological sites dated to the Qing (and Ming) Dynasty,⁵³⁴ reconstructed a representational body from everyday items, and in doing so, transformed domestically used items into art. Lee's work recalls both the everyday item of jogakbo, once used to wrap domestic objects, and clothing. These objects in the archive, however, now hold the memory of Koreanness reimagined into non-functional, unused garments of symbolic national identity.



L to R: *Figure 55*. Overhead photograph of *Mosi (ramie) Jacket*, Lee Young Hee's 1995 S/S Paris Collection. Lee Young Hee, 1995. Courtesy of Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet (Paris), Lee Jung-Woo Donation, 2019. MA 13184. *Figure 56*. Close-up detail photograph of *Mosi (ramie) Jacket*, Lee Young Hee's 1995 S/S Paris Collection. Lee Young Hee, 1995. Courtesy of Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet (Paris), Lee Jung-Woo Donation, 2019. MA 13184.

The 'extravagant aestheticism' used to describe the ornamental personhood of the yellow woman is not immediately apparent in the surfaces of Lee's hanbok. Instead, a patchworked ramie jacket, and patchworked style in trousers, showcased in Lee's Spring/Summer 1995 Paris collection, reference the modesty, and austerity of Korean practices (*figs.* 55, 56). The donated collection included iterations of 'modernised' hanbok, blocks that were derived from the jacket and skirt combination of Korean women's wear, but also included one-piece evening wear and

⁵³³ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 99–101.

⁵³⁴ Cheng notes that while the museum catalogue attributed the ceramic fragments to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), some of the shards actually dated back to the Ming Dynasty. Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 99, 101.

tailored jackets. The block of the aforementioned jacket measured 65 cm in height at the center back, with the shoulder length that measured 42 cm in height, and it was seemingly composed of four distinct pattern pieces that were individually composed of patchworked panels, a pleated lapel, and a fastening cord. There was no separate arm piece, instead the garment had a curved seam from the arm hole to the side; the arm hole had a diameter which measured 20 cm. The lapel was composed of a 25.6 cm in length piece of ramie that had been pleated three times. Two fastening ties were attached to the lapel and right side of the garment, which are composed of a piece of ramie which had been folded over and machine-stitched together.

Each patchworked panel was composed of what appeared to be a combination of white undyed ramie, a loose gauzed ramie, and a beige piece-dyed ramie, which were initially machine-stitched together, and then hand-stitched over top of the machine-stitched seams with a blanket stitch, giving the overall appearance the look of a hand-sewn garment. There were embroidered details, such as a brown thread sewn through the weft of the cloth to seemingly emulate a



Figure 57. Close-up detail photograph of *Mosi (ramie) Jacket*, Lee Young Hee's 1995 S/S Paris Collection. Lee Young Hee, 1995. Courtesy of Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet (Paris), Lee Jung-Woo Donation, 2019. MA 13184.

mending stitch (*fig. 57*) – these intricate and laboured details seem to signify ‘Koreanness’ through the patchwork technique, and the use of white ramie. Recalling the artwork of Zadie Xa from Chapter One, whose embodied performances of Korean womanhood produced labour-intensive pieces, we see the relation between women and patchwork as forged through labour, and thus reinforced through the reiterative, repetitive motions of piecing together, mending, and stitching. Moreover, through these examples, ornamental and decorative practices are revealed as gendered labour.

Yeseung Lee traces the shifting meanings of white hanbok in Korea, highlighting how the material surface simultaneously discerned Korean identities as a singular body of the colonised under Japanese colonial rule, while also acting as a mobilising symbol to unite national resistance. Clothing, Lee reminds us, can serve as a second skin, thus it can also be imbued with processes of socialisation, including racialisation, gendering, or otherwise classified.⁵³⁵ I argued in the previous chapter that white ramie, and specifically the white ramie collected in global collections of Korea, was racialised. While Lee contends that white was a symbol of resistance, I highlighted the complicated encounters that produced and recognised white and white ramie patchwork as Korean in archives. White ramie patchwork thus, connotes multiple meanings that symbolise histories of resistance, subjugation, and racialisation. This entangled history of national resistance and racialisation is bound to coloniality, where being Korean as a singular idea was predicated by cultural erasure and geopolitical division.

The details of the embroidered brown threads, gauze patches, and dyed pieces represent tears and mending practices (*figs.* 56, 57) that were not apparent in Huh Dong Hwa's archive. Reading Anishinaabe artist Nadia Myre's artworks, *Scarscapes* (2008-10) and *The Scar Project* (2005-13), Skelly reminds us of how beading and embroidery 'index the aftermath of violence (both physical and psychological)' as textile representations of 'stitched scars.'⁵³⁶ Similarly, Lee's details are symbolic representations of poverty and survival that were not visibly present in the national and material memories of jogakbo. Yet, these intricate features that represent 'the aftermath of violence' are also significations of skilled craftsmanship and timely labour. Baudrillard posits that 'simulacra' are copies or citations representing an endless reiteration of an iteration of the original reality itself, such that the gulf between the sign and the original reference is no longer apparent – 'it is the generation by models of a real without origin or

⁵³⁵ 'Pieced Quilts: Hexagon'.

⁵³⁶ Skelly, p. 125.

reality: a hyperreal.⁵³⁷ Lee's patchworked white ramie jacket is a simulacrum of 'Korea'; it is a signpost referencing a national imaginary. It is an expression of the ROK's postmodern identity, where fashion serves to reinforce 'Korea' through a typology represented by white ramie and patchwork. Belonging now to a French national archive, these pieces, and Lee's collections, reinforce the symbolic power of Paris as the 'F'ashion capital. The textiles and garments have become part of French cultural memory, and more accurately, defined by French cultural memory, reinforcing the coloniality of the ROK's cultural memory through its proximity to Western institutions, and European centers of taste.

iv. Globalising Korea: Chanel's Resort 2016 Collection

In the previous examples of Korean designers, I explored instances of patchwork as fashion moving outward, exhibiting and exporting 'Korea' and Korean patchwork to the global imaginary. In this final example of this chapter, the Chanel Resort 2016 show, I analyse a case study of a European design house interpreting 'Korea' and representing 'Korea' through garments that reference jogakbo and other Korean signifiers, including mother of pearl lacquer, hangul (Korean language) and saekdong (many colours) of jeogori (hanbok vest). By the time Chanel set their show in Seoul, the capital was a significant market for fashion. According to WWD, 'the South Korean fashion market was worth about \$12.6 billion a year, to rank 11th in the world. Fashion exports total about \$15.3 billion annually' in 2008.⁵³⁸ As fashion was one of the markets that the national government identified as one of the key drivers of cultural growth, the Ministry of Culture, Industry and Education funneled support into the Seoul Metropolitan government to support initiatives that developed Seoul as a global center for fashion. Seoul accounted for over half of the fashion market in the country.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser, English translation (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 1.

⁵³⁸ Vicky Sung, 'Fashion Takes Spotlight in Seoul', *WWD: Women's Wear Daily*, 15 April 2008 <<https://wwd.com/feature/fashion-takes-spotlight-in-seoul-457672-2069282/>> [accessed 23 August 2023].

⁵³⁹ Sung.

The ROK was also a targeted and lucrative market for luxury sales. As of 2020, Chanel's sales in the Asia-Pacific surpassed both Europe and the Americas. While the private company only began releasing its financial reports from 2017,⁵⁴⁰ the steady climb of the Asia-Pacific marketplace placed its 2020 revenue at \$5,257 million, despite COVID, which was above Europe's \$2,885 million and Americas' \$1,966 million.⁵⁴¹ Chanel entered the South Korea market in 1992, as a franchise fragrance and beauty counter at Shinsegae, one of the major department stores named earlier in the chapter. The luxury brand rapidly expanded to build nine fashion boutiques, and a flagship store by 2020. In an interview with the *Business of Fashion* (BoF) in 2015, Bruno Pavlovsky, Chanel's president of fashion, expressed the company's recognition of the South Korean market, not only as a lucrative consumer base, but as a significant tourist destination for the Asian market broadly due to the Hallyu phenomenon.⁵⁴²

The phenomenon of fashion shows in global destinations, particularly for the showcasing of Resort or Cruise collections, has been on the rise for the past two decades. One of the first shows that was staged outside of the four fashion capitals was Pierre Cardin's 1978 show in China. Since then, there have been destination shows in global locations, including, Louis Vuitton's 2017 Resort show in Rio de Janeiro, Chanel's 2017 Resort show in Havana, Louis Vuitton's Resort 2018 in Kyoto, Christian Dior's Resort 2020 in Marrakech, Christian Dior's Men's Pre-Fall 2023 in Cairo. More recently, Louis Vuitton's Pre-Fall 2023 show and Gucci's Resort 2024 both took place in Seoul. Initially conceptualised as a capsule collection in

⁵⁴⁰ 2017 marked the first year that Chanel released its annual financial results for the first time in its 108-year history. The new transparency was speculated to be a public relations campaign to deny 'persistent rumors that Chanel could be a takeover target.' For further reading see Elizabeth Paton, 'Chanel Publishes Annual Results for First Time in 108 Years', *The New York Times* (New York, 21 June 2018) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/business/chanel-earnings-luxury-annual-report.html>> [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁵⁴¹ *Chanel Limited Financial Results for the Year Ended 31 December 2020* (London: Chanel Limited, 15 June 2021) <<https://services.chanel.com/media/files/Press-Release-2020-Results-ENG-FINAL.pdf>> [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁵⁴² Gianluca Longo, 'Decoding Chanel's South Korean Spectacle', *Business of Fashion*, 4 May 2015 <<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/global-currents/decoding-channels-south-korean-spectacle>> [accessed 29 October 2017].

1919 by Gabrielle Chanel,⁵⁴³ the connotations of ‘Resort’ or ‘Cruise’ conjured leisure and worldly travel destinations for European and American luxury clients, and the collections were accordingly inspired by such clientele. In destinations that are outside of the Anglo-European world, locations become a symbolic or imagined backdrop for a temporary sojourn, which Others local communities and misrecognises some sacred spaces. Akin to the fashion editorials that depict fashion ‘*out of place*’, that is, fashion set in non-Western spaces, Sarah Cheang reminds us that

Fashion is shown to be a globetrotting overlay in endless juxtaposition of designer-clad models, who are citizens of the world, with indigenous people, who belong root and branch to one particular place. The products of the *Vogue* fashion world, although centered on the capitals of Paris, London, Milan and New York, are projected as a free-floating, universal phenomenon in opposition to an explicitly geographically grounded ethnicity.⁵⁴⁴

In other words, the Fashion system and luxury industry represents the Anglo-European clientele of the publications as the models, who are cosmopolitan and worldly, versus the ‘ethnic’ identities that are represented as belonging to fixed locations and associated with traditional garments. While ‘ethnic’, Cheang highlights, denotes ‘cultural’, in the case of this type of photo editorial, the distinction plays out to marginalise, exoticise, and Other people and communities.⁵⁴⁵

In Resort shows, this ethnicity or Otherness is represented by the setting, where the backdrop of recognisable cultural heritage serves as a fixed location signifying tradition and timelessness, juxtaposed to the global denizens of the modern fashion world. As the luxury fashion team and its audience literally and physically travel to each destination, the audience is positioned through the gaze of the explorer and coloniser. Thus when Fendi displayed their show on the Great Wall of China in 2007, the dynamic between European ‘F’ashion as modern

⁵⁴³ Sarah Maisey, ‘The Concept of the Cruise Collection Explained’, *The National News*, 3 June 2018, E-Paper edition, section Lifestyle <<https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/fashion/the-concept-of-the-cruise-collection-explained-1.736522>> [accessed 31 August 2023].

⁵⁴⁴ Sarah Cheang, ‘To the Ends of the Earth: Fashion and Ethnicity in the Vogue Fashion Shoot’, in *Fashion Media Past and Present*, ed. by Djurdja Barlett, Shaun Cole, and Agnès Rocamora (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 37.

⁵⁴⁵ Cheang, ‘To the Ends of the Earth: Fashion and Ethnicity in the Vogue Fashion Shoot’, p. 36.

versus Chinese culture as traditional, or European power as coloniser and China as subservient, was made ever more apparent when the design house revealed that they supposedly ‘did not officially have permission to stage its fashion show on the Great Wall’. The company’s owner, Bernard Arnault, nonetheless proudly stated that it was ““the first fashion show visible from the moon””.⁵⁴⁶ This statement and the spectacle of the show itself were underpinned by established colonial relationships, with the luxury fashion company exploiting a sacred site, emblazoning it with logos to signify its capitalist domination of the global marketplace, while simultaneously reimagining cultural localities for symbolic gain. Fashion scholar, Silvano Mendes argues that the show was ‘particularly revealing because the symbolic impact of the setting was a way for the house to re-affirm its presence among the pantheon of global luxury leaders with continuing profits despite the Global Economic Crisis that began to affect the sector the following year in 2008.’⁵⁴⁷ Simply put, the show was a display of economic and symbolic power during an anticipated global recession.

When Chanel’s Resort 2016 show took place at the DDP in May 2015, there was a seeming discrepancy from the practices described above. The venue was not a historical site, but rather one firmly rooted in a neo-futurist imagination. Located in Seoul by the historic market area known for textile production and garment making and by the Eastern gate of the old city, the DDP is a designated cultural hub that houses a design museum, a library, exhibition galleries, convention and seminar rooms, and several commercial storefronts. It is a space that acts as a postmodern symbol, recalling the cultural memory and geographic locality of Seoul’s industrialisation through the textile and garment industries. The impressive spectacle was built

⁵⁴⁶ Journalist Miles Socha clarifies that while the company did not have official permission, due to the multiple entities that governed the wall, 'Michael Burke, the-then chief executive officer at [Fendi], revealed in an interview, "[...] you'd never get approvals. All you'd ever get is non-rejections."', which seems to imply that the event was not exactly illegal. For further reading see Miles Socha, 'Seminal Moments: When Fendi Conquered the Great Wall of China', *Women's Wear Daily*, 24 September 2020, section Designer and Luxury <<https://wwd.com/fashion-news/designer-luxury/when-karl-and-fendi-conquered-the-great-wall-of-china-1203671195/>> [accessed 25 April 2023].

⁵⁴⁷ Silvano Mendes, 'The Instagrammability of the Runway: Architecture, Scenography, and the Spatial Turn in Fashion Communications', *Fashion Theory*, 25.3 (2021), 311–38 (pp. 312–13).

over five years between 2009 to 2014 and is now comprised of forty-five thousand aluminum panels of varied sizes and curvatures – a signature style of the late Zaha Hadid’s (1950-2016) neo-futurist imagination. Drawn from an advanced three-dimensional digital construction service called the Building Information Modelling system, it was the first public building in the ROK to be developed from such technologies.⁵⁴⁸ The DDP is thus an example of technological innovation, and a signpost for Seoul’s new branded identity as a de-industrialised design center.

During my several research visits to Seoul in 2018, 2020, and 2021, I toured the site, gazing upon the curvaceous silver façade of aluminum panels pieced together to resemble a patchwork without the sutures, which undulated like uneven waves rising out of the concrete ground, intersecting with concrete walkways. The building is a highlight of Seoul’s contemporary architecture of the early twenty-first century, a vision of an international aesthetic, and a fitting symbol for the rise of Seoul as a design capital. Upon viewing it, one encounters the very essence of postmodernism – it exemplifies what Chin-tao Wu describes as ‘the urban spectacle of consumption, [which] is no longer [about] the goods themselves but their status and symbolic value.’⁵⁴⁹ The DDP is a branded Zaha Hadid design; it is a site for tourists to visit, and influencers to take their photographs against.

It was initially commissioned as part of the city’s Design Seoul campaign in 2010, after Seoul was selected by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design as a World Design Capital.⁵⁵⁰ This was part of the city government’s initiative to rebrand the image of the ROK and Seoul from an industrial center to a capital of design and design innovation – an agenda undoubtedly aligned to new initiatives promoting cultural production and tourism as soft power. Situated in Dongdaemun, the building reinforces the cultural history of the location, next

⁵⁴⁸ Amy Frearson, ‘Zaha Hadid’s Dongdaemun Design Plaza Opens in Seoul’, *Dezeen*, 23 March 2014 <<https://www.dezeen.com/2014/03/23/zaha-hadid-dongdaemun-design-plaza-seoul/>> [accessed 6 July 2021].

⁵⁴⁹ Chin-tao Wu, ‘Hermès in Asia: Haute Couture, High Art and The Marketplace’, *Oxford Art Journal*, 39.3 (2016), 441–55 (p. 441).

⁵⁵⁰ Jieheerah Yun, ‘Construction of the World Design Capital: Détournement of Spectacle in Dongdaemun Design Park & Plaza in Seoul’, *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, 13.1 (2014), 17–24 (p. 17).

to the (historical) Gwangjang market and the Changsindong home factories, which makes it a considered choice for being the established venue of Seoul Fashion Week (SFW). Seoul is now not only a world design hub, but a global design marketplace for consumption. During SFW, the DDP becomes a backdrop for the fashion spectacle of style bloggers and street style photographs, reinforcing an image of the ROK as a futuristic location. As Instagram and TikTok influencers line the concrete walkways against the silver spectacle, their posts become advertisements for Seoul – through the recognisable features of the DDP.

The Chanel Resort 2016 show included ninety-five looks that could be sectioned into material categories of printed jogakbo, patchworked compositions with embroidered ornamental elements, saekdong iterations inspired by the striped multi-coloured variations of hanbok, hangul woven tweeds, ornamental designs jacquard knits, mother of lacquer pearl embroideries, and patchworked evening wear, most likely composed of silk organza. The signature Chanel tweed suit in various material developments were interspersed throughout, as well as more minimal material developments in a singular colour and composition. Descriptions from the coverage of the show included: Tim Blanks from *Vogue* remarked that the models were made up like ‘manga kewpies’,⁵⁵¹ that the show was full of ‘the oddities, synthetic, like people imagine K-Pop culture to be’, and made multiple references to ‘tradition’;⁵⁵² *WWD*’s Crystal Tai introduced her piece by stating that while Japan and China were well-mined inspirations for European fashion houses, South Korea had new references, reiterating relationships between ‘traditional’ Korea and ‘modern’ Chanel;⁵⁵³ Gianluca Longo from the *BoF* highlighted the ‘*avant-garde* silhouettes’ and how ‘Asian sophistication [was reinterpreted] with a contemporary spirit.’⁵⁵⁴ All three journalists highlighted the patchwork iterations.

⁵⁵¹ Blanks’ description of the ‘manga kewpie’ aesthetic elides popular cultural references from Japan: the graphic mascot of kewpie mayonnaise and a Japanese category of graphic literature.

⁵⁵² Tim Blanks, ‘Chanel Resort 2016 Collection Coverage’, *Vogue*, 4 May 2015 <<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2016/chanel>> [accessed 29 October 2017].

⁵⁵³ Crystal Tai, ‘Chanel Cruise 2016’, *WWD: Women’s Wear Daily*, 4 May 2015, section Runway/Paris 2016 Resort <<https://wwd.com/runway/resort-2016/paris/chanel/review/>> [accessed 31 August 2023].

⁵⁵⁴ Longo.

Throughout the reviews, there was a reiterative rhetoric that interpreted the show through the distinctive binary of modern European design house and traditional Korean culture, or simultaneously, fashionable European design house and unknowable futuristic oddity. The latter is an expression of a techno-Orientalist gaze, which perpetuates binary differences between the East and the West through technological and future imaginations. Both kinds of descriptions place Korea in an imagined ‘premodern-hypermodern dynamic’ of Othering; scholars of techno-Orientalism define this framework as critique toward the representations that occur across many genres and disciplines that reflects the ‘yellow peril anxiety of an earlier, industrial-age era’ adapting to ‘new forms across cultures and hemispheres as Asian economies become more visible competitors in the age of globalization and rapid technological innovations.’⁵⁵⁵ This fear/acknowledgement of Asian economic and cultural competition is palpable in luxury fashion, with directors of European fashion houses highlighting the shifting economic power of Asian consumers. By reiterating the binary between ‘modern’ European fashion versus ‘traditional’ Asian culture, European houses and conglomerates attempt to reinforce their control over the luxury industry and its vision.

In interviews for the collection, and an essay written for the ‘Couture Korea’ exhibition⁵⁵⁶ catalogue in 2017, Karl Lagerfeld (1933-2019), the creative director of Chanel between 1983 to his death and Fendi from 1965, described his desire to modernise traditional things. He writes, ‘traditional things can be updated, as Goethe said, to make a better future with enlarged elements of the past. I like Korean roots, but they must be adapted to the Korean world of today or to their idea of their world.’⁵⁵⁷ While set in the neo-futurist setting of the DDP, the garments of the catwalk referenced so-called traditional Korean elements, which were adapted to conventional

⁵⁵⁵ David S. Roh, Betsy Huang, and Greta A. Niu, ‘Technologizing Orientalism: An Introduction’, in *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media*, ed. by David S. Roh, Betsy Huang, and Greta A. Niu (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2015), pp. 1–19 (pp. 1–2).

⁵⁵⁶ *Couture Korea* took place at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco between 3 November 2017 to 4 February 2018.

⁵⁵⁷ Karl Lagerfeld, ‘Korean Inspired’, in *Couture Korea*, ed. by Hyeonjeong Kim Han (San Francisco and Seoul: Asian Art Museum and Arumjigi Culture Keepers Foundation, 2017), p. 57.

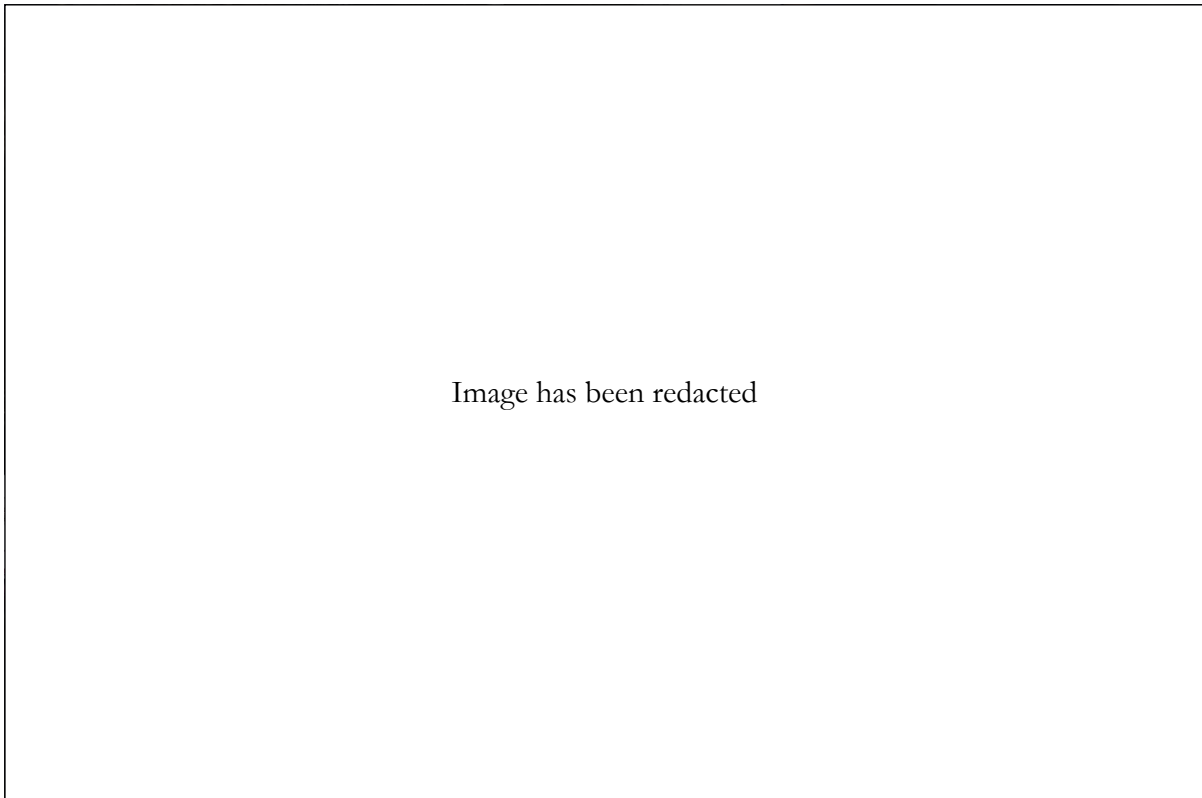


Figure 58. Photograph of research from Suzy Menkes interview with Kim Young-Seong. *British Vogue* online. 17 April 2016. Photograph by Olivier Saillant. <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/cnilux-suzy-meets-kim-young-seong-chanel> [Accessed on 21 July 2021].

garment blocks. In Lagerfeld's statements, the impulse to modernise, adapt, patronise, appropriate, and represent Korean culture was as a service to capitalism – to sell products through his own creative direction and the appeal of Chanel's brand name. One may easily interpret the collection as appropriation, or an Orientalist view of Korea, yet that seems to dismiss the transcultural potential of a collection shaped by many actors. In Rosalie Kim's discussions of the Chanel show, she highlights how Korean audiences were sold the display 'as a way of reaching a new audience and propagating their culture'.⁵⁵⁸ It would be amiss to not highlight Lagerfeld's problematic histories,⁵⁵⁹ which are articulated in his reflective desires of wanting to 'civilise' cultural identities, but this show and the collection can also be read as an

⁵⁵⁸ Rosalie Kim, 'On Curating Korea'.

⁵⁵⁹ Design critic Isabella Segalovich traces Lagerfeld's problematic views, naming his Islamophobia, sexism, and denigration of fat people, to his childhood upbringing, where the values of the Nazis shaped what she argues were his 'fascists aesthetic ideal[s]'. For further reading see Isabella Segalovich, 'Villains En Vogue: How Karl Lagerfeld's Dark Origins Reveal the Influences of Fascism on Fashion', *Print*, 18 July 2023 <<https://www.printmag.com/design-criticism/villains-en-vogue-how-karl-lagerfelds-dark-origins-reveal-the-influence-of-fascism-on-fashion/>> [accessed 10 September 2023].

expression of the ROK's global significance, which included the growing power of Korean consumers and backstage creatives that also contributed to the collaborative presentation.

Chanel's design team is composed of more players than Karl Lagerfeld. Luxury fashion collections are produced by both in-house teams and additional suppliers. One of the key roles in building collections is the fabric developer or fabric director, who designs the material aspects of each garment. On Chanel's team, the role of the fabric director is occupied by the Korean-

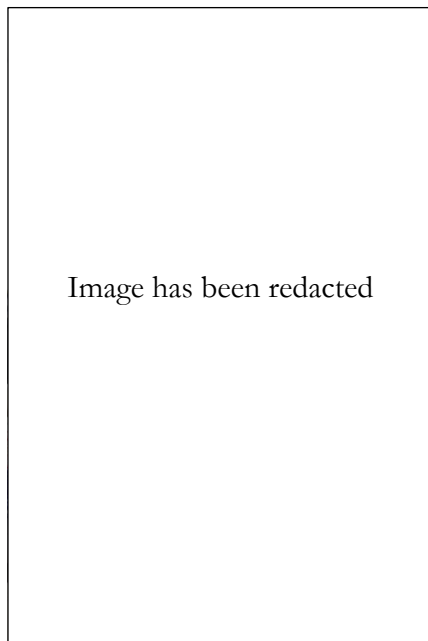


Figure 59. Photograph of Kim Young-Seong's office. *British Vogue* online. 17 April 2016. Photograph by Olivier Saillant. <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/cnilux-suzy-meets-kim-young-seong-chanel> [Accessed on 21 July 2021].

born, Kim Young-Seong, who joined the team in 1999. In coverage for the show, she was consistently defined as a significant collaborator, and described her role under Lagerfeld as having 'the freedom of creation [...] It is an amazing company, and with Karl there is total freedom. I ask other people how they work, and they cannot have this kind of autonomy.'⁵⁶⁰ In *Vogue's* behind-the-scenes interview between Suzy Menkes and Kim, her creativity and her Koreanness were expressed through photographs of the stacks of elaborate research packages, which included collaged pages of various jeogori, paeji, and jewellery boxes, (fig. 58) and two images of Kim holding a package of Korean

lotus root chips and a close-up of a filing cabinet with a 'Work Hard & Be Nice To People' poster above a South Korean flag, placed next to two postcards of Che Guevara (fig. 59)

Guevara's obvious signification is to communism as he was the Argentine Marxist leader who played a significant role in the Cuban Revolution, and thus the juxtaposition of the flag and the postcards, on the one hand could connote the Cold War antagonisms of the Korean peninsula. In the setting of the fashion house, however, it seems more likely to be a clear symbol

⁵⁶⁰ Suzy Menkes, 'Suzy Meets Kim Young Seong', *British Vogue*, 17 April 2016 <<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/cnilux-suzy-meets-kim-young-seong-chanel>> [accessed 21 July 2021].

of capitalist hegemony – a commodified image of the Marxist leader reproduced as a postcard to signpost one’s affections for Guevara’s coolness. This behind-the-scenes photography represents the staged aesthetics of backstage labour, belonging to a category of photographic representation that illuminates the often-unseen backstage workers. Drawn from theatrical studies, Christin Essin, argues that ‘the photographer/filmmaker who takes a camera backstage has the potential to not just represent, but *aestheticize* backstage labor, asking a viewer to consider the beauty and worth of a subject previously deemed insignificant or undeserving of attention [...] potentially prompt[ing] other theatre practitioners [and scholars] to consider and convey the value of their labor’.⁵⁶¹ Situating her insights in the context of US theatre and arts-funding cuts, Essin highlights the roles of backstage players to draw necessary attention to the value of their labour. In the fashion industry, behind-the-scenes photography now seems as ubiquitous as the catwalk shot. While this category extends to include the scenes of models and designers preparing for the catwalk stage, I argue that these in-house design processes are significant to the production of collection, and the performance of the fashion show. However, unlike Essin’s backstage hands who were seen as ‘insignificant or undeserving of attention’, this category of representation reinforces the structural hierarchies that regard the importance of the designer, situating the role in relation to the artist. These photographic representations highlight the sumptuous and colourful material processes of fashion design, positioning the viewer in proximity to the abundant material wealth of luxury. Jogakbo here, has not been produced in the private households of Korean women, but it has been produced on a global scale, with many collaborators.

The production of luxury fashion relies on both the in-house designers who each contribute to the final vision of each collection, and the out-of-house suppliers who produce textile and embroidery developments. Soyeon Turner⁵⁶² is an embroidery and textile designer for

⁵⁶¹ Christin Essin, ‘An Aesthetic of Backstage Labor’, *Theatre Topics*, 21.1 (2011), 33–48 (p. 35).

⁵⁶² Soyeon Turner is a pseudonym. The interviewee’s name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research.

a luxury textile manufacturing company, who supplies Chanel with seasonal material developments. In our email correspondence, she describes her work with the company as developing fabrics from the research stage to designing samples and finalising productions after the collections have been sold. Although she has no direct contact with the Chanel designers, the supplier that she works for provides samples to the brand, which are sometimes based on directed briefs. Soyeon describes this process:

[o]nly selected people are allowed to see and speak to Chanel designers. The rest of the team receives the relevant information afterwards. The seasonal briefing could be a straightforward sample or a low-res photo of a bad photocopy sent via WhatsApp. Some images are vague, but leave room for creativity and interesting techniques [to emerge. There are] lots of emails and drawings sent back and forth, until they are either approved or we run out of time. We produce quick samples to send out or an intern delivers them personally to their Paris office. In between seasonal developments, I either work on production files or on a number of additional designs that the sales department can showcase between seasons. After a while, you “get” their aesthetics, and can come up with new ideas. The entire process is a bit difficult, because I have no direct contact with the Chanel designers. Whenever a question comes up, I will speak to our contact person [...] I don’t know whether this is a rule from them or from my employer.⁵⁶³

William H. Sewell Jr.’s account of the French fashion industry in the late seventeenth to late eighteenth century illuminates how ‘the empire of fashion’ was built from the relations with French textile industries, predominantly the silk industry of Lyon, which Sewell Jr. argues was ‘a powerfully expansive nexus of design, marketing and consumer desire’.⁵⁶⁴ Importantly, it was the collaborative connections between Parisian fashion designers and the textile designers of the Lyonnais industries that forged the remarkable rise and dominance of the French fashion industries. Soyeon’s account reveals these legacies of a French fashion industry established through collaborations between Parisian designers and ancillary textile designers. Her labour defines the creative pluralities involved in the collective processes of making, as a backstage designer, highlighting how Chanel’s representation of ‘Korea’ must be understood as an expression of globalisation, logomania, and colonial politics involved in creating the Other.

⁵⁶³ Soyeon Turner to Christin Yu, ‘Re: Consent and Project Information’, 27 July 2021.

⁵⁶⁴ William H. Sewell, Jr, ‘The Empire of Fashion and the Rise of Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France’, *Past & Present*, 206.1 (2010), 81–120 (p. 88).

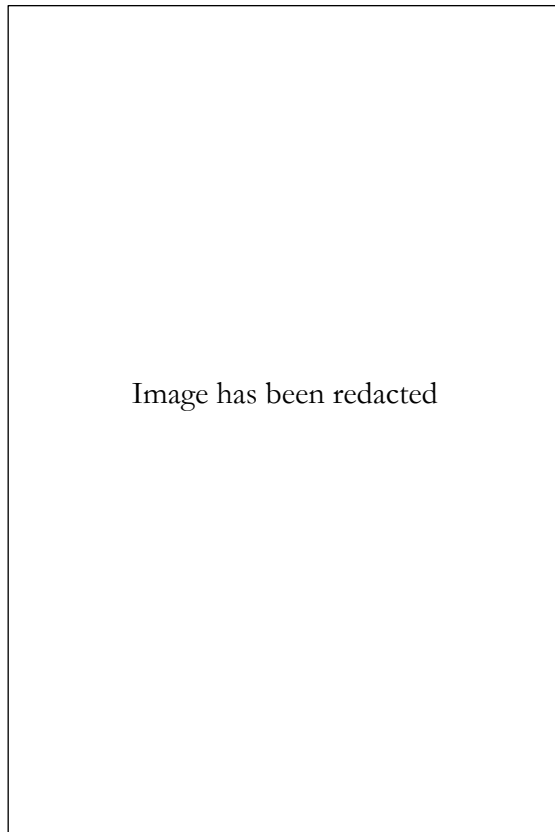


Figure 60. Photograph of Look 95, Chanel Resort 2016 Show, Model: Ji Hye Park. Courtesy of Vogue Runway. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2016/chanel/slideshow/collection#95> [Accessed on 20 July 2021]

For Arjun Appadurai, the meanings of objects are ‘inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories,’⁵⁶⁵ meaning that their histories, and their value, do not belong to a single moment, not in their production, nor even their exchange, but rather, they continue to build meaning as they exist in the world. Several pieces from the Chanel 2016 Resort collection have since its initial showing been photographed for fashion editorials, exhibited in several exhibitions, and adorned on celebrities, including *Vogue Korea*’s ‘Korean Fantasy’ editorial in January 2016, and the Asian Art Museum’s ‘Couture Korea’ exhibition (3 November 2017 to 4 February 2018) which was produced in

collaboration with the Arumjigi Culture Keepers Foundation of Seoul.

One specific garment, Look 95 of the collection (*fig. 60*), was also used in Bong Joon Ho’s 2017 film, *Okeja*, where it was worn by Lucy Mirando (played by Tilda Swinton), the antagonist of the film. In a powerful case of reappropriation, the film’s costume designs used the visible signifiers of jogakbo to offer a critique of Chanel’s interpretations of Korea through juxtaposing two iterations of patchwork use. The film was a Korean-American co-production that offered Ho’s signature social critique. *Okeja* follows the narrative of a ‘super-pig’, a fantastical creature that serves as the film’s co-protagonist, along with Mija (played by Seohyun Ahn), its friend and caretaker, unfolding to reveal the grim horrors of the animal industrial complex. In

⁵⁶⁵ Arjun Appadurai, ‘Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 3–63 (p. 5).

the representations of Mija as Korea versus the Mirando corporation, Ho intricately layers criticism of colonial modernity in Korea and capitalist hegemony's human-centric drives, which is reinforced by the filmic style.

The narrative of the film is centered around a super-pig contest where several caretakers from countries around the world were given a young super-pig from the Mirando corporation to raise with the agreement that the corporation would return to compare the welfare of the animals in the future. The winner of the contest was to raise the biggest super-pig, and in the film, it is Mija's grandfather who is the eventual winner. Okja, the super-pig and Mija, were raised in the forests and hillsides of the ROK. When Dr. Johnny Wilcox (played by Jake Gyllenhaal) and a film production team arrive to announce the winner over a public broadcast, there is a striking juxtaposition between the forested ecologies of the Korean countryside versus the lifestyles of the television people who were overwhelmingly fatigued by their surroundings (and their uphill climb). Dr. Wilcox is initially introduced as an adventure show host with a weird eccentricity, and while the viewer may expect him to act as a comedic foil, his character has sinister undertones. These characterisations are reflected in his dress, as he is introduced wearing a khaki button-up shirt with two breast pockets and epaulets, as well as a khaki drover hat, referencing Indiana Jones, *Crocodile Dundee*, and importantly, the dress of historical ethnographers, for example, Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2022) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942).

The field of ethnography and anthropology are tied to colonial ideologies, which founded and reinforced binary relations that imagined a distinction between the civilised explorers and the uncivilised tribal communities. When the film unfolds to reveal that Dr. Wilcox uses science to propel the horrors of animal cruelty, one also reads Ho's broader critique of colonial history. Once Okja is declared the winner, the duplicitous nature of the Mirando Corporation and the contest is slowly revealed. Okja is to be shipped to the headquarters in New York, where the animal is to be displayed in a public broadcast and parade before being tested

on, killed, then eaten. Okja's body is idealised as the most robust, therefore, most profitable animal for the corporation. Mija, initially ignorant to these plans, insists on accompanying Okja to New York, and the Mirando Corporation uses this opportunity to exploit her as a symbolic representative of the dutiful worker. Along her journey, Mija encounters an animal welfare group who had plans to disrupt and expose the Mirando Corporation. The narrative unfolds as an adventure film, where Mija sets off into the world to bring home her beloved friend.

Developed as a collaboration between Ho and the costume designers, Choi Seyeon and Catherine George, the world of *Okja* is rife with material signifiers that represent characters as geopolitical allegories through costume. Mija's dark-brown fringed bob, naturally flushed and blushing cheeks, and Nike running shoes are visually juxtaposed to Lucy's ice-blonde severe bob, fuchsia lipstick shades, and stiletto heels. Yet, their similarities are also represented by their childlike qualities, with Lucy wearing a set of orthodontic braces.⁵⁶⁶ The characters could be read as figurations for the ROK and the US, respectively. While the US is a relatively young country, its histories are entangled in colonial legacies, in the shadows of British, French and Spanish empires. In *Okja*, Lucy is initially introduced as the corporate head of the company, but her naivety and inexperience is reinforced by the introduction of a shadowy figure who stands behind her. The figure is her sister, Nancy, who is dressed in the identifiable checks of the British luxury label, Burberry, and thus, a reference to these British histories.

The scene that culminates as the climax of the film uses the juxtaposition of two iterations of jogakbo as costume to signify the representations of these geopolitical relations as a social critique. Lucy Mirando is dressed in the pink patchwork evening dress and matching overcoat from Look 95 of Chanel's Resort show (*fig. 60*), while Mija wears a similar construction of a mauve overshirt with a folded collar, composed of mauve and sepia patchwork and plain mauve trousers. The two-piece outfit resembles a pyjama set in its volume. Both costumes have

⁵⁶⁶ Although Mija is an actual child.



Figure 61. Film still from *Okja*. Dir. by Bong Joon Ho (Netflix, 2017).

green bow adornments around the chest, referencing the proportions of hanbok's division between the jacket (jeogori) and the skirt (chima). Mija's costume has a visible likeness to Lucy's dress, and an embroidery on the sleeve cuff that reads 'Lucy', branding Mija's costume and, Mija, the character, as property of Lucy (*fig. 61*).

When Mija first sees the costume in a backstage scene in the Mirando Corporation's offices, she encounters two assistants, who begin to remove her own accessories without consent. Mija is visibly perplexed and initially resists the costume change. The scene turns into a conversation about 'understanding English', with the costume allegorising the ROK's neo-imperial relations. The English spoken in the scene is of a distinctly (North) American dialect, and Mija's makeover is a stylised representation of 'Koreanness' that is designed by Lucy Mirando. Mija's own dress and distress is not a symptom of her own backwards naivety, but rather it is an expression of her resistance to participating in the capitalist modernity signified by the film's use of fashion. Mija eventually submits to the assistants' demands, and the camera cuts to her walking through a darkened hallway, dragging the outfit with her head bowed down. As this chapter previously demonstrated, there is a history of colonial modernity that was introduced through tailored fashions. In Mija's homophonic resonance to minjung, the common people, there is a clear critique of the capitalist cultural hegemony signified through the Chanel garment, fashion, and the coercion of dressing Mija in similar patchwork garments. Jogakbo is used to Orientalise Mija, dressing her in the constructed aesthetics of 'Koreanness'.

According to a profile of the costume designer, Catherine George, Mija's costume was initially sketched by Ho, and then crafted by traditional hanbok makers.⁵⁶⁷ From the film's publicity and interviews with both Tilda Swinton and George, it is clear that the intention of using Lagerfeld's garment was to portray the culturally inappropriate, Orientalist nature of Mirando's character. George stated that 'myself, Tilda Swinton and director Bong all loved the idea of Lucy wearing the Chanel couture dress. We talked about Lucy trying to make a statement by wearing a traditional Korean dress. We also talked about CEOs of big corporations and while we were looking at Richard Branson we found press photos of him wearing national costumes.'⁵⁶⁸ The indirect criticism speaks to the performative use of 'traditional' dress and national costumes for capital gain, and perhaps even the culture of exploitation and Orientalism within the fashion industry itself.

In contrast, the film emphasises the relationship between Mija's trousers and running shoes through medium close-up framing, as an outfit of functionality, which is further supported by the reveal of her utility belt. Mija's clothes (besides the textile construction) are practical, everyday garments, unlike the decorative symbolism of Chanel couture. Swinton stated that she played her character as 'the heir to a rotten great fortune built on the corrupt and morally repugnant initiatives carried out by her father.'⁵⁶⁹ It was a pointed reference to Ivanka Trump, for Swinton recalled that 'when we shot in New York last summer, I stood watching the Republican convention on the television in our lunch break dressed as Lucy, watching a different daughter of a different dubious dynasty addressing, from a high podium, a big crown with glossy blond hair, expensive orthodontics and modelling her Barbie-perfect modest pink dress (concurrently

⁵⁶⁷ Christopher Lavery, 'Fantasy Reality: Catherine George on Costuming Okja', *Clothes on Film*, 14 July 2017 <<https://clothesonfilm.com/fantasy-reality-catherine-george-costuming-okja/>> [accessed 20 July 2021].

⁵⁶⁸ Lavery.

⁵⁶⁹ Steve Pond, "'Okja' Star Tilda Swinton on How Ivanka Trump Inspired Her Role as 'Daughter of a Different Dubious Dynasty'", *The Wrap*, 28 June 2017 <<https://www.thewrap.com/tilda-swinton-cannes-okja-ivanka-trump-dubious-dynasty/>> [accessed 20 July 2021].

on sale online).⁵⁷⁰ In the reveal of the contest winner event, Lucy Mirando's makeover is also completed by her corrected smile, where her teeth bear an artificial perfection.

When Mija and Lucy take the stage in their patchwork garments, they are set against the cityscape of New York, which serves as a backdrop for the corporate celebration of the super-pig contest. Dressed in jogakbo as representations of 'Korea', the Mirando Corporation showcases Mija as the ROK as the prize-winning worker, symbolising the 'liberator-benefactor' relation of the ROK's economic dependence and contributions to the American capitalist hegemony. Crowds are gathered around a parade procession, where the colour pink is visually reiterated in cheerleaders' pink pom poms, the pink gingham check of milk maid uniforms and their matching pink aprons and the pink feather plumes of marching band top hats. The saturation of pink tones in the film's mise-en-scène functions, in addition to Mija's and Lucy's costumes, as a reference for the super-pig's flesh, which has now been wrapped in packages for the crowd's consumption. Capitalist values are packaged neatly in consumable products that conceal the horrors of the manufacturing process, and with it the human and animal costs of propelling the American corporation, and America in modern history.

The fleshiness of the super-pig, and the pink tones of the parade reinforce the symbolic fleshiness of the patchwork garments, which wrap the bodies of Mija and Lucy as representative skins of the ROK's national body. Jogakbo, or the reference to jogakbo, in this case study serves both as a second skin of Korean identities, and an established cultural tradition exploited by capitalist values. While I foregrounded the patchwork wrapping cloth in Chapter One, revealing how the everyday textile turned into a symbol of nation and cultural identity through women's work, this chapter highlighted relations between patchwork and the body. Mapping the connections between the national body, and the imagined and real bodies of Korean women, this chapter revealed the multiple meanings of jogakbo wrapping bodies, including voices and

⁵⁷⁰ Pond.

memories of patchwork style-fashion-dress that reflected Korean identities encountering modernity. As patterns of jogakbo transformed into clothing styles, the form sought to express and retrieve historical pasts as the country rapidly modernised, industrialised, and globalised. By foregrounding my own familial histories as stories of patchwork style-fashion-dress, and as case studies of Korean women finding new opportunities for work and consumption as the ROK rapidly modernised, I situate the imagined significations of nationalism alongside real-life stories.

From the decorative ornaments of Chunghie Lee, the Bauhaus-inspired collections of Lie Sang Bong, and the delicate, austere, laboured forms of Lee Young Hee, I mapped a genealogy of yellow womanhood through Korean fashions, revealing how local designers were supported by national policies, which were further encouraged through the ROK's initiatives toward globalisation post-Asian financial crisis. Jogakbo in the designers' visions inspired decorative skins which signposted Koreanness as traumatised, and healing, caught in a complicated entanglement with Western cultural influences, while also bolstering relationships between labouriousness and women's work. In the final case study of Chanel reimagined through Bong Joon Ho, the juxtaposition of the patchwork forms as fleshy containers, and references to *Okja*'s flesh itself, foretells the stories of Korean women who imagined new possibilities for their reconstruction via the boundary-material of skin itself.

Chapter Three. Patchworking skins: boundary-materials and corporeal processes

‘Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance in not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins.’
- *Classic of Filial Piety*⁵⁷¹

‘Skin re-members, both literally in its material surface and metaphorically in resignifying on this surface, not only race, sex and age, but the quite detailed specificities of life histories.’
- Jay Prosser, ‘Skin memories’⁵⁷²

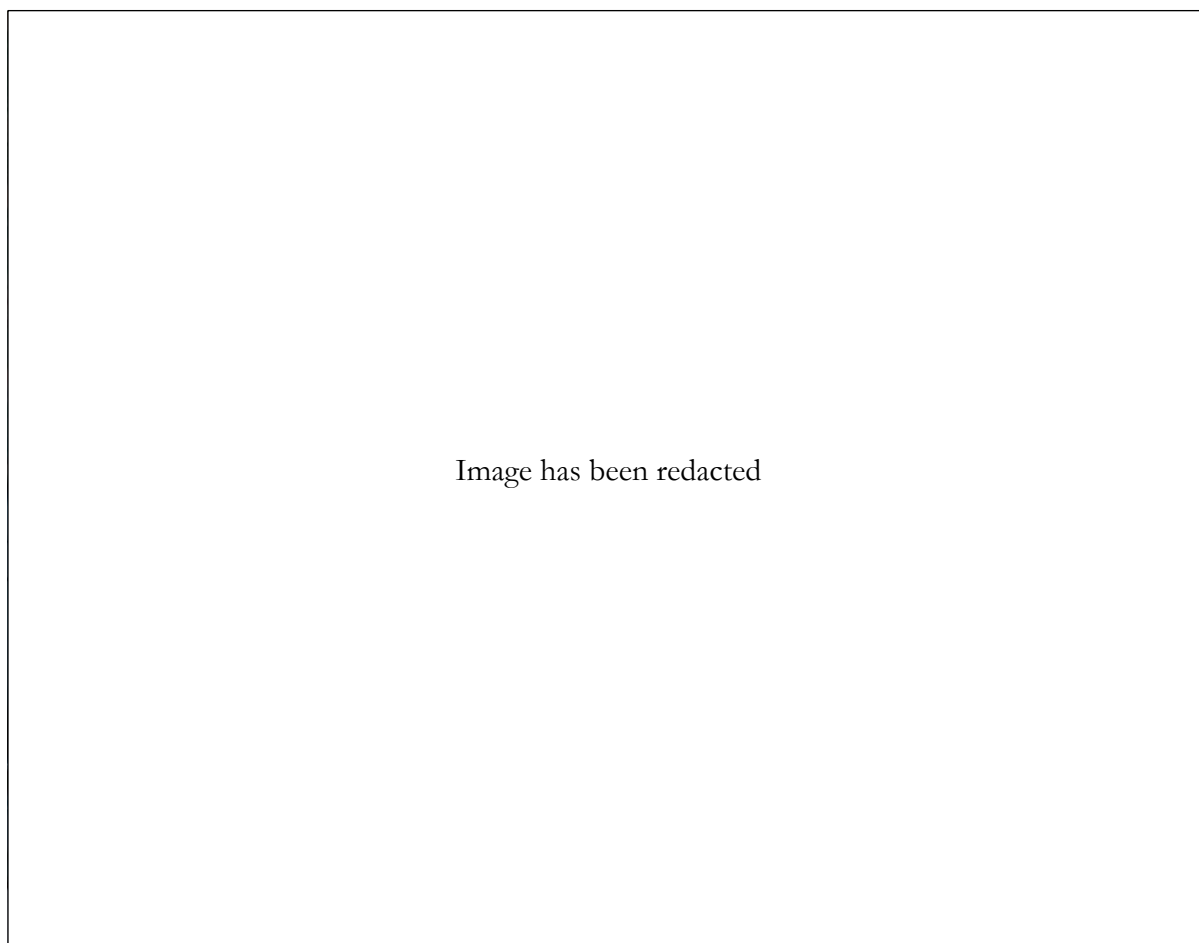


Figure 62. Ji Yeo, 2014. *Beauty Recovery Room* (Portrait 4). Digital photograph. Available from: Ji Yeo: Beauty Recovery Room, <https://jiyeo.com/osr8krscynda36ysczjkhwwn18e4xj>. [Accessed 1 September 2023].

⁵⁷¹ Henry Rosemont and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), p. 105 IN Kyeongmi Joo, ‘Gendered Differences in Modern Korea Toward Western Luxuries’, in *Fashion, Identity, and Power in Modern Asia*, ed. by Kyunghye Pyun and Aida Yeun Wong (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 143–66 (p. 145).

⁵⁷² Jay Prosser, ‘Skin Memories’, in *Thinking Through the Skin*, ed. by Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 52–68 (p. 52).

White hanbok, Yeseung Lee describes, acts ‘as a paradoxical skin – at once material and symbolic, at once expansive and exclusive – of the imagined blood relations.’⁵⁷³ Her research, introduced in the previous chapter, reveals the ways in which white hanbok served to identify colonial (Korean) bodies, and simultaneously, to mobilise collective action for Korean resistance. Practices of wrapping, adorning, and dressing the body act as important identifiers of collective and social bonds, and identities that are immediately perceptible to the public gaze. Lee describes the hanbok as a permeable membrane, between the external world and the inner body, generating powerful metaphors for the boundary between the self and (O)thers. Through Lee’s work, we are introduced to the possibilities of clothing serving as a form of ‘skin’, but what about the possibilities for imagining the materiality of skin itself?

Ji Yeo, a Korean photographer based in New York, produced a series titled *Beauty Recovery Room* in 2013. The series comprised portraits of (predominantly) Korean women in hotel suites and private apartments, and included the representation of a woman kneeling on the edge of a made-up bed, wearing what appeared to be a sleeveless black maxi dress (*fig. 62*). Composed to sit at an upright posture in the middle of the frame, her hands rested to meet on her lap. Her body was positioned on a slight angle between profile and forward as her gaze was directed outward toward the left of the frame. As she sat in front of a large window, the half-drawn laminate wood horizontal blinds intersected with the cityscape backdrop of washed out skyrisers. On either side of the window, there were vertical lines built from teal curtains that had been pleated to create their shape, where one side was gathered and the other side, loosened. The gathered side was tucked behind a dresser, against a wall covered in a damask wallpaper of green pattern and pink ground. The subject was contained, her body was gathered together within the setting of her private room. She looked poised and composed with her seemingly perfectly set hair, styled as a shoulder-length bob, framing her face. There were two visible bandages wrapped

⁵⁷³ Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’, p. 272.

on the bridge of her nose and between her lip and her nostrils. Her eyes had auras of discolouration – the significations of bruises, perhaps. Compression bandages were wrapped around the sections of her upper arms between her shoulders and her elbows. If practices of wrapping the body can act as an identifiable marker of a social group, then these bandages signify the collective identities of the injured, and healing. In Yeo's photographic series of Korean women, the bandaged wrappings contained the bodies and skin surfaces of patients who underwent plastic surgery procedures.

In the lore of Korean wrapping cloths, the decorative surfaces have been described as protective shells, and spiritual boundaries. As everyday objects, wrapping cloths were used to cover and store blankets, bedding, clothing, and to carry and swaddle babies. Patchworking thus far was viewed through histories of women's work, and as textile carriers of familial genealogies, with each stitch thought to imbue the objects with good luck, strengthening each wrapping cloth's protective properties in the spiritual realm. Found in national archives, decorative patchwork wrappings were explored as portraits of Korean women, and as narratives of cultural memory. Within the nationalist framework of cultural tradition, *jogakbo* was remembered as material evidence for Korean women exhibiting neo-Confucian values through the practices of needlework. The patchworks also revealed the multiple encounters with modernity that shaped their national and collective remembrance, and revealed Korean women making, encountering, and styling patchwork from multiple influences, piecing together narratives and ideas of selfhood from the ROK through its global openings, material trades, and collective communal practices. Korean patchwork was made by collectives of women who also sought to retrieve and author their own narratives through their own patchwork practices and dialogues.

This final chapter pieces together histories of Korean women embodying patchwork processes. I theorise patchwork as a corporeal process, both as a literal expression and metaphor for cutting, piecing together, piercing, stitching, mending, and reconstructing skin. Piecing together the multiple ways that bodies were shaped and constituted, I explore the relations

initially between wrapping, containing, and healing, then through the processes of ‘patchworking’ by threading the eye of the needle to the development of blepharoplasty, a double eyelid surgery, to explore reconstructing bodies through the disciplinary regimes of (neo)colonial ideals. I ask what possibilities are there for Korean women who cut and mend their skin?

This chapter draws on oral histories from Korean women and women of the Korean diaspora to explore what I define as the embodied experiences of patchworking. Alongside these stories, I piece together a comparative visual analysis between American military ‘before and after’ photography from the post-Korean War period with Ji Yeo’s *Beauty Recovery Room* series to analyse representations of being and becoming. Through Cheng’s *Ornamentalism*, I test the possibilities for the yellow woman, who has been constituted through her adornments and material associations, asking what happens when skin itself is theorised as material? What is at stake for the yellow woman when her encrusted and embroidered stylings are read through and *as* flesh itself? How are narratives of Korean patchwork and Korean women then, complicated, troubled, reinforced, explored through conceptualising patchwork as a corporeal process?

Theorising skin as (boundary-)material

For Cheng, the yellow woman’s flesh and being is defined by decorative, embellished, encrusted surfaces. From the case of *Chy Lung v Freeman* (1875), where twenty-two young Chinese women were accused of being ‘lewd’ and their legal personhood⁵⁷⁴ was then determined by their clothing and worn adornments, to the glittering gold costumes worn by Anna May Wong, to the ‘fragile daintiness and insensate coolness’ of Chinese porcelain that stood as a proxy for Asian women’s bodies, Cheng argues that the yellow woman’s being is constituted

⁵⁷⁴ Cheng writes that ‘Western modern personhood as inherited from the Enlightenment is generally understood to be organic, individualistic, masculine, and white. Yet in the everyday practice of the courtroom, the boardroom, the bedroom, and the cutting room, that ideal has always been deeply embroiled with, not just opposed to, a history of nonpersons. Scholars of American slavery have long pointed out the legal and philosophical challenges posed by the enslaved person, for instance.’ Accordingly, this term implies what constitutes a person, or citizen, by legal terms. For further reading see Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 4.

through material surfaces – through ornamentation.⁵⁷⁵ Yeseung Lee likens clothing to ‘a physical and psychological extension of the wearer and their skin’, and like skin, it was ‘socialised – racialised, gendered, or otherwise classified’.⁵⁷⁶ By mapping the histories of white hanbok and the Korean people, Lee foregrounds how the garment was denigrated during the colonial period by Japanese assimilation policies, but became inscribed with the fantasies of nationalist unity. Unpacking the etymologies of ‘baegui-dongpo’ or ‘baegui-minjok’, Lee traces how ‘white-clad people’ forged powerful nationalist connections between white hanbok as skin and nationhood during the colonial period.⁵⁷⁷ When Korea was divided, the white hanbok became a performance of national unity and memory for collective identities.

By reading Lee’s histories of white hanbok, I argued in the previous chapter, that the material expressions of Koreanness apparent in Lee Young Hee’s Spring/Summer 1995 white patchworked ramie pieces signified the complex mapping of Koreanness through white cloth. Yet, it was the patchwork form itself, and its embedded cultural narratives of historical poverty, survival, sustainability, and needlework that further reinforced nationalist narratives of Korean womanhood. In the embroidered blanket-stitches that were hand-sewn to reinforce and decorate the structure of the patchwork itself, ‘Koreanness’ and the ‘Korean woman’ were codified in a signpost of national identity available for a global audience through materiality and labour. These decorative details were the enunciation of Cheng’s yellow woman: the unified fragments of white ramie articulating the very being of Korean womanhood.

Feminist scholars, Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, posit the feminist possibilities for thinking about the skin as a boundary-object, inviting us to continue the feminist project of privileging embodiment, necessarily troubling the mind/body dualism of modernity. By asking us ‘to consider how the borders between bodies are unstable and how such borders are already

⁵⁷⁵ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 26–60, 66–73, 92–96.

⁵⁷⁶ Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’, pp. 276–77.

⁵⁷⁷ For further reading see Yeseung Lee, ‘The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism’, pp. 283–85.

crossed by differences that refuse to be contained on the “inside” or the “outside” of bodies’,⁵⁷⁸ they theorise skin as an object that allows us to imagine how the body itself is constituted. As the body, the skin too is a socially and culturally produced object. Building on Ahmed’s and Stacey’s research, Julia Skelly’s 2022 book, *Skin Crafts: Affect, Violence and Materiality in Global Contemporary Art*, draws on skin studies and critical craft studies to explore contemporary female artists working with skin as a metaphor. By exploring how skin acts ‘as a powerful sign, medium and symbol for racial difference and racial violence as well as gendered bodies and gender-based violence’,⁵⁷⁹ Skelly maps the discourses between skin, art, cloth, women, and violence, particularly through the lens of Indigenous making. Violence, in many ways, underpins my own exploration of Korean women. From the initial opening of Korea’s borders to the colonial occupation to the geopolitical division and the reconstruction of the ROK through military dictatorships to the uprisings of the minjung movement, violence has shaped and framed the fragmentation of this nation, people, and families.

This chapter pieces together both representations of Korean women, and the real, embodied experiences of women through skin. I draw from the theoretical intersections between studies on textiles and skins, and textiles as skins, to conceptualise plastic surgery cultures through patchwork wrapping, as embodied forms of patchwork wrapping, ultimately forming new questions about materiality and embodiment that exist outside of discourses of Korean women and plastic surgery. Building decolonial praxis, I invoke Cheng, Ahmed, Stacey, and Skelly to expand the genealogy of the yellow woman as an alternative ontology, while foregrounding embodied realities and embodiment to recall the stories of Korean women. Through these violent acts of cutting, piecing, and stitching, I theorise patchwork as a form of mending, reconstructing, and healing.

⁵⁷⁸ Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, ‘Introduction: Dermographies’, in *Thinking Through the Skin*, ed. by Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 1–17 (p. 2).

⁵⁷⁹ Skelly, p. 4.

Unfolding through the narratives of four oral history participants, this chapter pieces together stories of Korean womanhood, including: Kim Bong Kyu, my great-aunt, who was in her 80s at the time of our interview and living in Toronto. She was originally born in Korea, and emigrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1987, before moving to Toronto in 1990. Sarah Park,⁵⁸⁰ a 32-year-old married woman living in Toronto at the time of our interview, who was from the Korean diaspora. Sarah was born in Canada, but also lived in the ROK for durations of her adult life and identified both of her parents as being from Korea. Jiyeon Chae,⁵⁸¹ a 36-year-old woman from South Korea at the time of our interview, who emigrated to London when she was 28 years old. She was trained as a musician, but then pursued a career as a researcher. Iris Yi Youn Kim was a 26-year-old Korean-American at the time of our interview. She was born in Seoul and moved to the US at 5 years old. She worked as a podcast producer at a broadcasting company, and as a freelance writer and journalist. Iris's⁵⁸² essay, 'I Had Korean Double Eyelid Surgery at 18. I Look Back Now with Regret' was published in *Harper's Bazaar* on 5 December 2022 and offers an important perspective of first-person reflection.

Iris's research delved into Dr. David Ralph Millard's medical essays during his period of working as an American military plastic surgeon in the ROK in the nine months directly following the Korean War, seeking to reconcile the legacies and lasting implications of the medical industrial complex and the prism of race and neo-imperialism that shaped her own beauty ideals in 2022. She described how amongst the journalistic features and podcasts that reported on Korean beauty standards and the Korean plastic surgery industry, including on Millard, she never encountered a first-person account or essay, and thus she sought to write 'into a void'.⁵⁸³ Through Iris's perspective, I also explore the legacies of Millard's work in the

⁵⁸⁰ Sarah Park is a pseudonym. The interviewee's name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research. Henceforth, I will refer to the interviewee by Sarah to distinguish her voice from academic scholars.

⁵⁸¹ Jiyeon Chae is a pseudonym. The interviewee's name has been anonymised for the purpose of this research. Henceforth, I will refer to the interviewee by her first name to distinguish her voice from academic scholars.

⁵⁸² I refer to Iris's first name to distinguish her from other interviewees and scholars with the same surname.

⁵⁸³ Iris Yi Youn Kim, interviewed by Christin Yu about first-person essay and blepharoplasty experiences, 5 April 2023. See Appendix H for transcript.

narratives of Korean plastic surgery cultures, troubling and complicating the impact of his work. Through the voices of these women, I build a patchworked history of Korean plastic surgery cultures, piecing together the narratives of embodied experiences. In doing so, I map the relationships between Korean womanhood, beauty, violence, and procedures of mending and wrapping skin surfaces.

All four of the participants engaged specifically with blepharoplasties, a double eyelid surgery described by Millard as a process of removing the epicanthal fold, reducing the excess lid skin, and then redefining the ‘flat blank hood by an expression crease.’⁵⁸⁴ The ‘epicanthal fold is skin of the upper eyelid that covers the inner corner of the eye,’⁵⁸⁵ and the surgery required an incision from the outer corner of the eye along the fold, to remove the fat tissues of the eyelid.⁵⁸⁶ Silk sutures were then used to bond a permanent adhesion forming into a crease.⁵⁸⁷ In this process of cutting, suturing, and healing, a form of decorative stitching takes place. By piecing together fragments of tissue, a reformed, re-membered skin becomes the mended interface between beauty ideals, embodied subjectivities, and lived histories. Framing and highlighting the desires, processes, and circumstances of becoming oneself through beauty, I map the colonial and imperial gaze alongside these experiences of blepharoplasty to explore how reconstructing disciplines bodies, but I also ask what possibilities are there for Korean women to imagine these practices beyond these regimes of power? This chapter engages in a decolonial praxis that develops research as a piece-work. The following sections are fragments of histories that do not follow a strictly linear chronology, but are rather pieced together through theoretical continuities and relations.

⁵⁸⁴ D. Ralph Millard, Jr., ‘Oriental Peregrinations’, *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, 16.5 (1955), 319–66 (p. 333).

⁵⁸⁵ ‘Epicanthal Folds’ (Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, 2021) <<https://www.mountsinai.org/health-library/symptoms/epicanthal-folds>> [accessed 10 February 2022].

⁵⁸⁶ For further medical process notes, please see Millard, Jr., pp. 333–34.

⁵⁸⁷ Millard, Jr., p. 333.

Dr. Millard and the geopolitics of beauty

i. ‘Oriental Peregrinations’ and the US military

The common and overrepresented narrative of Dr. David Ralph Millard Jr., an American military plastic surgeon, emphasises his role in popularising the double eyelid surgery in the ROK. Largely derived from readings of his 1955 essay, ‘Oriental Peregrinations’, Millard’s writing is part-medical research, part-travelogue, and a document of his medical practices, which clearly expresses imperial race politics. Accordingly, ‘[i]mperial racial formation’ is defined by Nadia Kim as forging ‘the superiority and normativity of White America and, in relation, the inferiority and Otherness of Korea and its people.’⁵⁸⁸ Reading Millard’s descriptions of Korea as a land in need of his services, rife with deformities and traumatic injuries from the Korean War, and a ‘plastic surgeon’s paradise’,⁵⁸⁹ reveals how the model of US-ROK relations forged imperial relations, which seemingly historicised the narratives of Korean beauty.

Beauty, for Millard, was an imperative within his medical practices. In his essay, he describes his processes of collecting qualitative data about local beauty standards through a ‘moose call’, which developed his own plastic surgery practices. This so-called ‘moose call’ took the form of a dinner dance, where ‘attractive’ and young Korean women gathered in a casting call.⁵⁹⁰ Likening Korean women to animals, his description of the event observes that

there are variations in the Japanese, Chinese and Korean faces but in general there is a similarity – the yellow moon-shaped face topped by bangs of straight black hair, slit-slant dark eyes peeking from behind a mongoloid fold and a curtain of upper lid skin. Their bony structure is prominent in the zygomatic and mandibular angle regions and this is accentuated by a strong masseter muscle. Both upper and lower tooth-bearing elements are exceptionally well developed, carry strong, even teeth and are covered with full lips and fat cheeks. The profile is relatively non-existent for the oriental maxilla in its “middle third” does not seem to keep pace with the other bones. With a minimal projection from its maxillary platform, the nose is flat, turned up at the tip forming a re-entrant nasolabial angle.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 56.

⁵⁸⁹ Millard, Jr., p. 323.

⁵⁹⁰ Millard, Jr., p. 321.

⁵⁹¹ Millard, Jr., p. 322.

This recollection unfolds to read as a physiognomy of Koreanness, reifying problematic racial profiles. While noting variations in Japanese, Chinese and Korean faces, Millard regards the generality of the ‘yellow moon-shaped’ face, and ‘slit-slant dark eyes’ of East Asians. He describes the faces as prominent in the cheekbones and the jaw line, which was further accentuated by the muscles lining the jaw. Korean faces were perceived to have had relatively flat profiles. Straight teeth were covered with full lips, the faces had fat cheeks, and flat noses that connected to defined smile lines. By metrifying Korean women’s faces, Millard’s research was believed to have contributed to the development of standardised practices of plastic surgery in the ROK. The research reinforced racial stereotypes, terms such as ‘moon-face’ and ‘slanty eyes’ are now commonly used to derogatorily describe Asian phenotypes.⁵⁹²

Historians of plastic surgery in East Asia complicate Millard’s role in establishing blepharoplasty in Korea. Prior to the formation of the ROK, and the ROK’s medical industry, the first accounts of plastic surgery in Korea were recorded during the colonial occupation and shaped by Japanese imperial ideas. Emilie Y. Takayama’s research on the history of aesthetic surgery in Japan and Korea in the early twentieth century reveals that by the mid-1920s, Koreans were already engaged in blepharoplasty and rhinoplasty procedures, ‘despite Confucian taboos concerning cutting the skin.’⁵⁹³ Confucian doctrines of filial piety decreed one’s hair and skin as gifted from one’s parents,⁵⁹⁴ and thus one’s body was seen as belonging to a family lineage that in turn belonged to a larger collective, heritage, and genealogy of being.

This clash between Confucian ideologies and modernity’s ideas that divided the mind from the body was also exemplified by Korean reactions to the Eulmi dress reform of 1895, an

⁵⁹² In 2020, Donald Trump (as the President of the United States) described Kellyann Conway’s husband, George Conway as ‘her deranged loser of a husband, Moonface.’ The racist term was used to slander Conway’s character through a historical encoded physical profile of Asianness. For further reading see Fred Barbash, ‘President Erupts at George Conway for “Mourning in America” Video, about the “Deadly Virus Trump Ignored”’, *The Washington Post*, 5 May 2020 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/05/trump-george-conway-coronavirus/>> [accessed 24 February 2022].

⁵⁹³ Emilie Y. Takayama, ‘The History of Aesthetic Surgery in Early Twentieth-Century Japan’, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 48.1 (2022), 29–61 (pp. 55–56).

⁵⁹⁴ See quote at the beginning of the chapter. Henry Rosemont and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), p. 105.

ordinance that included the enforced cutting of men's topknots. Hair was viewed as a gift from people's parents, and as a result, there was a widespread revolt against the rule, resulting in an uprising of resistance.⁵⁹⁵ Although Confucian belief systems prohibited the cutting of the hair and skin, by the twentieth century, modern encounters ushered into East Asia new imaginings and ideas about the body. According to Takayama, Koreans began undergoing aesthetic procedures by Korean doctors who were 'educated within the colonial medical system', implying that they were informed by Japanese interpretations of 'Western physiognomy, eugenics, and classicism', which were adapted to local beauty ideals.⁵⁹⁶ The historian acknowledges Millard's role, contextualising his work in the decade after Japanese liberation, but asserts that 'the long-term impact of the modern Japanese beauty ideology on Korea was profound.'⁵⁹⁷

Nadia Kim and David Palumbo-Liu situate Millard's work through the framework of US military aid and Americanisation. Kim, reading Millard's essay via Palumbo-Liu, highlights Millard's 'sense of racial/national superiority' exemplified through his rhetoric regarding his many patients.⁵⁹⁸ Arguing that South Korean inferiority was crystallised through the reliance on US military aid, Kim highlights the racial ideologies of the US military itself, which held beliefs of the superiority of White America. Kim highlights literature from the US military to reveal that despite diplomatically defining the Korean state as an 'ally', it nonetheless perpetuated racist rhetoric about Korean people.⁵⁹⁹ For Palumbo-Liu, the flourishing of plastic surgery after the Second World War began as a 'public relations program of [US] occupational forces in Korea.'⁶⁰⁰ Scrutinising the processes and rhetoric of Millard's essay, the scholar argues that Millard 'reduc[es] human being[s] to the medical case', and imagined their '*transformation*, not reconstruction' into a 'new, hybrid figure [that] must be able to vacillate unimpeded between self

⁵⁹⁵ Yeseung Lee, 'The White-Clad People: The White Hanbok and Korean Nationalism', pp. 278–79.

⁵⁹⁶ Takayama, pp. 57, 30–31.

⁵⁹⁷ Takayama, p. 59.

⁵⁹⁸ Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA*, p. 53.

⁵⁹⁹ Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA*, pp. 53–56.

⁶⁰⁰ David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 96.

and other'. Millard is defined as 'absolutely and biologically racist' in his work to "deorientaliz[e]" Korean bodies, and specifically faces.⁶⁰¹

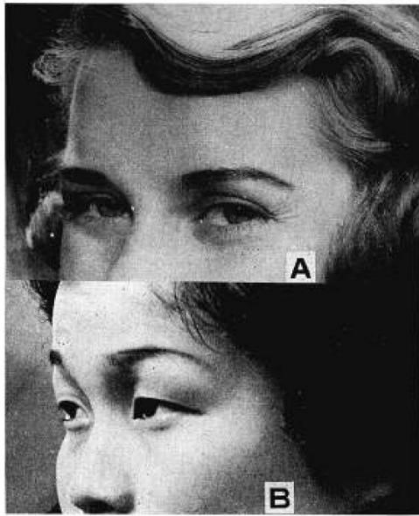


FIG. 12A. The Occidental look.
FIG. 12B. The Oriental look.

Figure 63. Fig. 12A and 12B. from D. Ralph Millard, Jr., 'Oriental Peregrinations', *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, 16.5 (1955), 319–66 (p. 332). © Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. The Creative Commons license does not apply to this content. Use of the material in any format is prohibited without written permission from the publisher, Wolters Kluwer Health Inc. Please contact permissions@lww.com for further information.

Millard's work enunciated this 'imperial racial' relation, evidenced not only by performing blepharoplasties, but his reflections in their aftermath. Analysing the diptych of 'Fig. 12A and Fig. 12B', Kim argues that setting 'the "Occidental look" above the "Oriental look," legitimated that Occidental eyelids were superior and that Korean patients should be willing to mutilate their bodies to approximate them.'⁶⁰² (fig. 64)

Palumbo-Liu argues that Millard coerced a war-ravaged female population, seeking to transform their bodies as a measure of controlling Korean women into a hybridised version of Korean-American. Millard's beauty and racial ideologies were bound to the creation of an idealised norm

that moved beyond racially distinct norms to focus how 'the normativity of the geometrical and the ascension of the hybrid' created terms to assimilate 'formerly foreign' identities.⁶⁰³

Not only is this 'Occidental look' placed above the 'Oriental look', but the gaze of the corresponding model also looks directly into the camera. The film theorist Laura Mulvey studies the gaze and scopophilic pleasure in studio era Hollywood cinema. Deploying a psychoanalytic framework, she describes how the audience engages in a pleasure of looking, and specifically, 'looking at another person as object' in a 'hermetically sealed world which unwinds magically, indifferent to the presence of the audience'.⁶⁰⁴ The 'person' in Mulvey's descriptions refers

⁶⁰¹ Palumbo-Liu, pp. 95–105.

⁶⁰² Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to L.A.*, p. 56.

⁶⁰³ Palumbo-Liu, pp. 98–105.

⁶⁰⁴ Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Ebook (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 14–26 (p. 17).

specifically to women. Her analysis of studio era films highlights how the narratives enclosed their characters in a world that never acknowledged the audiences, thus leaving them to enjoy the voyeuristic pleasure of objectifying women. When the gaze *is* acknowledged, this voyeuristic relationship and pleasure is disrupted; by meeting the audience's gaze, subjecthood is reclaimed. In this photographic example then, the model of the 'Occidental look' is empowered by her gaze: she is looking. Moreover, her expression meets the audience with the slightly upturned corners of her eyes, implying that she is most likely smiling – greeting the viewer with warmth and congeniality. In the photograph below, the model of the 'Oriental look' gazes outward with a resting expression. Without meeting the gaze of the viewer, she is not only objectified, according to Mulvey's theory, but as part of Millard's medical essay, her representation also signifies that she is a medical specimen and an ideal of the Korean woman. That is, her face seemingly represents all Korean women's faces.

Sharon Heijin Lee, a feminist scholar of Korean cosmetic surgery, argues that Korean women's ideas about beauty and their choices for undergoing surgical procedures must be framed by the geopolitical, as 'everyday practices of beauty are embedded within deep histories of (neo)colonialism and produced by transnational and local trajectories of global capital and competing discourses therein.'⁶⁰⁵ In other words, Korean women's everyday practices of beauty belong to a disciplinary regime set by new relationships of global capital, alongside the foundational (neo)colonial policies shaped by American hegemony and Japanese imperialism before it. Locating Korean beauty aesthetics within a 'genealogy of imperial racial formation',

⁶⁰⁵ Sharon Heijin Lee, 'The (Geo)Politics of Beauty: Race, Transnationalism, and Neoliberalism in South Korean Beauty Culture' (unpublished PhD, The University of Michigan, 2012), p. 6.

Lee notes the influence of both ‘Japanese Eugenics and Ethnology’ and ‘American doctors’ on Korean concepts of beauty.⁶⁰⁶

More recently, John DiMoia, a historian of the ROK’s medical industry, argues that Millard inflated his ‘personal role as the agent of transformation and tend[ed] to either elide or minimise the contributions of his predecessors.’⁶⁰⁷ DiMoia’s research maps the rise of plastic surgery practices in the ROK through the development of intersecting influences including the historical practices of cosmetic/aesthetic surgery that were developed from neighbouring East Asian countries (as early as the nineteenth-century in Japan and China), American humanitarian goodwill in the post-war period, and the professionalisation of the South Korea plastic surgery industries. He writes that what *was* significant about Millard’s work was that it served as a ‘valuable marker of the complex relationship between the immediate context of the war and the heightening emerging concerns around personal identity.’⁶⁰⁸ Said otherwise, Millard’s work and essays serve as documents reflecting new emerging South Korean subjectivities that were constituted by complex geopolitical relations in the aftermath of the Korean War. These varying viewpoints of scholarship are shaped by regional lenses, with Kim and Palumbo-Liu reading Millard’s work through Asian-American identities, unlike DiMoia and Takayama, who situate their work from local East Asian perspectives. Lee offers a transnational perspective, which seeks to excavate the connections between Asian-American and East Asia scholarship.

ii. COVID and the violence toward Asian-American women

‘Oriental Peregrinations’ is a document of the ROK’s emerging subjectivities as the country was first formed. It is a piece that partially composes the larger patchwork that connects frameworks and themes of imperial racial formations, Korean women, militarised prostitution,

⁶⁰⁶ Sharon Heijin Lee, ‘The (Geo)Politics of Beauty: Race, Transnationalism, and Neoliberalism in South Korean Beauty Culture’ (unpublished PhD, The University of Michigan, 2012), pp. 7–8.

⁶⁰⁷ DiMoia, p. 187.

⁶⁰⁸ DiMoia, p. 181.

sexualised violence toward Asian women, and Asian-American identifications. In the conclusion of his essay, Millard highlights the rise of ‘post-war marriages with Korean girls’ and details the some of the reasons behind patients undergoing procedures in an Orientalising description of Korean women:

when a lonesome G.I. comes face to face with the gentle humility, artistic grace and mysterious charm of feminine *baby-san*, he brings her back alive. Alas, folds that were exotic in Pusan or Kyoto will become strangely foreign to Main Street of a mid-west town or under the columns of a southern mansion. Especially in the products of the second generation, the plastic surgeon may be called upon to help them blend with their surroundings.⁶⁰⁹

The rumination enunciates the Orientalist description of Asian women as an exotic, mysterious, and malleable Other, while simultaneously positioning Millard, himself in the role of a ‘liberator-benefactor’ that could help the women assimilate into the social fabric of White America.

Reconstructing women’s bodies for the sake of their emigration to America, the diptych photographic relation of the ‘A’ to ‘B’ or Before and After of ‘one of the “Candlelight Club”

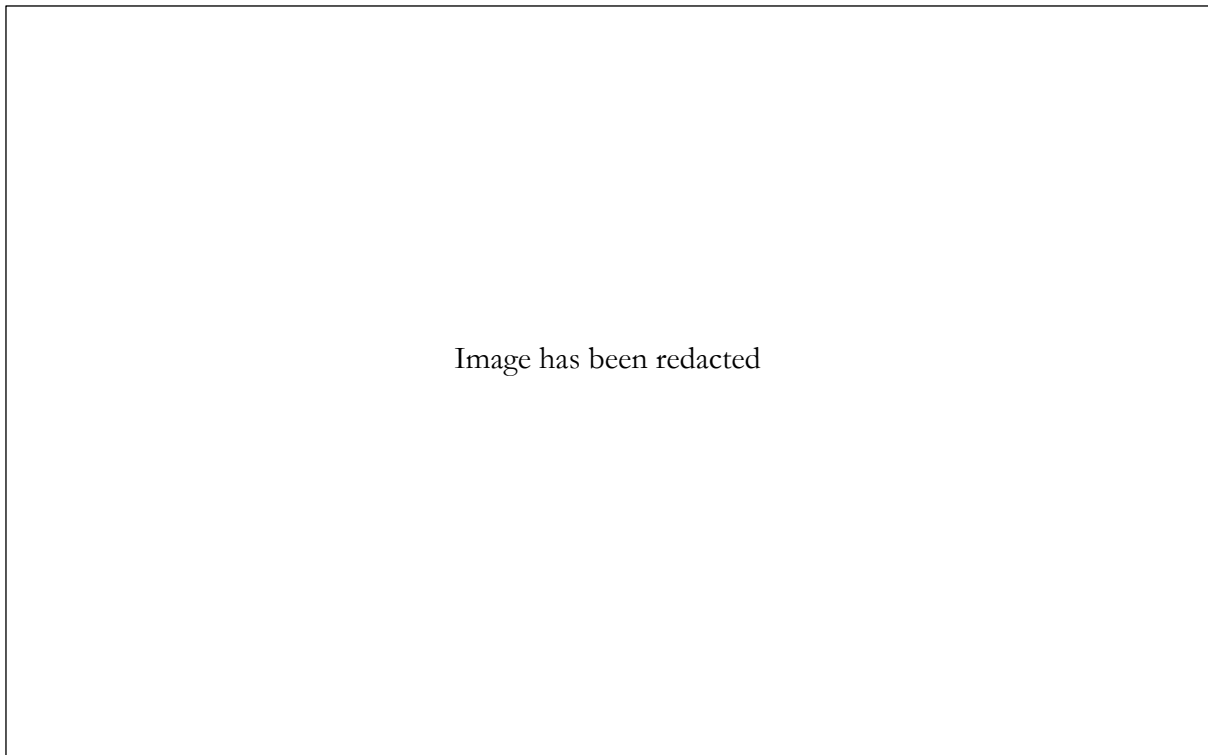


Figure 64. Before and After photograph denoted as Fig. 15A and 15B. from D. Ralph Millard, Jr., ‘Oriental Peregrinations’, *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, 16.5 (1955), 319–66 (p. 335).

⁶⁰⁹ Millard, Jr., p. 336.

girls' (*fig. 65*) also evidences the histories and relations of militarised prostitution between American serviceman and Korean women.

In her book about military camptowns, Ji-Yeon Yuh, describes the role that the Korean government took to regulate prostitution during the post-Korean War period. Camptowns were also known as base towns or GI towns, or simply the towns near military bases, where the servicemen resided.⁶¹⁰ According to Yuh, the Korean government designated special districts for prostitution. The women working within these districts were 'required to join "women's associations" with names like the Rose Club and the Dandelion Club', where they were to register as hostesses.⁶¹¹ Clubs prior to these regulations being enforced were institutions of nightlife culture in GI camptowns, where prostitution was also apparent.⁶¹² While there were no specific records for the Candlelight Club, this woman represented in Millard's diptych was embedded in the gendered and neo-colonial relations defined by club culture, although I make no conclusive assumptions about her role in them.

The term 'yanggongju' which translates to 'Western princess', and more pejoratively to 'Yankee whore', was ascribed to the women who worked as camptown prostitutes and/or women who married American men.⁶¹³ Yuh notes that for Koreans, these women were viewed as having questionable character. They were seen as women 'who had married American soldiers because such marriage was their only escape from poverty'. Yet, their decisions were shaped by the 'unequal relations' and asymmetrical dependencies between the US and the ROK, namely America's military presence in the peninsula.⁶¹⁴ In Korea, these characterisations shaped beauty ideals for Korean women, where the hyper-sexualised trope of the 'Yankee whore' was defined in opposition to the demure Korean woman that was shaped by Confucian values which

⁶¹⁰ Yuh, p. 10.

⁶¹¹ Yuh, p. 26.

⁶¹² Kevin Heldman, 'On the Town with the U.S. Military', *Korea Web Weekly*, 1996 <www.kimsoft.com/korea/us-army.html> IN Yuh, p. 11.

⁶¹³ For further reading see Grace M. Cho.

⁶¹⁴ Yuh, pp. 2–3, 9.

idealised women's chastity.⁶¹⁵ While Yuh demonstrates that the women who worked in camptowns, who subsequently married US servicemen, were pioneering immigrants for the Korean diaspora in America, they were nonetheless stigmatised in both countries, expressing how Orientalist ideas of Asian women in the US were forged through historical and geopolitical relations.

In Iris Yi Youn Kim's first-person narrative essay for *Harper's Bazaar*, she reflected on her experiences of undergoing her surgical process through retrospective regret, highlighting how learning about the geopolitics of beauty that governed and shaped her choices forced her to reconcile with these difficult histories

It wasn't until college that I read that Asian blepharoplasty was popularized in 1950s Korea by David Ralph Millard, an American military plastic surgeon. He operated on Korean interpreters working for the U.S. military during the war, sex workers, and brides of American GIs. With this initial catalyst, the surgery took off in a postwar Korea that desperately aspired to the Western physical ideals of their occupiers. Clinics offering blepharoplasty and other procedures proliferated in Korea in the '60s, and by the '90s, South Korea had become the plastic surgery capital of the world.⁶¹⁶

In our interview, which took place on 5 April 2023, she explained how her essay was written during the pandemic, when she had gone down a 'rabbit hole' of Millard's writings. She recalled

[f]or the first time, realising that I had never really unpacked why and how I was influenced to get the plastic surgery, and so I started writing a journal entry of my first recollections of realising that I didn't have double eyelids and I wanted them. From those summers back in Korea, you know, when I was seven or eight watching those K-Pop idols on screen, to growing up and then constantly hearing from my family members, if I wanted to get the surgery, I could get it done. It was, it's almost considered a minor procedure in Korea. It's the most minor procedure you can get done. People go to work a week after they get the surgery done. So internalising that it wasn't a big deal, and it was a choice I could always make, I wrote my adolescence down. How this idea that I was going to get the surgery when I graduated high school really became so fixated. I really became fixated on that idea. And then, I wanted to write down everything I learned about Dr. Millard and the origins of the Korean plastic surgery industry and put that down as well.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁵ For further reading see Young-hee Shim.

⁶¹⁶ Iris Kim, 'I Had Korean Double Eyelid Surgery at 18. I Look Back Now with Regret', *Harper's Bazaar*, 5 December 2022 <<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/beauty/health/a41914030/korean-double-eyelid-surgery-essay/>> [accessed 17 March 2023].

⁶¹⁷ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

During COVID, Iris began reflecting on her own experiences of undergoing a blepharoplasty, when the violence toward Asian-American citizens in the US had significantly increased.

The uptick of racially motivated hate crimes involving physical violence and harassment were an expression of the long history of xenophobia and yellow peril that describes Asian migrations to America since the late 1700s,⁶¹⁸ and a specific history of sexualised violence toward Asian women.⁶¹⁹ By situating her own experiences through the CMP's governing of beauty ideals, Iris's reflections sought to make sense of her choices to reconstruct her own body through writing during COVID, as a way to approximate and negotiate her own agency during a time when the hypervisibility of her skin made her personhood precarious. Piecing together her own memories of self and situating herself in a collective history of Korean women reconstructing themselves, she expresses her voice and story of being in relation to the medical discourses that place Korean women's bodies in an index of beauty, desirability and worth.

On 16 March 2021, Robert Aaron Long murdered eight people in the Atlanta area. In an act that was described as domestic terrorism, six of the victims were Asian women, and the shootings took place across three Atlanta-area spas.⁶²⁰ News coverage of the event described how Long claimed in initial interviews with the investigators that he had a 'sex addiction' and that he 'lashed out at the spa businesses that he viewed as a sexual temptation.'⁶²¹ The event was

⁶¹⁸ For further reading on research that explores the rise of Asian-American hate crimes during COVID see Angela R. Glover, Shannon B. Harper, and Lynn Langton, 'Anti-Asian Hate Crime During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Reproduction of Inequality', *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 45 (2020), 647–67.

⁶¹⁹ From the first case of *Chy Lung v. Freeman* (1875), where twenty-two Chinese women were stopped at the American border and trialled for being suspected prostitutes to the system of militarised prostitution during the US occupation of Korea to 2021 mass murder of six Asian women who were represented as 'villainous temptresses', there is a recorded history of the gendered racialisation of Asian women who are deemed 'sexually desirable yet a threat to the social order'. For further reading see Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 26–60; Grace M. Cho; Maria Cecilia Hwang and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, 'The Gendered Racialization of Asian Women as Villainous Temptresses', *Gender & Society*, 35.4 (2021), 567–76.

⁶²⁰ Richard Fausset, Neil Vigdor, and Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, '8 Dead in Atlanta Spa Shootings, With Fears of Anti-Asian Bias', *The New York Times* (New York, 17 March 2021) <<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/17/us/shooting-atlanta-acworth>> [accessed 7 September 2023]; Phil Helsel and Rachel Elbaum, '8 Dead in Atlanta-Area Spa Shootings, Suspect Arrested', *NBC News*, 16 March 2021, section U.S. News <<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/3-dead-shooting-georgia-massage-parlor-suspect-loose-n1261262>> [accessed 7 September 2023]; Annika Kim Constantino, 'Atlanta Spa Shooter Who Targeted Asian Women Pleads Guilty to Four of Eight Murders', *CNBC*, 27 July 2021 <<https://www.cbc.com/2021/07/27/atlanta-spa-shooter-who-targeted-asian-women-pleads-guilty-to-four-counts-of-murder.html>> [accessed 7 September 2023].

⁶²¹ Kim Constantino.

reflective of the resurgence of anti-Asian hate in America following the onset of COVID, which President Trump reiteratively referred to as different iterations of the ‘Chinese Virus’.⁶²² Iris wrote her essay in the aftermath of this violence.

Gender theorists, Maria Cecilia Hwang and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, argue that the violence of the Atlanta shootings was an expression of the ‘gendered racialisation of Asian women as villainous temptresses’, which renders Asian women as ‘sexually desirable yet a threat to the social order and thereby expendable.’⁶²³ Although it was never confirmed that the women were sex workers, the assumptions were evidence of the gendered and racialised representations of Asian women, whose identities were nonetheless sexualised. Iris’s perspective, and reflections of her body and self in the aftermath of the Atlanta shooting were entangled in the geopolitical histories that have constituted women of the Korean diaspora through the Orientalising trope of the femme fatale, which often places her in a diametric relation to the ‘white male animus’ of Christian America.⁶²⁴ Through sociologist Rick Baldoz, Hwang and Parreñas explain that (the discourses of) white supremacy in America position these abhorrent acts of white terrorists as protecting communities from groups that disrupt the status quo, and thus attempts to exonerate the domestic terrorism.⁶²⁵

This history of white supremacy in America has influenced constitutional laws that have determined citizenship and legal personhood. Anna Pegler-Gordon reminds us under the Page Act of 1875, Chinese immigrants and Chinese women specifically, were scrutinised under the statute that prohibited the ‘immigration of prostitutes’; as the first immigrants ‘exposed to new

⁶²² Dr. Mishal Reja, ‘Trump’s “Chinese Virus” Tweet Helped Lead to Rise in Racist Anti-Asian Twitter Content: Study’, *ABC News*, 18 March 2021 <<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/trumps-chinese-virus-tweet-helped-lead-rise-racist/story?id=76530148>> [accessed 8 September 2023]; Katie Rogers, Lara Jakes, and Ana Swanson, ‘Trump Defends Using “Chinese Virus” Label, Ignoring Growing Criticism’, *The New York Times* (New York, 18 March 2021) <<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/us/politics/china-virus.html>> [accessed 8 September 2023]; ‘President Trump Calls Coronavirus “Kung Flu”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2020, section US & Canada <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-53173436>> [accessed 8 September 2023].

⁶²³ Hwang and Parreñas, p. 568.

⁶²⁴ Hwang and Parreñas, p. 570.

⁶²⁵ Rick Baldoz, ‘The “bad Day” Defense after the Atlanta Shooting Reinforced the Idea of White Victimhood’, *Washington Post* (Washington DC, 26 March 2021) <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/03/26/bad-day-defense-after-atlanta-reinforced-idea-white-victimhood/>> IN Hwang and Parreñas, pp. 570–71.

techniques of representation and regulations', which included forms of photographic documentation, Chinese women's bodies were subjected to surveillance technologies that required the women to 'obtain photographic identity documentation that attested to their identity and their moral characters'.⁶²⁶ Chinese women were amongst the first demographics to require passport photographs. Millard's medical images belong to a history of visual representation that has constituted the legal personhood of Asian women through surveillance technologies. In historical research of US immigration, immigration officials were said to have perceived Chinese and other Asian skin itself as particularly unreadable. Accordingly, officials claimed that unlike European bodies, visible signs of disease were not easily detectable on Chinese and other Asian skin, thus Chinese and other Asian immigrants were subject to medical inspections which scrutinised the skin and the naked body.⁶²⁷ Pegler-Gordon argues that these regulations 'served as a biological metaphor for immigration officials' concerns about Chinese inscrutability and invasion.⁶²⁸ In this act of dehumanising Chinese and other Asian bodies, skin itself becomes a material object.

Less than a century later, the photographs in Millard's essay, read through this relationship of skin, photography and legal personhood for Asian women, represent the reconstruction of bodies and skin itself as part of a disciplinary project to reshape identities through medical and military regimes. Side by side, the diptych of 'Fig. 15 A.' and 'Fig. 15 B.' represent the 'Before' and 'After' portraits of the woman from the 'Candlelight Club' (*fig.* 65). The second portrait is marked with the description: '3 weeks post-operative', implying that the photograph was taken three weeks after the blepharoplasty. There are no visible traces of the medical procedures, instead each image captures a temporal moment of a contained body. In their relation then, each contained body represents an iteration of the woman in her

⁶²⁶ Pegler-Gordon, p. 22; Also see Hwang and Parreñas, pp. 572–73.

⁶²⁷ Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 180–81; Amy L. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 180; Pegler-Gordon, p. 25.

⁶²⁸ Pegler-Gordon, p. 25.

transformation. If the classical body of modernity is represented as a sealed surface, then here too, the women are ‘contained’ with no bearings or markings of their mutilation. What Ji Yeo’s photographic series depicts in contrast to these contained bodies then, are the grotesque bodies that remind us of bodily borders that are defined by the boundary-material of the skin.

According to the fashion scholar Francesca Granata, who invokes Mikail Bakhtin, the ‘grotesque body is an open, unfinished body, which is never sealed or fully contained, but it is always in the process of becoming’.⁶²⁹ Grotesque bodies and open surfaces of skin trace and remember the practices of cutting, piecing together, suturing as processes of becoming.

Grotesque bodies, cutting practices, and the violence of becoming

i. Girlhood to womanhood

My great-aunt’s blepharoplasty was supposed to be a secret. She had not told anyone in our family that she had the procedure, except for her husband and my grandmother, both of whom have passed away. Her husband had helped her find the appropriate clinic, as well as partially fund the procedure. Unbeknownst to my great-aunt, my father was also privy to her secret, after witnessing the aftermath of her injury. He informed me of this as I began my research. While she was initially embarrassed after I asked her to participate in recording an oral history, she nonetheless shared her recollections of the day. She had hoped that my father was too young to remember and assumed that it would have been forgotten. It was through her memories of interacting with my father that she names the violence underpinning the process:

I went home after the treatment, and when I got home, I was startled. My eyes were ... when your dad saw me, he was young, he yelled “what is that?” I said, “I took a wrong turn on my way home and I hit something (or I got hit), so I hurt my eyes.” He said, “oh”. After one week, I had to do [another treatment] again, as they couldn’t do it all at once. When I did the rest of the treatment, and it was successful, your dad again asked, “What happened?” And I said, “I got hit again.”⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Francesca Granata, ‘Introduction’, in *Experimental Fashion: Performance Art, Carnival and the Grotesque Body* (London: I.B. Tauris & Company, Ltd., 2017), pp. 1–14 (p. 1).

⁶³⁰ Kim Bong Kyu.

My great-aunt concealed her desire to adhere to new beauty norms, and the procedures that were available to acquire them, as a violent beating. In this scenario, I imagine a vivid description of her face in the aftermath of the process – with bruises, swelling, and discolouration that came from the acts of cutting and mending. She recalled being scolded by my grandmother, who asked ‘why would you go rip into your face?’ She recalled her desire to ‘be pretty’, as a young woman who was concerned with her looks.

My great-aunt described herself as a ‘cheonyeo (처녀)’ when she underwent the blepharoplasty. The Korean word translates to ‘young, unmarried woman’ or ‘virgin’, and my great-aunt described how the main demographic of people she knew getting cosmetic procedures done in the early 1960s were the cheonyeo of her neighbourhood, for it was fashionable at the time. The word has a double meaning in its translation,⁶³¹ but it identifies women who were in the phase between girlhood to womanhood. Marriage is a significant rite of passage in Korean culture, an initiation into adulthood that was historically signified through alterations in style. For example, in the Joseon dynasty, a ‘groom’s childhood pigtail was once bound up into a topknot’ and the bride’s hair changed from a low plait at the nape of her neck into a pinned chignon.⁶³² The blepharoplasty procedure was often gifted as a high school graduation gift, prior to marriage, marking what had previously defined this passage into adulthood.

My great-aunt describes how it took three months before the swelling started to go away, and then ‘from then on, no one knew if I had the surgery or not, so it was successful.’ She underwent the procedure in 1962 from a clinic in Myeongdong. In the previous chapter, my

⁶³¹ Min Ji Lee’s essay on “Comfort Women” reveals the word ‘cheonyeon’, like many other words in Korean has a double meaning. She demonstrates that the translation of testimonies into English, rather than original Korea documents misinterpreted the use of the word cheonyeo. Lee argues that the testimonies reveal both unmarried and married women who were drafted to the comfort stations. For further reading see Min Ji Kim, ‘Reparations for “Comfort Women”: Feminist Geopolitics and Changing Gender Ideologies in South Korea’, *Cornell International Affairs Review*, 12.2 (2019), 5–43 (pp. 10–11).

⁶³² Laurel Kendall, *Getting Married in Korea: Of Gender, Morality, and Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), p. 7.

great-aunt described her circumstances of living after the war in abject poverty, therefore the procedure was not easily accessible to her financial means, but her friends convinced her to get her eyes done as it would be ‘better for [her]’. She noted that there was an influx of Westerners coming into the country at the time, and her own eyes in comparison looked like they were ‘jjijeo (찢어)’, meaning torn or ripped.⁶³³ Celebrities and singers in popular culture at that time seemed to also be undergoing the surgical procedure; my great-aunt recalled how the narratives in the news reiteratively emphasised ‘that we would succeed if we got the procedure.’⁶³⁴ Her reasons for undergoing the blepharoplasty articulated collective influences, as she sought to engage in the trending beauty practices which were shaped by the influx of Westerners, and her youthful desires to be beautiful. After her own procedure, she claimed that ‘[t]wo of my friends at work, and one from the neighbourhood, then two more from the neighbourhood, there were five people that got it done because of me.’⁶³⁵

Jiyeon Chae referenced a saying in Korean that goes ‘in a kindergarten class, only one in ten will have the double eyelid, by the time they go to university, only one in ten will not have the double eyelid. All Korean girls want to have big eyes. So as soon as they get into the university, I think 70-80% of people have the double eyelid [procedure].’⁶³⁶ For Jiyeon, who grew up in the ROK, there was a period after finishing the university entrance examinations and entering university where her friends could not contact each other, because everyone was undergoing cosmetic surgery procedures. Jiyeon trained as a musical performer in middle and high school, and her education taught her to consider her looks on stage. She described how ‘everyone [wa]s more sensitive on their appearance than other normal, just students,’ while recalling a formative memory from her schooling: ‘I remember once, when I was a university

⁶³³ Kim Bong Kyu.

⁶³⁴ Kim Bong Kyu.

⁶³⁵ Kim Bong Kyu.

⁶³⁶ Jiyeon Chae, interviewed by Christin Yu about blepharoplasty experiences, 3 August 2022. See Appendix I for transcript.

student, some students had to play – had to perform on the stage once a month, in front of all the other university students. One of the members didn't have makeup [on], and the professor found her, and she kicked her out because she did not wear makeup.⁶³⁷ She stated that although there were no specific rules regulating one's appearance, it was moments like these that shaped her understanding of her environment. Jiyeon's memories of her blepharoplasty were not noteworthy; she expressed how as someone growing up in Seoul, the process was completely commonplace. According to her doctor at the time, the skin composing her eyelid was 'very thin', and as a result, a process involving 'three to four stitches' was recommended over cutting the skin itself. The aftermath of the procedure or healing, she replied, was hard to remember; it was almost twenty years before our interview and not a significant event of her life.

Sarah Park remembered understanding that she could undergo a 'double eyelid' procedure when she was young. She described that

[i]t was just a known thing. Everyone [says] "when you graduate school, when you graduate high school, you get your eyes", if you're Korean. It was just a very, very known thing [...] I honestly have no idea where that thought even came from. I was just like "I'm going to get surgery." It was just automatic. When I got to Korea, my mom told me that I had to get a certain grade and I have to go to university to get the surgery. I remember specifically in grade eleven and twelve, I studied [hard] to get a 90% average to go to university. So I did it, and then she took me to Korea.⁶³⁸

Growing up in Canada, it was her Korean friends that 'all' underwent the procedure. She remembered how even in her family, discussions about 'ssangkopul (쌍꺼풀)', the double eyelid, would often enter into conversations. There were family discussions about who had it and who did not have it – the cousins on her mother's side had them naturally, whereas her relatives on her father's side were said to have naturally developed the creases later in life. Sarah's mother offered a gift of the blepharoplasty as incentive and reward to drive her daughter to complete her high school and secure entrance into university.

⁶³⁷ Jiyeon Chae.

⁶³⁸ Sarah Park, interviewed by Christin Yu about blepharoplasty experiences, 18 February 2022. See Appendix J for transcript.

Sharon Heijin Lee reflects that the ‘double eyelid’ surgery is often ‘a marker of high school or college graduation and usually in preparation for [...] professional life, including finding suitable marriage prospects’, importantly, it signifies ‘the beginning of a woman’s life outside the familial home.’⁶³⁹ These practices of gifting reflect shifting ideological practices. While the skin was once viewed under Confucian ideals as a sacred gift from one’s parents, it became, under the economies of capitalism, a surface to reconstruct. Leaving home implied transitioning from the traditional family values of the Confucian household to enter into a capitalist marketplace, and job economy on an individual level. On a macro scale, this transition from the Confucian value system to capitalism reflected the very reconstruction of the ROK through modernisation, industrialisation, and globalisation. South Korean citizenship thus was defined by opportunities for consumption, and beauty through reconstructing skin surfaces became a product to consume.

These practices echo the sentiments of gifting that were also embedded in textiles, and jogakbo. In an interview with the bojagi artist, Youngmin Lee, she stated that mothers of her grandmother’s generation ‘made jogakbo for their soon to be married daughters’.⁶⁴⁰ While the practices were no longer prevalent today, Lee described the gifted jogakbo as ‘very emotional sentimental pieces’⁶⁴¹ that were preserved as generational keepsakes, tracing what Francesca Bray calls female genealogies through textiles.⁶⁴² From decorative wrappers to decorative skins, the gifting of reconstructive practices to mark the transition between girlhood to adulthood can be read as expressions of filial piety. Instead of a disciplinary relation between the child and parent, there is a relation now governed by nation and citizen, mediated through the family unit. Under the framework of modernity, it is not continuity that the nation-state demands, but

⁶³⁹ Sharon Heijin Lee, ‘The (Geo)Politics of Beauty: Race, Transnationalism, and Neoliberalism in South Korean Beauty Culture’, p. 5.

⁶⁴⁰ Youngmin Lee.

⁶⁴¹ Youngmin Lee.

⁶⁴² Bray, p. 176.

reconstruction through consumption. Thus reconstructing one's skin not only serves the demands of the capitalist economy, but also the demands of the nation to reconstruct and reimagine one's own identity through beauty and ornamentality.

ii. Cutting into stigmatised skin

When Sarah made the decision to get the procedure, her mother and her flew to Seoul. In the consultation before the blepharoplasty, the doctor informed Sarah and her mother that the process would comprise an 'incision' and 'not a cut [...] It's a procedure, not a surgery they call it.' She described the process as getting clusters of stitches: '[o]ne in the inner corner of your eye[lid], the middle of your eye[lid], and then the end.' Sarah vaguely recalled how they used a general anaesthesia, but they woke her up in the middle of the procedure to check the detail. In the aftermath, her eyes

were puffy. I couldn't wear contacts. I couldn't shower for a week, because of the incisions. You have to go back and get them out and all that stuff – basically, the stitches pulled out because they have to set, right? So then, when they take the stitching out after a week, honestly, that was so painful because they don't numb you. They just pull it out. It's supposed to be melting [stitches], but the ones that don't melt, they just take it out right? They don't put you under for that. And then after that, I was swollen for maybe, it didn't look natural for six months, I would say. But apparently now, after two weeks, you look natural.⁶⁴³

In Sarah's descriptions of looking 'natural', I recall the aesthetic debates of the ornament itself. Cheng reminds us that the '*ornament* refers to the insignificant, the superfluous, the merely decorative, the shallow, and the excessive' and that its history 'informs the way we think about the denuded modern surface and modern personhood itself.'⁶⁴⁴ That is, this history of modern personhood, overrepresented as the bourgeois, white male, was constituted as the essential, minimal, 'denuded' surface in binary opposition to the yellow woman, whose historical imbrication with the ornament defined her as excessive, unnecessary, and decorative. Sarah's description of 'natural' refers, on the one hand, to the non-swollen skin, but it also highlights this relation and tension between the natural and the artifice that theories of ornamentality

⁶⁴³ Sarah Park.

⁶⁴⁴ Cheng, *Ornamentality*, p. 15.

highlight. This desire then for the natural assumes that such a body exists, and critically, that it is possible to return to this state in the aftermath of the cosmetic procedure.

Iris was either seven or eight when she first realised what the term, *ssankopul*, meant, and ‘what the difference between [...] having monolids and then also having double eyelids was.’⁶⁴⁵ While she remembered seeing ‘pop stars and actresses on screen’ with the double eyelids, she also recalled this being a discussion in her family household. Her mom and her aunt had double eyelids, and their physical differences were often ‘pointed out by the women in [her] family from a pretty young age.’⁶⁴⁶ Iris’s monolids were often described by her family as being ‘cute’ or as ‘an endearing, affectionate’ trait, but it was often communicated that the surgery was an option for when she got older.⁶⁴⁷ As she approached high school graduation, her decision to undergo the blepharoplasty was offered as a graduation present. She described this transition between high school and university as a practical time to undergo the procedure as it offered a lengthy amount of time to heal from the process. Moreover, entrance into college held the potential of ‘reinvent[ing] [one]self[.]’⁶⁴⁸

Unlike Sarah and Jiyeon, Iris’s memories of the aftermath of her surgery were vivid and alienating. She recalled looking unrecognisable to herself:

[...] I looked in the mirror and it looked really grotesque. Just because the stitches are still in, and so they were kind of holding up the eyelid fold, and so it was really grotesque. The whole eye region too was really swollen. I remember the areas under my eyes were looking a little bruised from the surgery as well, just because of all the blood rushing up there, and so my whole face was ... well the upper half of my face was swollen as well. I kind of looked at the mirror once, and I scared myself off a little, so decided not to look at it again until at least the stitches were completely gone and the swelling had gone down more. I remember thinking to myself, “oh my god this looks awful, and I hope it gets a lot better than this,” and that I achieve the desired look I want. But also, reassuring myself [thinking] “I’m sure this is how everyone looks after surgery and if I gave it a month or two I’ll look way more normal and then I can start college looking normal.”⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁵ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

⁶⁴⁶ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

⁶⁴⁷ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

⁶⁴⁸ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

⁶⁴⁹ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

In her description, Iris uses the pronoun of ‘it’ to separate herself from her reconstructed skin. When looking in the mirror, she recalled how she gazed upon a ‘grotesque’ version of herself that seemed to be separate from the ‘I’ of her narrative.

In mapping the conceptual origins of stigmatised skins, Jay Prosser connects Erving Goffman’s etymology of the term ‘stigmatisation’ to Frantz Fanon’s concept of race. According to Goffman’s etymology, the term stigma denoted the practice of using skin markings in ancient Greece to mark criminals, slaves, and traitors.⁶⁵⁰ Prosser interprets stigmatisation as how ‘the material marks on the skin remember, literalising the body and signifying in the symbolic, the subject’s social difference.’⁶⁵¹ In other words, skin markings created an index of social difference, acting as visual signs to signify one’s marginality. In later Christian times, medical ailments were also inscribed onto this system of meaning; skin disorders became ‘symbolic disorder[s]’.⁶⁵² Frantz Fanon theorises racism as the ‘epidermalization’ of an inferiority complex, and thus racialised skin became stigmatised under colonial conceptions of being. Prosser reminds us through Fanon that it was this conceptualisation of race when the stigma of the body was overlaid with the stigmatisation of the skin.⁶⁵³ Whereas stigmatisation, theorised by Prosser through Fanon, was imagined onto skin’s pigmentation, Millard marked the ‘Oriental eye’. Stigma was inscribed onto the ‘flat blank hood’ of the eyelid, with transformation defined by ‘an expression crease.’⁶⁵⁴ Millard, and plastic surgeons of the Japanese colonial system before him, medicalised stigma onto the surface of the eyelid, imagining that their interventions of cutting and sewing could transform the skin and one’s personhood. By separating one’s skin from one’s selfhood, Iris’s and my great-aunt’s reflections seemingly express the desire to separate oneself from this stigmatisation of skin and its folding around the eyes. If ‘[s]kin is the body’s memory’,

⁶⁵⁰ Goffman, p. 11 IN Prosser, p. 55.

⁶⁵¹ Prosser, p. 55.

⁶⁵² Goffman, p. 11 IN Prosser, p. 55.

⁶⁵³ Prosser, p. 56.

⁶⁵⁴ Millard, Jr., p. 333.

as Prosser argues, a surface-material that ‘re-members [...] the quite detailed specificities of life histories’,⁶⁵⁵ how do we forget, can we transcend these memories of stigma?

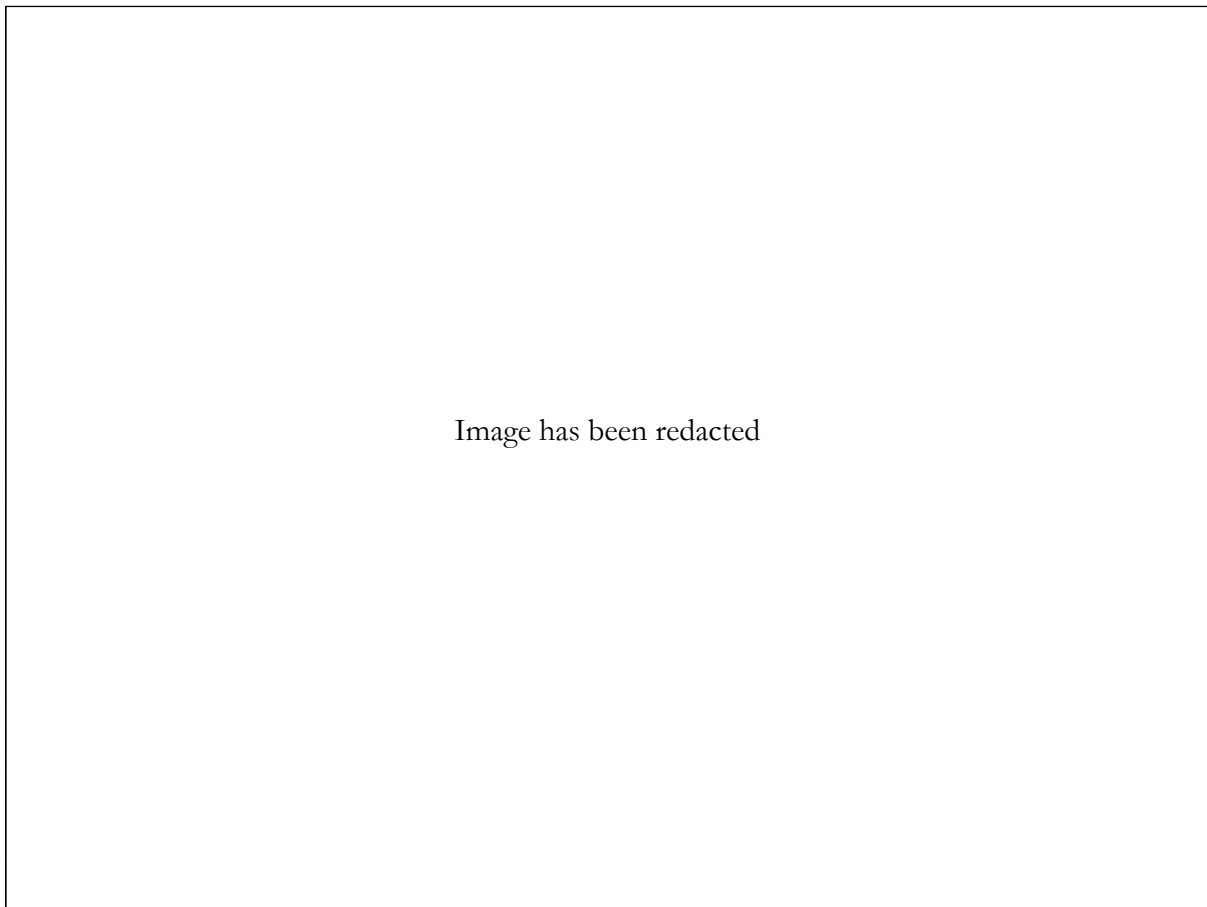


Figure 65. Ji Yeo, *Beauty Recovery Room* (Portrait 5) (2014) [photograph] Available from: Ji Yeo: Beauty Recovery Room, <https://jiyeo.com/860kdbgxggq9us7oyxzlswrcz5cx> [Accessed 9 September 2023]

Gazing into the camera’s lens, a woman sits on the edge of a half-made bed, in the middle of the photograph’s frame (*fig. 66*). There appears to be a dominant key light half-flooding the subject from the right side of the frame, which settles into the shadowed left side interior. The *mise-en-scène* of the setting is comprised of linear patterns – the faux horizontal wood grain of the wall behind the subject, the moss green horizontal textures of the embossed wallpaper on the left side, the vertical lines of the gathered fabric texturing the lamp shade, the horizontal stripes of the woven white bed sheets, the horizontal gathering of the taupe-grey jersey forming the woman’s shirt, and the lines marking the woman’s face, both what looks like

⁶⁵⁵ Prosser, p. 52.

pen markings and the pleated textures of her facial bandages. In an interview with *Slate* magazine, Ji Yeo explained to journalist David Rosenberg that she found her subjects by volunteering her care services. They were mostly women who were undergoing cosmetic surgery procedures, who did not have any support from friends or family for their aftercare. Rosenberg describes how Yeo offered to ‘take care of them during the isolating, painful, and sometimes shameful period of transformation. In return, they would sit for a portrait. Yeo would drive them to surgery, pick them up and take them home, cook soup for them, and pick up drugs from the pharmacy for them’.⁶⁵⁶

The circulation of the images varied from *National Geographic* to *Wired* to the blog of the Plastic Surgery Institute of Washington,⁶⁵⁷ Yeo was even shortlisted for the 2013 Taylor Wessing photographic portrait prize. Yet the moral tone of the coverage, which included the headlines: ‘Victims of a craze for cosmetic surgery’, ‘Stark Portraits From the Plastic Surgery Recovery Room’, and ‘South Korean Photographer Shows Costs of Plastic Surgery’, perpetuate the Orientalising gaze which positions Korean women as shallow, vain, and irrational victims.⁶⁵⁸ Sharon Heijin Lee argues that these obsessions with Korean cosmetic surgery reflect Western anxieties toward ‘Korea’s newfound affluence (and influence)’, situating the rise of these conversations at ‘a time when US economic global dominance appeared most threatened’.⁶⁵⁹ As

⁶⁵⁶ David Rosenberg, ‘Stark Portraits From the Plastic Surgery Recovery Room’, *Slate*, 17 September 2013, section Behold <<https://slate.com/culture/2013/09/ji-yeo-beauty-recover-room-looks-at-south-korean-women-after-plastic-surgery-photos.html>> [accessed 29 April 2023].

⁶⁵⁷ Janna Dotschkal, ‘Musings: Ji Yeo’s Beauty Recovery Room’, *National Geographic*, 17 October 2013 <<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/article/musings-ji-yeos-beauty-recovery-room>> [accessed 10 September 2023]; Alan Devenish, ‘Unsettling Images of Patients in Hiding After Plastic Surgery (NSFW)’, *Wired*, 14 March 2014 <<https://www.wired.com/2014/03/yeo-beauty-recovery-room/>> [accessed 10 September 2023]; ‘“Beauty Recovery Room”: A Series of Photos by Ji Yeo’ <<https://www.plasticsurgerynow.com/blog/beauty-recovery-room-a-series-of-photos-by-ji-yeo/>> [accessed 29 April 2023].

⁶⁵⁸ Stephen Evans, ‘Victims of a Craze for Cosmetic Surgery’, *BBC News*, 15 December 2014 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30295758>> [accessed 10 September 2023]; David Rosenberg, ‘Stark Portraits From the Plastic Surgery Recovery Room’, *Slate*, 17 September 2013, section Behold <<https://slate.com/culture/2013/09/ji-yeo-beauty-recover-room-looks-at-south-korean-women-after-plastic-surgery-photos.html>> [accessed 29 April 2023]; ‘South Korean Photographer Shows Costs of Plastic Surgery’, *NPR Radio Here & Now* (NPR, 2015) <<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2015/10/20/south-korea-plastic-surgery-photos>> [accessed 10 September 2023].

⁶⁵⁹ Sharon Heijin Lee, ‘Beauty Between Empires: Global Feminism, Plastic Surgery, and the Trouble with Self-Esteem’, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 37.1 (2016), 1–31 (p. 4).

techno-Orientalist and Orientalist ideas of the East sought and seek to contain and reinforce colonial differences, setting the East in binary relation to Western ideals, the reductive and sensational understandings of Korean plastic surgery consumption reflects global power dynamics, where a declining American empire sets to control narratives of Korean bodies.

These images unsettle the viewer's gaze, as we are made privy to the intimacies of desires, pain, and transformation. So-Rim Lee recently wrote about Ji Yeo's photographic series, arguing that the photographs 'reveal the material and embodied practice of plastic surgery' otherwise unseen in public media representations of the procedures and that the images represent 'a practice of embodiment that bespeaks the human desire for becoming, and for belonging.'⁶⁶⁰ Situating the Korean plastic surgery industry through colonial histories, the complex relationship between the nation and the development of the medical industry, neoliberal ideas about body work, and the medical tourism industry in the ROK, Lee argues that while the ads of the Korean plastic surgery industry idealise the allure of plastic surgery's 'surface imagination',⁶⁶¹ Yeo's images reveal in their intimate depictions the 'durational, precarious, and often messy process of recovery of the material human body that the promotional images of surgery never show. Reconstruing plastic surgery as a nexus of wounding and pain lets us reconsider what its durational undertaking actually entails, ultimately humanizing the patients that experience the affective and material processes of healing.'⁶⁶² By highlighting the materiality of skin itself, the images disrupt the standardised images of the plastic surgery industry, which as

⁶⁶⁰ So-Rim Lee, 'Between Plastic Surgery and the Photographic Representation: Ji Yeo Undoes the Elusive Narrative of Transformation', pp. 709–10.

⁶⁶¹ Derived from Rebecca Hurst's book, *Surface Imaginations: Cosmetic Surgery, Photography, and Skin*, Lee explains that the 'surface imagination', according to Hurst's theories, connect two critical surfaces in the plastic surgery industry, the photographic surface and the human skin. Lee reading Hurst writes '[t]he photograph, which can depict "whatever the patient or surgeon might desire, without pain or contingency," represents an "idealized surface" for the cosmetic surgery industry for its capacity to "[represent] the past, present, and future of the patient's skin, which supports the fragmentation and objectification of the body necessary to imagine an aesthetic surgical intervention"'. Rebecca Alpha Johnston Hurst, *Surface Imaginations: Cosmetic Surgery, Photography, and Skin* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), pp. 20–21; So-Rim Lee, 'Between Plastic Surgery and the Photographic Representation: Ji Yeo Undoes the Elusive Narrative of Transformation', p. 717.

⁶⁶² So-Rim Lee, 'Between Plastic Surgery and the Photographic Representation: Ji Yeo Undoes the Elusive Narrative of Transformation', p. 726.

Millard's diptychs before, represented contained bodies that have been spectacularised in idealised images presented by the Korean plastic surgery industries' ads. By offering a purview into the intimate, private moments of each subject's healing, the viewer's voyeuristic gaze is made witness to pain and wounding. This connection between the viewing and the subject, Lee argues, creates empathy between the spectator and the vulnerable patients in the stages of their healing. Yeo's images humanise the patients, troubling the histories of medical imagery and American surveillance technologies that have previously turned the Korean woman into a medical specimen.

In these representations of recovery, there is a correlation to the patchworking processes in histories of *jogakbo*. As Lee highlights the 'durational, precarious, and often messy process of recovery of the material human body', her rhetoric echoes descriptions of women in the Joseon era producing needlework while confined to their domestic quarters. Charlotte Horlyck references Confucian teachings to remind us that women, especially of the upper classes, were often relegated to domestic spaces, and inner quarters.⁶⁶³ Women were encouraged to produce needlework; such processes were remembered in relation to women's loneliness and the darkness of the nighttime.⁶⁶⁴ Within private, secluded, inner quarters, both women producing patchwork textiles, and undergoing corporeal patchwork procedures, engage in processes of building and reconstructing material forms.

Yeo's subjects, however, also sit in spaces of living light. The light in the photographs seems to emanate from the diegetic world of the image – the world of the subject. In doing so, the light paints a corollary reflection of the relationship between the private and the public, and the interior and the exterior as a mirror to the healing itself. This is especially apparent in 'Portrait 5' (*fig. 66*), as the woman's body separates the shadows from the light source. The contrast between the light and the dark represents both the temporality of healing, and the

⁶⁶³ Horlyck, 'Questioning Women's Place in the Canon of Korean Art History', pp. 227–30.

⁶⁶⁴ Horlyck references poems by Yi Ok (1760–1813) and Heo Nanseolheon (1563–89) to describe these practices. For further reading see Horlyck, 'Questioning Women's Place in the Canon of Korean Art History', p. 240.

private interior space that shielded from the public gaze. In Lee's descriptions of wounding, pain, and messy recovery which defines the materiality of the human body, I also hear and recall familiar stories of friends and family members who have recently given birth. Their perineal, or vaginal tears, emergency c-sections, their common stories of traumatic pain, and importantly, the recovery of their skin wounds, as their bodies opened, echoed the rhetoric of Lee's descriptions. These relationships between the pregnant woman and Yeo's surgery patients are connected through the grotesque body, for they rupture the idealised skins and forms of classical bodies. Associated with the in-between, liminality, and border crossings, the grotesque body reminds us of the potential of becoming,⁶⁶⁵ that is covered by the shell of the placenta and the skin as a wrapping cloth.

In the previous chapters, I explored Korean patchwork as a material wrapping – as a *jogakbo*, and forms of fashion that have wrapped the body. I recognise here that it is the skin and not the body itself that I illuminate in these connections to patchwork. It is the reconstructed skin that wraps the body in this final chapter that I explore. While Lee argues that Yeo's images humanise her subjects by making privy to viewers, the 'figurative' and 'visceral' pain of reconstruction,⁶⁶⁶ I also ask what possibilities there are for imagining the reconstructed skin of Korean women here as a decorative, ornamental surface. If we apply Anne Anlin Cheng's theories of yellow womanhood to the materiality of skin itself, can we offer new insights to her ontological configurations merely than to discern that she is in fact, human? How do we consider her racialised being if we read her patchworked skin as decorative surface?

iii. Concealing and preserving skin: stitch-work, mending practices, and healing

One of the earliest accounts of the double eyelid surgery in East Asia can be traced to

⁶⁶⁵ Granata.

⁶⁶⁶ So-Rim Lee, 'Between Plastic Surgery and the Photographic Representation: Ji Yeo Undoes the Elusive Narrative of Transformation', pp. 726–27.

1896 and the practices of Dr. Mikamo Kōtarō.⁶⁶⁷ Descriptions in medical journals of these processes illustrate how the procedure was used to correct the asymmetry of a patient's eyelids: '3 stitches with silk thread created a double-eyelid margin that was 6 to 8 mm from the cilia, and the depth was determined by when the stitches were removed (2 to 6 days postoperatively).'⁶⁶⁸ By sewing silk threads into the surface of skin, a permanent bond was formed to create a new crease that was fixed by the materiality of skin itself after the silk was removed. More than a century later, the innovations of this procedure would produce desires for 'good results'. Jiyeon explained that word-of-mouth recommendations would be determined by previous patients who received treatments with little scarring. She stated that '[t]he best results that you can have for eyes is that you don't have a scar. Like a visible scar. The best thing, best result that you have is that it looks very natural. So without a scar. But if you go to a not-very-good doctor, not skilled doctor, I've seen some people have a scar when they close their eyes.'⁶⁶⁹ Echoing Sarah's sentiments for wanting to look 'natural', it was imperative that the procedures were concealed from the skin surfaces, the stigma of racialised existence could not be marked.

In many of the iterations of jogakbo from national collections, a flat-fillet seaming technique, called the gekki stitch, was used to conceal the seams of the once-separate fragments. While the patchwork form itself expresses fragmentation through the juxtaposition of its various pieces, of the textiles belonging to national collections, it was not the construction itself, but the fusion into a uniform piece that seemed to distinguish jogakbo from the stylistic expressions of other patchwork counterparts, for example, boro. In these concealed constructions, I read a nationalist narrative of Korea and Korean women that sought to reclaim and potentially erase the histories of trauma through these pieces of mending – concealing pain and concealing scars, both literally, metaphorically, and figuratively.

⁶⁶⁷ K Mikamo, *A Technique in the Double-Eyelid Operation* (J Chungaishinpo, 1896) IN Y. Shirakabe and others, 'The Double-Eyelid Operation in Japan: Its Evolution as Related to Cultural Change', *Annals of Plastic Surgery*, 15 (1985), 224–41 (p. 225).

⁶⁶⁸ Shirakabe and others, p. 224.

⁶⁶⁹ Chae.

In Chapter One, J P 제피's reflections of patchwork compelled us to think about the processes of patchwork as bound to materiality. That is, the compositions of patchwork were bound to the relations between the shapes of each fragment. For Iris, the results of her surgery left her with a remarkable asymmetry in her eyelids. In the aftermath of the process, after the swelling had subsided, she described how

it became pretty apparent that the eyelid folds that the doctor had created were mismatched, so the left fold was maybe even a millimetre or half a millimetre bigger than the right one and it was pretty noticeable. At least to myself, and my mother and my family members in Korea. My aunts, the next summer when I went back, they commented on it. Even though it's such a small thing that I don't think anyone that wasn't Korean would notice. My mom, even a month in, started voicing how she was really dissatisfied how it turned out, because from her point of view, she was like "we paid thousands of dollars to get this done, and he should have made them completely parallel, but instead, they came out mismatched." She said, "he's a quack doctor" and suggested actually that we should go back and demand that they fix it. I kept saying, "it's because the swelling hasn't gone down yet, we should just wait and see what it looks like once, in three to six months, maybe it's just that the right side is healing faster, or that the swelling is going down faster than the left, which is why they look mismatched." Then, also there was a fear in me too, that I didn't want to go through the whole process again. I didn't even know what that would be like, if I should go in to redo the right eye, especially with college approaching [...] Then after three to six months it became pretty clear that the left eye, the fold on my left eye was just going to remain larger. I was pretty self-conscious about it for, I would say the first two or three years after the surgery. I tried to adjust the way I put on eye makeup on my left versus right eye, because my left eye looked bigger, just because the fold looked bigger. It enlarged the eye more, so I would put on more eye makeup onto my right eye, so it would look more even. I remember I didn't like the way I smiled, because to me, when I smiled my eyes looks like they got a bit more crinkled and it made the difference even more apparent. So there was a certain way that I would stand for the camera, so that when I was taking pictures my right eye wasn't closer to the camera. All of these internalised minor things were affected by the mismatching seeming huge to me when I looked at myself.⁶⁷⁰

As Iris reflected on the differences between her and her family's expectations, the results, and her understanding of herself through her skin, she reveals the complicated entanglement of viewing herself through the lens of being a Korean woman, a woman of the Korean diaspora, and as a daughter and nieces shaped by collective expectations of beauty ideals. The eyelid fold itself is well scrutinised by Korean and other East Asian women. Her mother's and her aunt's

⁶⁷⁰ Iris Yi Youn Kim.

dissatisfaction with the results, and the calls to correct the procedure express the capitalist framework that governs the body as a commodity, imagining how one could easily ‘redo’ herself to fit into these imagined ideals. But skin is an unruly material, which does not conform to standardised rules of reconstruction despite the medical attempts and interventions.

In my interviews with Iris and Sarah, they described skincare as one of their abiding beauty rituals and practices. Their desire for smooth skin that was unblemished by age was reflected in their practices of applying sunscreen and anti-aging products from a young age. Sarah states that despite growing up in a working-class family, and her mom not having the opportunities to worry about her own beauty regimes, she remembers from an early age how her mother applied sunscreen on her face. She remembers this, despite having learned most of her beauty rituals from YouTube or other online blogs. Sarah also recalled how her mother ‘always told me to put on toner and everything, and then obviously, face cream.’⁶⁷¹ Iris similarly describes how her own skincare attitudes and regimes were inherited:

‘I think Korean women are [...] so focused on anti-ageing. And so I’ve had it drilled into me, from my early 20s that I need[ed] to start applying eye wrinkle cream now, and retinol cream and sunscreen is something that also I’ve learned to apply religiously ever since I was in high school [...] I feel like there is a common saying that Korean women say, [or] maybe it’s just my family. The women in my family [...] say beauty doesn’t matter when you get into middle age. [...] it’s all about how young you look.’⁶⁷²

Anne McClintock’s work on soap and imperialism reveals that the representations of mirrored and polished surfaces on soap ads ‘eras[ed] both the signs of domestic labor and the industrial origins of domestic commodities.’⁶⁷³ To preserve skin surfaces then, is not only to erase signs of racial difference, but also to conceal the signs of work itself. In these inherited desires to preserve the surface of the skin, unmarked from the wrinkles and blemishes that signify time, I read a longing to capture skin in an idealised moment of time.

⁶⁷¹ Sarah Park.

⁶⁷² Iris Yi Youn Kim, Oral History.

⁶⁷³ Anne McClintock, ‘Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising’, in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 207–31 (p. 218).

Cheng's theorisations of yellow woman initially imagine and juxtapose her in distinction from the black female body, whose racial histories and critical theorisations imagined black womanhood as constituted through flesh: 'the wounded, flesh-laden black body [is distinguished] from the immaculate, synthetic, ornamental yellow body,' yet *Ornamentalism's* conclusion offers a view to think about the entanglements between flesh and object.⁶⁷⁴ Evoking the visions of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Cheng describes 'the clump of scars' on Sethe's back as 'the chokecherry': '[f]lesh itself [as] an aggregate, an incorporation indebted to a logic of serial attachment that is at once violent and aesthetic, material and abstract.'⁶⁷⁵ In this visible mapping of scars, formed from the wounds of violence on the plantation, the 'mobile ornament' of flesh, Cheng points the point of convergence where 'flesh that passes through objecthood needs ornament to get back to itself.'⁶⁷⁶ It is this thinking about how things have been turned into people, and not only how people turn into things, that ornamentalism theorises a conceptual mapping of the genealogies between decorative surface and personhood.

This chapter maps the materiality of flesh and the skin surface as a corporeal metaphor and literal process of patchworking. Highlighting the embodied experiences of four Korean women who underwent blepharoplasty processes, I situated their stories in the geopolitics of beauty which imagined the epidermal surface and racialised identities through the eyelid fold. By asking what possibilities there are for Korean women who cut and mend the skin, I conclude that by hearing women discuss their processes of becoming, and witnessing Ji Yeo's representations, as violent acts, as acts that disrupt the boundaries of the body, we not only bear witness to the labour of making Korean womanhood, but we humanise these stories of pain and desiring beauty as embodied experiences of being. Their stories, which articulate their journeys and experiences, between girlhood to adulthood, trouble medical practices which have viewed their bodies as specimens. The varying responses of ambivalence, regret, yearning,

⁶⁷⁴ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, pp. 152–53.

⁶⁷⁵ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 154.

⁶⁷⁶ Cheng, *Ornamentalism*, p. 156.

contentedness, and shame, define the multiple possibilities of thinking about women undergoing cutting and mending processes, constituting the beauty practices and receptions of plastic surgery for Korean women as not singular, pathological experiences.

There are two theoretical trajectories within this chapter that, on the one hand, recall the real-life stories and embodied experiences of Korean women. On the other hand, I imagine reconstructed skin as a form of patchwork wrapping, necessarily theorising skin itself as a boundary-material to develop a continuum of patchwork materiality. By foregrounding the reconstructed skin surface, the decorative, aesthetic injury of yellow womanhood is ever more pronounced through plastic surgery processes. Brutalised flesh imagined as a material object allows us to understand the specific contributions of Korean materialities to yellow womanhood, through the once-injured, once-fragmented, sutured-together, healing, and concealed surfaces of Korean patchwork itself.

Conclusion: Piecing fragments, mending histories

On my external hard drive that I keep in a griegie woven linen dust bag, that sits on a collection of electronic cables and other miscellaneous electronic plugs, in a beige woven basket underneath my Ladderax shelving unit in my flat, I have a recorded digital copy of my paternal grandmother when she was initially diagnosed with dementia. The video was recorded as part of an undergraduate art project, and in the first few seconds my grandmother looks into the camera and asks whether I am Kyunghie, whether I am me. When I began this research, I wondered how I fit into a world defined by Brexit, Trumpism, and the resurgence of a yellow peril that was undoubtedly shaped by the decline of the Anglo-European hegemony and its shifting localities of global capital and power. As these events resolutely announced to me the precarity of my citizenship, my body, and my personhood, I wondered how I was shaped by these constitutions of legality and nationhood, while trying to discern my own place of belonging. In piecing together these histories of Korean patchwork, women, and materials of the Korean diaspora through women's work and their creative practices, I asked myself how do we remember? How do our material belongings, personal memories, familial stories, national mythologies, collective hauntings, and racialised traumas shape us? How does the blood that courses through our veins, create an embodied ecology of knowing that retrieves from the eyes the visual impression stored in our hippocampus? How does the skin that wraps our bones, our organs, our blood, sense and touch the world that we move through? How do we forget? What is our elixir of choice?

This thesis germinates from the personal, but expands to the collective, as I follow the migrations of materials, women, and their stories between lands, across oceans, traversing borders, journeying through time to illuminate 'Korea' as both an imagined and lived experience of nationhood, asking who is the Korean woman? By tracing the constellations between histories of Korean patchwork and Korean women, I argue that the form, defined by fragments that have been sutured together, cannot be contained in a singular shape, pattern, or style, but it is a configuration constituted by its growing potential. Meaning that the style denotes any number of

fragments pieced together to create a unified whole, and yet, this unified piece may also grow, by adding more pieces, mending over holes. Adding pieces may change the shape of the border, and perhaps the seams between the fragments may become loose with time and wear, but the patchworking itself unifies the body. My once-called diasporic positionality too then, reads as a fragment and/or set of sutures within the larger piece-worked history of Korean women, mending and unifying stories not from the periphery or margins, but from within the body of the patchwork itself, constituting its whole. By employing this strategy for unifying fragments to the process of writing and researching women's histories, I reflect upon Korea's geopolitical fragmentation, exploring partition and the rebuilding of the ROK as a container to explore Korean women, while simultaneously theorising mending as a form of survival. As a contemporary history of Korea that explores the national reconstruction of the ROK, and the colonial encounters of the Open Port period, I employ a decolonial feminist framework, framing this thesis through theories of coloniality/modernity. Critically, I foreground the form as constituting Korean womanhood, not only through the practices and stories of women's labour, but through Cheng's *Ornamentality*, patchwork *as* the Korean woman.

Key conclusions and original contributions

The three chapters of this thesis developed through containers of material forms: tracing patchwork wrapping cloths, patchworks wrapping bodies, and patchworking skins. Revealing the braided ideologies which shaped Korean womanhood through Confucian values, nationalist programs of tradition, and global market capitalism, I demonstrated how practices and narratives of Korean patchwork were shaped by shifting reforms and new encounters in Korea. Chapter One explored cultural and national memory, and how jogakbo in collections defined Korean women through decorative objecthood. Through *Cloth Bundle, Patchwork*, I located what was most likely the first patchwork collected in an institutional collection, foregrounding its material form through its taut stitches and machine-woven cottons to reveal the material trades of the

Open Port period and Korean women encountering modernity through Christian missionaries and technological forms. Histories of ethnographic collecting were explored as American acts of intelligence gathering, which encountered Korea through white forms. Through imaginings of whiteness, I elucidated regional geopolitics, which positioned Korea as a potential US ally. In contemporary displays and collections of white ramie (and hemp), materiality expressed the complicated entanglement between colonial and nationalist ideas of self and/as the Other. I argued that displays of white ramie racialised Korean identities.

Mapping the historiography of jogakbo, I defined Huh Dong Hwa's curatorial work and career as building the prototype collection of jogakbo *as* Korean in the 1980s. Patchwork histories constituted gender ideals that viewed Korean women's work at service to nation-building, which were defined by nationalist desires to unify collective identities. Confucian values of disciplining women through needlework were evoked to present the bejewelled, decorative, hanging limbs of spectacular, lustrous surface ornaments. The cloths were presented as definitively and authentically Korean, and simultaneously, modern. Rather than debunk these claims, I situated and framed them through US-ROK relations, viewing how Huh's collecting practices were shaped by coloniality. In these histories, Korean women's creative practices were represented by others. Narratives reiterated their so-called lost authorship as wistful expressions of women's oppressed circumstances, which then justified the curatorial practices of speaking on behalf of others. Yet, decolonial scholars remind us that these practices of representation make 'us believe that there is a world out there that can be described independently of the enunciation that describes it.'⁶⁷⁷ Locating the enunciation of Korean women's representations through jogakbo in the authority of a collector, and a private male citizen of the ROK, revealed the gendered and national relationships of power that governed Korean women's bodies and beings.

⁶⁷⁷ Mignolo, 'The Conceptual Triad: Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality', p. 151.

As jogakbo multiplied in global collections of Korean objects, the possibilities for understanding Korean patchwork were necessarily viewed through transnational interpretations, influences, and migrations of textiles. In the diasporic practices of J P 제피 and Zadie Xa, I explored practices of building, defining, and performing Koreanness through jogakbo. Moving beyond national boundaries, conversations between jogakbo and patchwork, namely the Gee's Bend Quilting Collective, were illuminated to reveal relational histories of making, and the possibilities of transcending national, gendered, and racialised borders. Moving across gendered borders, the bi-gendered artist, J P 제피 offered insights about creative practices that troubled jogakbo as a women's practice, imaging and creating forms that emerged from the duality of he(τ) gendered identities. J P and Xa engaged in practices that performed Koreanness through making jogakbo, existing outside of the ROK's national borders, and thus called to expand our understanding of Koreanness through journeys and migrations that saw diasporic experiences as an expression of the ROK's geopolitical division and colonial circumstances.

This first chapter served to illuminate the enunciations and the institutions enunciating representations of Korea and Korean womanhood through jogakbo as cultural memory. By revealing how museums and collecting practices defined and constituted systems of knowledge and ideas of being, I began to forge new pathways to imagine Korean womanhood through collective and global experiences and practices. Critically, I traced new genealogies of ornamentation through patchwork wrapping cloths, exploring cotton-woven and stamped surfaces, lustrous silk forms, unified ramie fragments, and indigo-dyed hemp pieces, as Korean materials defining yellow womanhood, discovering that national histories of jogakbo emphasised the decorative unification of fragments through concealed sutures.

In Chapter Two, I theorised patchwork wrapping bodies, exploring the embodied experiences of patchwork style-fashion-dress, Korean bodies defined by geopolitical fragmentation and multiple modernities, and the uses of patchwork in (K-)Fashion as a signifying Koreanness on global stages. Instead of viewing fashion through the hanbok versus

yanbok binary, I mapped the possibilities to think about a patchwork style-fashion-dress that was formed by narratives of pleasure and survival. Through my own mother's archive, tracing my brother's baby blanket to a patchwork baby vest, I traced the narratives of mothers that were defined by the gendered ideologies of the 'Wise Mother, Good Wife' who aspired to live beyond national borders and containers of womanhood. Korean women became consumers who engaged in the global marketplace, disrupting nationalised ideas of their identities, by purchasing and participating in what Dorinne Kondo called 'the transnational circuits of commodities and capital'.⁶⁷⁸ Living through the ROK's democratisation, globalisation, and rapid economic growth, generations of women turned into workers, designers, entrepreneurs, and emigrants who travelled the world to seek opportunities beyond Korea's borders. Situating their stories alongside the shifting global and national politics that defined the ROK, namely the program to de-industrialise and reconfigure the domestic market as a creative and design center using cultural products to promote soft power, I highlighted material visions, and commodities of fashion that were presented globally, presenting '(South) Korea' abroad.

Decolonial praxis calls researchers to highlight embodied experiences, de-linking from Anglo-European epistemologies to re-exist and reconstitute local histories and cosmologies of being. Through my material memories of familial belonging, and the voice of my great-aunt, I recorded and historicised Korean women's stories of survival. By building my sources of knowledge from the personal, I illuminated histories of women shaped by coloniality, but sought to remember their lives through joy, desire, pleasure, hardship, and survival. Such lives and memories recalled stories of family and community, not nation, in their attempts to survive. Tracing these genealogies of Korean women, working, migrating, and living, I recorded knowledge that emerged from personal experiences, necessarily illuminating the emotive aspects of being.

⁶⁷⁸ Kondo, p. 80.

Through Chunghie Lee and Lie Sang Bong, I interrogated representations of 'Korea' through fashion that were displayed at the V&A, while exploring patchwork as a global signifier of Koreanness forged through soft power and a national program for globalisation following the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. Developing displays through a V&A sponsored 'Fashion in Motion' show and a KCCUK presentation, respectively, the global stage of the V&A provided the Korean artist and designer opportunities to showcase Korean art and design. Patchwork as a recognised symbol of Koreanness expressed for Chunghie Lee, the material possibilities to encode fragmentation and colonial violence in her visible seam work. For Lie Sang Bong, patchwork was used as a transferable sign, referencing the influences of Western Modernism in the authentically Korean forms. This presentation illuminated the ROK's ideological positionality through Cold War politics, with South Korean ideas of Koreanness aligned to Anglo-European cultural hegemonies.

I located the collections of Lee Young Hee at the Guimet as an expression of the ROK shaped by coloniality, namely the imperial ideologies of French taste. With the luxury fashion industry centralised in Paris, the museum's holdings of the largest Korean textile and garment collection outside of the ROK bolstered Paris in the Korean imaginary, and moreover, 'Korea' in the global imaginary. In the decorative, embroidered tears of Lee Young Hee's garments, the simulacrum of the Korean woman emerged: delicately fragmented, and mended together through woven forms. In the final case study of Chanel's 2016 show, I explored the travelling visions of 'Korea' that were initially imagined through a team of transnational designers, and then reappropriated through Bong Joon Ho's *Okja*. Contributing to fashion histories, I argued that the multiple backstage designers conceptualised 'Korea' through a complicated entanglement of references and aims. Jogakbo in Ho's production was used as a powerful signifier of Korean bodies, labouring, defining the flesh of Koreanness through the blushed pink tones of patchwork, that emerged as a bodily ornament imagining patchwork wrapping bodies as the fragmented bodily surface itself.

In Chapter Three, I explored the skin surface as a boundary-material, and patchwork as a corporeal metaphor and literal act of cutting, piecing back together, piercing, suturing, and mending the skin. As I situated the legacies of Dr. Ralph Millard, Jr. through the history of coloniality and colonialism which defined beauty ideals in South Korea to the present-day violence toward Asian-American women in America in the aftermath of COVID, I connected the violence that underpinned this history through the eye of the needle, and the eye of the beholder. Through the comparative analysis between Millard's diptychs and Ji Yeo's *Beauty Recovery Room* photographic series, histories of photographic representation, identification, legal personhood were juxtaposed with intimate portraits of healing, which humanised the experiences of becoming. It was through the conceptualisation of the grotesque body, a body defined by its uncontained surfaces, which I troubled the boundaries of the classical and idealised body. I argued that the radical potential of these practices lay in their abilities to not only reveal the artifice of the ideal body, but in their abilities to trouble the boundaries of these enclosed skins. By drawing on the voices and embodied experiences of four women imagining and reconstructing themselves through inherited and gifted beauty ideals, I sought to decolonise Korean womanhood by exploring the varying desires for beauty, longing for perfection, yearning for acceptance, recognising regret, contended forgetting, and so on, which mapped the multiple and sometimes contradictory ways which women regarded their connections to their skins.

In skin's unruly nature, as it disappointed the expectations of some of my participants, I theorised its materiality. In doing so, I connected the skin surface back to Cheng's ornamentalism, positing that by exploring the reconstructed skins of plastic surgery as a decorative surface, we could imagine the ornamental artifice defining yellow womanhood. By wrapping bodies, the patchworked skin, offered the possibilities for the yellow woman's escape through the fantasy of ornamental being. Violated and reconstructed flesh imagined as a surface ornament allows us to once again confirm that Korean patchwork as ornament is constituted by unified and concealed surfaces.

The original contributions of this thesis include the new voices that emerged from artists, curators, and designers, making jogakbo and defining histories of jogakbo. By revealing and unpacking the practices of Huh Dong Hwa, and Chunghie Lee, I argued that nationalist narratives were built and reinforced through the desire to define oneself and one's nation in the aftermath of colonial subjugation and geopolitical partition. Yet, these histories could not be disentangled from museum collecting practices that were framed by ethnographic systems of knowledge, as presented by Anna Jackson and Sara Oka and their colonial gazes upon Korea through Japanese knowledge. Through the diasporic practices of makers of J P 제피 and Zadie Xa, I recorded new voices articulating practices of retrieving and finding their Korean identities through jogakbo, while making sense of place through migrations and journeys. The voices of four women engaged in plastic surgery practices offered new perspectives to develop multiplicities of women's desires and beauty ideals, foregrounding how thoughts and imaginings of their skin surfaces were simultaneously reflective and not reflective of their own identities.

Through my own diasporic positionality, I offer original insights on the nature of jogakbo in the global constellations of material memories, stories of making, style-fashion-dress, and reappropriating cultural symbols. Textiles carried memories of scented bodies. Personal objects were removed from the contexts of nationalist narratives, evoking singular, embodied memories of being and belonging. Through decolonial theory, I troubled the distinct categorisations of the Korean woman versus the woman of the Korean diaspora, as I viewed nationalism, national borders, and regional thinking as inventions of coloniality/modernity. This thesis argues for an inclusive understanding beyond national borders, to view the experiences of Korean women of the diaspora as shaped by Korea's coloniality.

Testing Cheng's theory of ornamentalism by uncovering and theorising jogakbo as a decorative ornament composed of fragments, my work expanded upon and complicated genealogies of yellow womanhood through Korean materials by highlighting its fusion together as a uniform piece. In national collections, silk and ramie variations of patchwork cloth were

remembered as the unused gifts from mothers to daughters, immaculately preserved, and composed with concealed seamlines. Such cloths imagined Korean women as composed, decorated, and immaculately preserved as an ideal of womanhood before colonial subjugation, longing for the traditional and authentic Korean woman to suture together pieces as national reconstruction. White ramie and hemp patchwork of global collections were shaped by imperial gazes, imagining Korean materials through Japanese lenses. In their proximity to Japanese knowledge and tastes, the textiles racialised Korean identities, and reified static ideas about Korean suffering, and simplicity. As patchwork wrapped bodies, I explored the red seams of Chunghie Lee's *Durumagi* as the symbolic scars of Korean bodies in the aftermath of colonial subjugation and geopolitical partition; the decorative mending of Lee Young Hee's *Mosi (Ramie) Jacket* as a postmodern reference to Korea's histories of poverty; and the pinky-toned patchwork of Chanel juxtaposed to the flesh-coloured patchwork costume of Bong Joon Ho's *Okja* as a reminder of the appropriated and reappropriated national body. When theorising the materiality of flesh, and the desire for skin to resemble the polished mirror surface, I read the fusion between flesh and ornamental life.

The chapters of this thesis mapped a continuum of patchwork materiality, contributing new possibilities to imagine plastic surgery procedures as patchworked skins. While Cheng's theories apply to representations and not the realities of lived lives, I take the idealised Korean woman as an aspirational fiction inherited in these experiences of womanhood. To decolonise Korean womanhood, while addressing the question of the Korean woman then, is to piece together material memories, personal histories, voices of makers, collectors, designers, and women as a patchwork methodology that builds histories of Korean womanhood and patchwork defined by polyvocality.

Shortly after the nuclear bomb obliterated Nagasaki and John J. McCloy of the [US] War Department asked Dean Rusk and a colleague to go into a spare office and think about how to

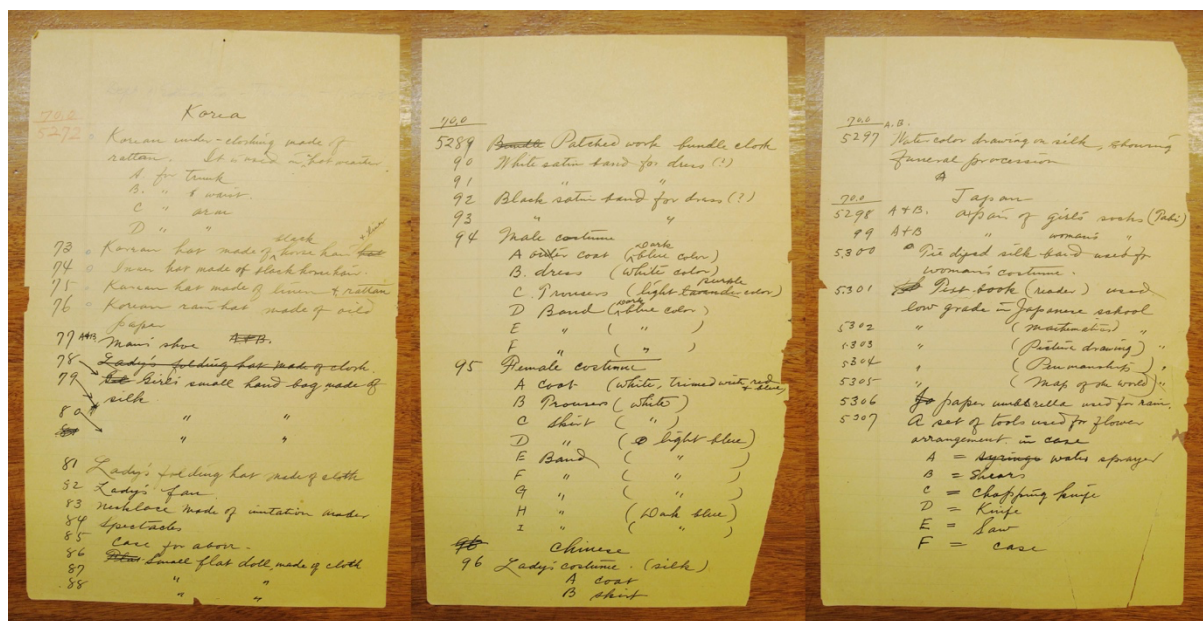
divide Korea',⁶⁷⁹ my paternal grandfather left. Following the US government's decision to partition Korea – a fragmented divide between two countries that would turn into an ideological gulf – my paternal grandfather and his older siblings left his pregnant wife, his mother, his one-year-old son (who shortly after died from smallpox), and his two younger siblings. Traumatic stress, from a psychological perspective, denotes 'a fundamental rift or breakdown of psychological functioning (memory, behaviour, emotion) which occurs as a result of an unbearably intense experience that is life threatening to the self or others.'⁶⁸⁰ Traumatic events are said to be splintering experiences, where traumatised people often relive these unbearable moments. These events can cause traumatic memories, memories that are forever fixed in the mind. My grandmother's traumatic memories are how I remembered her. She would recall these devastating circumstances of her life at every opportunity in my childhood. My grandmother was widowed, and forced to bury a child, all while collecting and keeping together the pieces of her fractured family. As my grandmother's illness progressed, she seemed to forget the traumatic memories that shaped her. She had already placed them into my childhood memories, however, forging through me, a genealogy of trauma and survival. While I did not inherit any patchwork wrappings cloths, I was gifted the fragments of dreams, pieces of trauma, and tactics of survival that I now reconstruct together in this history of Korean patchwork and Korean women who traversed borders, crossed oceans, and endured despite their circumstances. As decolonial praxis, I recognise that these gained knowledges from investing in six years of PhD research has allowed me, most importantly, to rebuild my own familial relationships and heal from (some) of these generational traumas.

⁶⁷⁹ Cumings, 'A Murderous History of Korea'.

⁶⁸⁰ Hunt, p. 7.

Appendices

Appendix A. American Museum of Natural History.



Typed pages from left to right (table added):

70.0	Korea
5272	Korean under-clothing made of rattan. It is used in hot weather.
	A. for Trunk
	B. " * waist
	C. " arm
	D. " "
73**	Korean hat made of black horsehair hat x liner
74	Inner hat made of black horsehair
75	Korean hat made of liner & rattan
76	Korean rainhat made of oiled paper
77	A&B. Man's shoe
	Lady's folding hat made of cloth
78	Girl's small handbag made of silk
79	" "
80	" "
81	Lady's folding hat made of cloth
82	Lady's fan
83	Necklace made of imitation amber
84	Spectacles
85	Case for above
86	Flat Small flat doll made of cloth
87	" "
88	" "

Appendix A. continued

* Implied that the list is denoted as 70.0/5273; the following list of 74, 75, 76, etc. should follow the as -74, -75, -76, etc.

<u>70.0</u>	
5289*	Bundle Patched work bundle cloth
90	White satin band for dress (?)
91	" "
92	Black satin band for dress (?)
93	" "
94	Male costume
	A. Outer coat (Dark blue color)
	B. Dress (white color)
	C. Trousers (light lavender purple colour)
	D. Band (Dark blue colour)
	E. " (")
	F. " (")
95	Female costume
	A. Coat (White, trimed with red & blue)
	B. Trousers (White)
	C. Shirt (")
	D. " (Light blue)
	E. Band (")
	F. " (")
	G. " (")
	H. " (Dark blue)
	I. " (")
	<i>Chinese</i>
96	Lady's costume (silk)
	A. Coat
	B. Shirt

<u>70.0</u>	A. B.
5297	Water color drawing on silk, showing funeral procession
<u>70.0</u>	<i>Japan</i>
5298	A&B. A pair of girl's socks (Tabi)
99	A&B. " woman's "
5300	Tie dyed silk band used for woman's costume
5301	Text-book (reader) used low grade in Japanese school
5302	" (mathematics)"
5303	" (Pictorial drawing) "
5304	" (Pen manship) "
5305	" (Map of the world) "
5306	Paper umbrella used for rain
5307	A set of tools used for flower arrangement in case
	A. Syringe water sprayer
	B. Shears
	C. Chopping knife
	D. Knife
	E. Saw
	F. Case

* Significant object: 'Cloth Bundle, Patchwork' (Object No. 70.0/5289), see Chapter 1.

Appendix B. Anna Jackson, interviewed by Christin Yu about the acquisition of the *Korean patchwork wrapping cloth ramie* (Object No. FE.303-2011) at the V&A, 12 April 2021.

Anna Jackson, Keeper of Asia, V&A transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin Yu: That's fine. I really have just one, or a couple of questions for you, initially. I suppose my main question is regarding that jogakbo that you gifted to the museum. I was just interested in the circumstances of [the] acquisition

Anna J: Well, I don't know if you know much about me or from Rosalie or anything else. But I'm a Japanese specialist in Japanese textiles. So I was in Kyoto, must be about 2010 ... 2011. 2011, I think. I was visiting Kyoto and I have a friend there who always tries to take me to something interesting to do, [such as] see Kimono makers or collections, whatever. And he took me to something called the Koryo museum, which is the north part of Kyoto. Which is a private museum, a private Korean Museum, which was set up, by a Korean collector, he's Korean, who lives in Japan. And he's just opened this small private museum, so my friend just took me there to show me this. So, and they just had a few things for sale. Historic things, you know. So I just bought the wrapping cloth. And I suppose in my mind, I had it as a potential object for the V&A collection, because although I don't know the Korean collection so well, I was aware that we didn't have a wrapping cloth like that, a patchwork one. One that was just plain, so in the back of my mind, I thought it might be something suitable for the museum's collection. But obviously we aren't allowed us to go out and buy whatever we like for the collection, we have to make a collective decision about what we should have. So when I returned to the museum, I brought it in and I asked my colleagues whether they thought it was suitable for collection. And they thought that it was, so I gifted it. So it's not something I ever really had in my own possession for very long.

Christin Yu: Okay, great. Yeah, it's certainly interesting, in some of my research and I'm studying a section on souvenirs. Right now, there's a lot of collectors out of Japan and I was wondering if you could ...

Anna J: I took a photograph of the business card. I was trying to figure out whether he was actually, he was actually Korean. So I think he's a Korean who lives in Japan. It's called the Koryo museum, you could look it up perhaps online, to see if there's a bit more information about it. I get the impression that it's a Korean who lives in Japan, because after our visit, my friend took me to the restaurant, the Korean restaurant that was run by the daughter of this man. So I get the impression that he's Korean, who's lived in Japan. Certainly within Japan, there's a great political situation, the situation is tense. But there's still a great admiration and interest in Korean art within Japan. That's why the person decided to open the museum.

Christin Yu: Okay, great, that's the question. I was hoping to situate the objects within a broader network of art collecting...

Anna J: I suppose in a way, what was that appealed to me with my 'Japanese eye', if you like, was, first of all, it's made of ramie. So it's made of, this very sort of very fine Bast fiber and ramie has quite a particular place within Japanese textile culture as well. It's a cultivated grass fiber, but it's still, it's quite on the high end kind of cloth. It's very much sort of thing that would be worn by the elite during the summer months in kimono form because it's very cool and airy and absorbs sweat. So I think for me personally, it was the fabric, the sense of the fabric that

appealed to me, particularly. And also there is, there was a cultural sort of wrapping cloth, not quite the same, but within Japanese culture. So it's an object that I understood and I suppose it was also the notion of that kind of patchworkness of it. I find that quite appealing the sort of layering the cloth that the ordering of the cloth in, in a sense, that looks ... can look arbitrary, but it is obviously quite carefully constructed. So I suppose it aesthetically, it was from my own Japanese eye, it has that kind of aesthetic and material appeal to me though. I kind of gave it away as soon as I got it home.

Christin Yu: And I could you speak a bit more about the place of ramie in Japanese textiles.

Anna J: Okay, so Ramie like hemp in Japan is a cultivated Bast fiber. And it's grown in sort of particular areas in Japan, and it's quite an elite cloth.

[...]

Appendix C. J P 제피 (formerly as Jen Pack), interviewed by Christin Yu about the artist's practice, Koreanness, authenticity, and hybridity, 27 February 2019. See Appendix G for transcript.*

J P 제피 transcript (truncated version)

Christin: Do you mind if we record this interview?

J P 제피: No, I don't, I did have some questions about that thing you sent, the permissions thing. I'm only paranoid because of, actually that article response I wrote, because I felt I was a little mistreated by the prior researcher [Bridget Cooks]...so...

Christin: Yeah, of course, I suppose in the past, I have transcribed the interview and then sent it over, because I did interview a curator recently, and she had the same apprehension. And so, I sent it to her, the transcription, and also sent her the context of where it would be written and I just wanted to let you know that it is not my intention to kind of interrogate or deconstruct really the opinions that you are giving. But mainly it is for me to create a collective history.

J P:

Yeah, ok, and that is kind of what I thought, its interesting. Because it would be great to get the transcription and see the context of how you are going to format it. But I am also sensitive to the fact that I don't want to dictate what you write. You know what I mean?

Christin:

No, of course. And I completely understand that. I mean the ethical wording of that, I mean the background of that is that it comes from a social science background. Ethics protocols came into place to protect people used in lab experiments, so it's a new protocol that is being brought into the humanities but the wording of the legalese is not quite adjusted to humanities. So it seems a lot more serious. But again, I wanted to emphasise that it wasn't part of this project to really deconstruct, you know, your perspective as a truth. Its mainly to collect stories, and to understand that this history of this craft that I am looking at is something that has been dictated from a certain perspective, and its my intention to kind of, just expand the voices and narratives that are used to articulate it.

J P:

Ok, that's actually why I wanted to participate, I think it's a really awesome project.

Christin:

Yeah, thank you, I hope so anyway, it's in the very early stages. [...] First of all, what is your impression of bojagi and jogakbo, how did you come upon that craft in your work?

J P:

And just so I understand, jogakbo is the one with all the little pieces?

Christin:

Yeah, exactly the patchwork pieces.

J P:

The scraps, it's a most specific term, it sounds like.

* This interview was originally conducted as Jen Pack, but according to the artist's wishes, I rename (he)r as J P 제피

Christin:

It's the variation of the patchwork. Because there are otherwise there are embroidered ones, jogakbo is the wrapping cloth itself.

J P:

Right, ok. Yeah so it's interesting. I'm half-Korean, so my father is Korean. And my family actually moved there [South Korea] when I was six, for like a year only. So we had exposure to Korean culture, not just through my family here in the states, but also by living there that year. And it was actually, it was a real culture shock. It's kind of when we found out we weren't Korean, people would stare at us, you know because they didn't think we looked Korean. And I have a white mother, so we'd be walking down the street with a white mother, which was jarring in the 80s. You know, it's not like it is today, when you go back and it's hyper-modern. I know I must have seen it [jogakbo] at some point, but my first crystallized memory of seeing bojagi is when I went back as an adult to visit Korea, when I went to Insadong, the arts district in Seoul. And I was floored, because I had already started my body of work by that point, it was pretty in initial stages, but I was using fabric and had just started doing thinner stripes and more piece work. And it was like 'oh my gosh' I'm so Korean in my art practice I had no idea. It was this strange feeling. So that's my first memory of seeing it consciously. And it made me really happy actually, that there was this whole art tradition that I really wasn't aware of, and that I happened to be working in fabric. The fabric I use is very different, it's like sheer and I mean the moshi is sheer but it's textured and thick. But I've seen silk ones too, but you know in Insadong, I would see them hanging in window spaces so they were backlit, it was just a great realisation, I guess. But I don't remember seeing it earlier, I was asking my mom at some point, asking did we have that? I remember having paintings of Korean, tradition paintings of Korean prints, in the house, and we definitely were familiar with the hanbok, you know, just visually, and colour-wise I was certainly familiar with like certain Korean traditional crafts, but that one I wasn't, and so, I don't know if it, I read somewhere that there was a resurgence at some point, Korea of that traditional craft, so maybe there was a gap of time, where it wasn't as mass culture. I'm not really sure, it seems huge now.

[...]

Christin: I was reading over your essay and thinking about authenticity, and your [self-identified] hybrid identity. I was wondering if you could speak about this further in relation to your artwork, and what your thoughts about authenticity were.

J P: It's so elusive, and the fact that people try to make authenticity static is very disturbing to me. I think I wrote that article in 2016, I can't even remember, so it's a few years ago, and it's funny, because I've thought a lot about it since. And I'll just be totally transparent and say it was very painful for me because I felt erased by that writer. And my cultural background I felt was erased, and that's a very sensitive thing for me because of being bicultural and not really fitting anywhere. And so that, I had to do all this research honestly, because I was just kind of working and I also had this fantasy as an artist which was, you know, not possible, of your work standing on its own. And not having to put your narrative attached, I had really strong fantasies because I think I felt so exposed. By all the questions of cultural background and gender and all of it, so it was like this protective thing I was doing, but I did myself a disservice, because by not engaging with those narratives, it allowed someone else to project onto me their own narrative. Kind of like what the curator seems to have done. So I had to stand up to it, and I don't mean just in terms of with this art writer but even with my audience now, I just a lecture now, and I address these things, fairly directly, but not super in depth, because it's not really what my art is about, it

certainly influences it, but I'm working in context, but it's not what's driving it. But I do address it now, whereas I didn't in the past, because it felt so touchy, I didn't know how to explain things and all that. But the thing about authenticity is a disturbing point for me, because of how people want it to be so static. With the way, I mean everything is hybrid now, with like this mash up culture, and it's so strange to me when people try to pin it down. I live in New Mexico, so up in Sante Fe, it's horrendous that, this need to make things authentic, so you see it really strong with the adobe, old adobe houses, that's the authentic indigenous building technique, and you can walk down certain streets in Sante Fe and there are windows that are cut into the adobe itself but they don't go through the wall but it's a way of showing you that its real adobe.

[...]

Christin: Is the construction generally concealed? Because from the pieces I've seen, it almost seems as if you are working into, a flat space. Can you talk about your process?

J P: The surfaces are flat, there is texture on them, but yeah I do work kind of hard to get them taut and flat, because that's when really interesting things happen with the shadows of the seams, a lot of it doesn't translate onto online images. I've realised, but I don't remember what you've asked.

Christin: I was just wondering what your process was.

J P: So it's all stitched together, I can send you images of the back of them. They're stitched together there are many many strips or pieces of fabric. And so the backs are very textured and messy. And I've been wanting to make the backs the front, but there is this perfectionist part of me that won't let that happen quite yet, so it's going to happen, I just don't know when. I'd like showing the back, but I also like showing the front, so that why I like the coming off the wall. Is that you can see that, plus I'm just more interested in 3D forms at this point. Partly because my skill set with building the frames got good enough that I can do it.

Christin: It's almost a development of your technique and craft

J P: Yah, my work is very technical. So I've had to gain enough skills over the years to build what I've had in my head for a very long time. I wish I could move faster.

Christin: You talk about this repetition and process, the materials guiding the composition. It's definitely something that I think a lot about when I think about the materiality of things. How you describe that. You are working with fabric strands and threads, how do you, do you just start building something, how does that process work with your work?

J P: I feel like there are two different ways that I start a piece. Some of them are incredibly engineered, so some of the ones that are abstract shapes and multiple panels that are bolted together ultimately, things like that take a lot of precise planning. And so those from the get-go are very step-wise, and I'll sketch out what I want it to be, and things shift as I go along but for the most part, I'm following a plan. So there is an execution that happens. But then there is another one that are more free. Where I might build some shapes, some frames. And then the composition isn't predetermined and I'm kind of playing along the way. But dictated by the shape of the frame I've built. And what I have on hand, because I have lots and lots of fabric, but since I started incorporating my scraps into new pieces, I have this volume of scraps from prior works from prior works that can get woven back into new works. So depending on what those look like it is part of it as well, I guess.

Christin: Can you talk about your relationship with choosing textiles?

J P: It kind of was random. I was in college in art school, I went to art center in LA, and there is no fiber department there, and there certainly wasn't back then. And my neighbour just gave me a sewing machine, this old sewing machine that she had in her garage. And I was in this space of experimenting with everything, which I hope most people do in art school. So I just started sewing. And playing, and my relationship with fabric, I did have one, even though I had not sewn much before, because my sisters and mom, growing up they all sewed. It was familiar to me, I was a tomboy and I was stubborn. And so I didn't, I learnt woodworking, I started taking shop class from the sixth grade. So I was more interested in building things. So it was this weird, I was familiar with fabric. But not experienced, and so it was this natural transition, but also I came at it from this weird direction. My mom has told me you sew like a construction worker. Because everything is cut straight. I'm really uncomfortable with making clothes, because then you have to go onto a body and its this whole other ... I remember one of my sisters who sewed a lot was like 'I can't believe you are using this silky thin stuff' and stretching it, because it doesn't make sense, because it's delicate and rips all the time. You know, all of that, so I didn't pay attention to those things, because I had no context. I didn't know any better basically. So it was just a new fun material for me that I was playing around with. It's funny because I was realising at one point when I was back visiting my mom, and she has this series of small, framed pieces in her bathroom that I had given her when I was in college, and they are all, they're on these old pieces of fabric that are mounted on these tiny wood frames. This is the very first inception of this: they're mounted on these tiny wood frames that I built, and there there are these drawings, of me, when I was, really simple paintings of memories when I was growing up. It's very much associated with clothing that I remember wearing, like old memories of and things, recently I went back and I was like this is the inception of me putting fabric on a frame and it's, you know, it's context. Of course, I'm working within my own context of my memories and my association with colour, and my cultural background, even though I don't know I want for that to be the driver. But it's interesting to think, 'oh yah, there's this whole series I did which are all about memory'. My own memories.

Christin: It's such an interesting thing, because I thought a lot about that as well, the relationship between music and memory is talked about a lot, but textural memory is also something that I find does really evoke, of memory and growing up.

J P: Those original pieces were, the fabric I used, was not fabric from my childhood, but it reminded me of my childhood. Like it was, I found it at a thrift store. Some of them were like 70s patterns, you know, just, some of them were super lacy. I remember going to a wedding, and my mom made all of our dresses, I had three sisters growing up, so we made all of our dresses match for this wedding we went to. They were like lacey and girly, so random memories through fabric, essentially. And texture.

Appendix D. Zadie Xa, interviewed by Christin Yu about retrieving family histories through performances and artistic practice, 9 February 2018.

Zadie Xa transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin: [discussion of PhD project] I'm also looking at the ways in which textiles transform, because with the *jogakbo*, it originally came from domestic working women, because it was about frugality and creating an object, which I thought was interesting, but ultimately in the 1970s, there's a curator at the Museum of Korean Embroidery, and he starts collecting these objects and these objects become art objects, which I find an interesting transition as well. And now there is this kind of movement, I don't know if you are familiar with this artist, Chunghie Lee

Zadie: What does her work look like?

Christin: She [makes] bojagi, and she was teaching at RISD for a while.

Zadie: Oh yeah, I do know who she is, she's really cute.

Christin: [...] I will add an element where I will add Korean diaspora, and artists within it, so I was hoping that maybe I could include you in it.

Zadie: Yeah, yeah sure [in reference to first question of consent]. So it's really interesting to hear you talk about it, I think from a more, kind of, not clinical, but I mean, because your background is design, and I think design and art function very differently, so there's a lot of things you talked about in terms of pragmatics and practicality, or ways you might think logically about this, you know that I also think about, and I think within my art practice, I am thinking about, middle space or like, intervals between spaces, I'm thinking about it in terms of interludes. I'm really interested in music, so like interludes between songs, from like whatever, 90s r and b albums. I think about the action that's happening in-between. So that's where I feel like, let's say myself or maybe perhaps you, or other people in the diaspora, depending on...it doesn't matter if they're in the Korean or Asian diaspora, some diaspora in general, we all occupy this space. And so for me, I definitely identify as Korean, I feel like it's a very specific Korean, that's more relatable, you know, to you, you so happen to also be someone who's family is from Korean, but I might also engage with someone who's family is from Bangladesh. It's just the idea that your body has moved through space, crossed over borders and then there is certain cultural information whether it's imprinted on your DNA or like, memory mass, that you kind of bring with you. And also for me, I find it really, actually, I use the word annoying, but I don't think annoying is the right word, it's very offensive and extremely hurtful for other Korean people to be dismissive of the experiences or my own idea of myself as a Korean person because I didn't grow up in Korea. I don't actively speak the language, because I grew up in, I grew up in a space where people looked at me with the face that I have, and I was treated as someone who was an Asian person, and I grew up my whole life having an Asian face, so its absolutely absurd to think that way. And actually I think a lot of it comes down to nationalistic viewpoints about what is and what isn't, right? To be an authentic Korean is to have grown up in Korea, it's to have grown up within certain borders that the state has demarcated to say this is where this country lies, you have a passport, and therefore you are, I mean those things are just strange to me, but at the same time, of course I respect and understand that my experience is different. I don't try to

claim that same experience, I think, I mean it's not the one that I had, I'm happy that I have had the one that I've lived. So I think it's about understanding...I'm trying to find the words to describe that, that experience that you know, you briefly touched upon, you know that feeling of yourself moving through time within your experience of growing up in Canada, as a Korean person. What does that make you less of a Korean? I think that it just makes you a complex person, and you have many layers. I think that's what it's about. My interests of, like, exploring or using aspects of traditional Korean craftsmanship or using Korean stories, or formative arts in my work, it's kind of a way where through the physical re-enactment of making certain things, it's kind of like you are retracing that memory onto your body in a physical way so its manifested that way. I feel that my relationship to perhaps, my family's history is through that reimagining and reinventing events or space.

Christin: Like performing identity, you become it.

Zadie: Of course, and I think that's a much more interesting way to access that. I'm not really interested in adopting contemporary value systems of Korea, because I have my own, I grew up in Canada, and I've lived in England and I've lived in Europe. I have a very different viewpoint on how I go about my life, and think about things.

Christin:

How do you feel that living in London has affected you? You asked me why I'm still here, and I ask myself the same question, because I feel like its an incredibly hostile environment.

Zadie: It is a very hostile environment. For you to think about the dynamics of discourse, re: "East Asian" people, that's what you would be classified as, it's not really existent. I mean the dynamic, I feel like the discourse is similar in the States, where it's very binary, it's very much about white and black, and "brown" people are kind of ad-hoc to the side, but when you say brown, I think they are speaking largely of Latin Americans, or Mexican, I don't think they are thinking of...people think of brown in a political space in England, they are thinking Arab or Middle Eastern descent, or North African, right? So I think for me within that discourse, I feel like its been helpful, because I don't necessarily feel like I need an Asian-centric discourse, what I do really revel in, is conversations around diaspora, because I feel those are the links I have more with. I find myself being much more attracted to colleagues of mine who have stories that are similar in the way I think because you know, because of family histories or where they've been or where they've self-conceptualized themselves, much more that I do with other people that I'm friends with who are from Korea. I mean my experiences them, I mean, they can run parallel, they can run overlapping, but ultimately, I think the things that make me interested, the things that make me a politicised diasporic body has much more to do with other people that have that experience rather than being, you know, ethnically Korean.

Christin:

Especially as I think what's happening now in Korea is that national identity is so affected by past colonial history. And in my readings, because I'm looking at North Korea as well, you have a history where up until the 1940s it was one country, and now the way in which cultural policy works is that it separates them. And so there are refugee communities of North Koreans, and the South Koreans will totally negate their existence. And that's sad because you have a whole identity of yourself that is negating of this other part of you, out of trauma. So South Korean identity is complicated and so unaccepting and nationalistic, which is something that..

Zadie: That's an interesting point. I mean, so the one thing that comes to mind now, something else that I'm really interested in is, comes from my own interest in Western feminist thinking and anti-oppressor action. I'm really interested in Korean shamanism. Do you know much about it?

Christin: I started reading about before Protestantism came into the peninsula.

Zadie: And before Confucianism, and before Daoism, it's really interesting from that perspective how because it's considered a feminine religion...and you mentioned Confucious. But what I was gonna say is that I think a lot of, there is this idea of wanting to be seen as progressive, and up with the times and I think its that leaving the memory of being a developing country, a war-torn country, a Third world country, etc. etc., and so I think there is this hostility against Shamanism, as well, because its seen as a religion of North Korea, where it's seen as more spiritual and primitive and kind of, evil, because I wonder ifs it's that aggression, it's very, the pushback against Korean shamanism is so aggressive and really violent to the point where it makes me really uncomfortable to talk about my own intellectual and personal interests of it, even from an academic viewpoint with other Korean people, because they get really angry about it. So this anger is something I'm trying to explore now with some of the readings, because all the books I've read about it come from a Western feminist perspective and they are laying out all the reasons why, it's kind of the archetype for why feminists would be interested in this religion. Through the idea of performance, power structure, pushing against the idea of Confucian values, where gender roles are so heavily instilled.

Christin: The recent president was, she got bad press for being related to that

Zadie: Yeah, but I think that it's this anti-Korean shamanistic feeling, sentiment is a hundred years old.

Christin: It's funny too, because paganism here as well, for me, that makes sense because there is a oneness with the Earth and the planet, whereas when you have a colonial religion, like Protestantism, in Korea, it just doesn't make sense to me that you would be so attached to that doctrine and negating your own past history.

Zadie: Well that's the thing that really bothers me is that, I've come up against people...

Christin: Oh, I bet

Zadie: Even my mom was like, 'I don't like this, we don't like people like that.' It's like what does that mean? It's also a class thing too; it's like poor women trying to pursue this, it's kind of a village ritual, it's seen as primitive, anyway, I'm doing a lot of really interesting reading about it now, because I understand it through my own Western fascination and the pursuit of other Western academics into it, and that makes sense. And so now, I'm trying to locate this book, it's written by this Korean-American, and basically, his entire book is to go against this really famous American white woman scholar about Korean shamanism, but she's a renown expert in it. She speaks fluent Korean, she started her field studies in the early 80s, she's been doing this for a long time. But he basically says, and this to me sounds very Korean, even though he's American-Korean, Korean-American, she'll never understand because she's not Korean, I have access to all the nuances, etc. etc., but I think his point, his book goes into why there is so much vitriol and anger against it, but maybe not from a logical point of view. I felt like I read excerpts from it and he was talking about his own experiences being with a shaman, and it, basically this person sounded like a sketchy charlatan.

Christin: It doesn't have any more validity

Zadie: But I'm interested in that because there's, you've probably noticed, a resurgence in the zeitgeist, about witchcraft and the covenant, and that's fine, but a lot of it, it's a bit eye rolling, because it doesn't seem very genuine. But again, I recognise my own position within that so, a person who was educated in the West, I am very much aware that I am obviously projecting feminist performative fantasies onto an ancestral religion, which is already sounds really exciting, even just within the pathos of my own interests of indigenous culture and protecting them and elevating them, that comes from being someone from Canada, and wanting very much to respect that.

Christin: Because we are removed from that...

Zadie: So I tried to explain it to my mom within that point, and of course she understands, it's interesting, because she holds much more reverence towards that, because she can understand that within the colonial context. But I guess her own memories of Shamanism, maybe there are things that scare her because..

Christin: Right, the trauma...

Zadie: These are not...I grew up Catholic, so when I was younger, I was afraid of the stigmata and devils, because these are the things that are put into your brain that are terrifying, and you need to avoid, whereas, my mom grew up in a village, in the countryside, these types of, these myths and ghost stories, essentially, are terrifying. So for me, it's amazing I'm thinking about it, it's really fascinating: these women, there are two types of shaman women, basically. Ones that inherit this through bloodline, those are from the South, and ones from the North and the ones that, I guess there must be a direct translation in Korean, but the charismatic shaman, are able to speak in tongues and they basically have the spirit land into their bodies, and they get really sick..

Christin: Like a chosen vessel

Zadie: Yeah, and they get really sick in order to overcome this, and they go through initiation rituals and they give their lives to servitude. But basically it's the idea that this woman archetype is able to channel and harness and control, whatever, these ten thousand spirits that. Just that power dynamic, and also idea of feminist faith that these women, previously it was, this is one way to look at it, maybe from a Western viewpoint, that women were able to conjugate and hold ritual and chat and talk, it's a way to alleviate pressure from the gender normative constraints of how village society, or Korean society is, in general.

Christin: So there is a private collective space.

Zadie: Yeah, where they are able to go, because basically they are all just drinking and dancing and talking about their problems.

Christin: That's so interesting, because I think that you find, throughout history, communities that enable that talking environment, under the guise of something else.

Zadie: Well, that's the thing. Again, I don't want to get too much into it, because I don't, maybe if you want to ask more specific questions about your dissertation that would help, and then if ever you wanted to have further conversations about, I mean just for me, I'm interested in textiles from a very performance-based perspective, and then, if there are, like aspects of design

or colours, it's more of a like, aesthetic sensibilities within art-making and building, but very much from an identity, performative stand (word?). Within Korean shamanism too, there's costumes are so important. Basically when they have their rituals there's a shrine and there are offerings, and there are all these paintings which are like the embodiments of these spirits and ancestral spirits and gods, and there are basically racks of clothing and each shaman worships, lets say five or ten, or ten thousand different spirits, so within her ritual, these spirits land into her body, but when they do land, she's changing the cloth shoes...

Christin: And she performs that spirit..

Zadie: That's right, also within Korean shamanism, I think the idea of gender is, the idea of gender play is really interesting, within the construct of how rigid Korean gender norms are, so Korean shaman women, first of all, they are the money-makers of their home. Sometimes they are single, sometimes they are married, whatever, but they will embody spirits of men spirits, so they perform masculine behaviour, and men shamans, they are called *baksu*, I think that they are not able to possess tongues, like speaking in tongues, and oftentimes, they are gay men, or queer, trans-men, so it seems to be like a space where they are able to perform their real identity, but under the safety of, oh well that's because he's a *baksu*, so that's ok, do you know what I mean?

Christin: To have a safe space.

[...]

Christin: I think that's probably all the questions I had for now...actually I had one about your process...but I suppose you've kind of answered some of them...

Zadie: [talking about "Korean quilting bee"] The idea of collective performativity of this repeated action, and I kind of like this idea that a lot of these people who were participating, not everyone, was Korean, maybe they were interested in patchwork, maybe quilt making. But then learning about Korean patchwork making, but the collective performativity, this repeated action, if you were making these squares, people kind of building this large structure, I think that's inherently woven into how these things are produced, is through the collective, and actually, what there is a youtube clip, it's basically these women, I think they aren't professional people, they are aunties and grandmothers or whatever, they all make bojagis together, and they say, oh for this you need a team of people, because it's a collective thing. Because even though they look very simple, they are quite difficult to make.

Christin: Because you have to piece them together...

Zadie: Yeah they are quite annoying. The way that I did mine, I did not do it by hand. Because if you, there are some if you see them they are quite big, they can be made traditionally by hand, that's so laborious, so I think similarly to clothing you make a pattern. Then you take things, you take the fabric and you cut each piece out. And then you can start sewing side by side. Another thing is if you want your bojagi to this big, you have to make the fabric this big, because it all shrinks, because every single side you have to fold it...

Christin: Yeah, because you probably have a seam allowance?

Zadie: Yes, so that's why this piece that I made is really big, I planned to make three, because I want them in a top floor gallery space...and I'm not even doing a nice job, in the sense, I'm sure

the women that do this, they use a machine, they are using really straight lines, this is taking way too long, I'm literally put in like 90 hours, and it's still not done. It's really labourious.

Christin: It's interesting, I was thinking about making some pieces, but similarly to your performance work, it was the idea that I could embody the process of making and understanding it.

Zadie: That's the idea of the embodied histories, I think that you should, it's a lot of work, I think that's not something that you may initially recognise...because my work is always very labour intensive, but I feel like this work is very labour intensive but it gives you so little, because my work, I would never work with abstract forms, I always have to then build on top, it's taken me literally 60 hours of work to get a base down, whereas normally, I use just one base fabric and stitch the sides, and then I would layer gradually on top, but this thing is like patching a base-thing and then having to re-sew things on top and I'm still not done..

Appendix E. Youngmin Lee, interviewed by Christin Yu about jogakbo and bojagi practices, 28 October 2020.

Youngmin Lee transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin Yu: And do you feel that when you make bojagi does research and history, does that play a very important role? Or how do you design? What is your process?

Youngmin Lee: Bojagi is the thing that is taught generation to generation. So there is not much of written rule. But thanks to Dr. Huh Dong-hwa, he collected a lot of them, and wrote about books. So that shows some good history of bojagi and designs and other things. And I think not only the technique or aesthetic or design elements, but also culture is very important because as I mentioned, mothers gave, made and gave to their daughters and that's like an act of labour. That labour is act of love. Yeah, labour of love it, I think. Yeah. And every single hand stitch, those are the wishes for someone's happiness. So I often emphasize that. It's wish for someone's happiness. It can be your daughter, it can be your family, it can be someone who is getting a bojagi and also that builds up your own happiness because it's like a meditative action. And a lot of people agree to that and when you see Korean fabrics, textiles, you can see lots of patterns. I don't know if you can see from it. Yeah, you can see some patterns and oftentimes those are auspicious symbols. Like 10 longevity symbols and when you see peony, then that means prosperity, flowers and pomegranates, and grapes are a symbol of lots of children. that will give you prosperity eventually right? So those symbols are imbued in fabric and people are fascinated about those. So I think not only the technique or the outside bojagi, but also the philosophy and the auspicious symbols and those things are very important too. So I feel like I'm in as just like you, we are in between two different cultures. We have tried to find our identity all the time and I think my role is connecting those two

Christin Yu: Yeah, within your practice?

Youngmin Lee: That's right, yeah.

Christin Yu: And so can you talk about your teaching and your workshops: how do you structure the teaching and how much history is within the teaching? I know that you talked about it a little bit, but you just talk about the breakdown?

Youngmin Lee: So when I teach multiple days workshops at the Art Center or for the art groups, then I can break down to a little bit about history and little bit about textiles and little bit about design and techniques. And when I teach even small project class. I always include what is bojagi and how you use and how it was developed to like fabric recycling. When you see jogakbo originally jogakbo for is made out of leftover fabrics. Yeah, so it's fabric recycle and reuse and repurpose that is important too, and I mentioned the wishing for happiness that part and technique. Some bojagi is pre-designed, when I make which are Some times I pre design or think about the design, but most of the time, I just put, select colors or material colors of materials and put it right next to me and just start with two pieces and then expand from there. So that is another design process and which I love to do. And that resonate with a lot of improvisational quilts, people agree with me and it sounds hard. But it is not that hard. And you get to choose and you make a decision. So you will feel the freedom of making and creating

Appendix F. Kim Bong Kyu, interview by Christin Yu about sewing work and cosmetic surgery experiences, 13 February 2022.

Kim Bong Kyu transcript, translated from Korean (truncated version)

Kim Bong Kyu: Ok, you want me to start now?

Christin Yu: Yes, please.

Kim Bong Kyu: And you want me to start with the plastic surgery experience?

Christin Yu: Yes, please.

Kim Bong Kyu: When I was younger, where I was working, my friends would come in with their eyes done. They would say to me, ‘Hey you should get it done it, it would be better for you.’ I said, ‘Yeah? No, I don’t have any money.’ And they replied that there were cheap places to do it. If I went to a cheap place though, there would have been side effects or complications, so I said I would think about it later. At that time, I had started dating your great uncle. So I asked him, and he said that I couldn’t go just anywhere, because there could be big problems. He said to go do it in Myeongdong. So your great uncle advised me, and found a place for me, as he said if I listened to my friends that it might not work out. I went to Myeongdong, but the prices were expensive. But your great uncle helped fund it, and so I went to check it out [...] this is embarrassing [laughs] do I have to discuss it all?

Christin Yu: No, you don’t have to talk about it all. And we can anonymise your name if you want.

Kim Bong Kyu: It's ok to use my name. It's just speaking about it is difficult. So I went home after the treatment, and I when I got home, I was startled. My eyes were ... when your dad saw me, he was young ... he yelled ‘what is that?’ I said ‘I took a wrong turn on my way home and I hit something, so I hurt my eyes.’ He said ‘oh.’ After one week, I had to do it again, they couldn’t do it all at once. So I did the rest of the treatment, and it was successful. Then your dad again was like ‘what happened?’ And I said, ‘I got hit again.’ So everyone in the house had no idea, and so only two people knew [myself and your great uncle]. And your grandmother, who passed away, also knew. When I came back I was in trouble, I was scolded by your grandmother. She said ‘Why would you go rip into your face?’ But what could I do? I was young, it was when I was a young woman. I was concerned with my looks, I wanted to be pretty, if people looked at my former eyes they would look down on me. Three months later, the swelling slowly went away, so on the outside, from then on, no one knew. If I had surgery or not, so it was successful. And rather than go to a cheap place and get two or three procedures, it was better to go to a well-known place and do it once, and pay more. And not to think about the costly price. So I went through life without anyone commenting or noticing, and keeping it a secret until I came to Canada, my whole life ... but your dad ... he revealed it to everyone. I’m so embarrassed.

Christin Yu: What year was it then?

Kim Bong Kyu: 1962

Christin Yu: Was it a Korean doctor?

Kim Bong Kyu: Yes, if you say it in Seoul, it was in Myeongdong, so in comparison to here, it was downtown.

Christin Yu: And your friends, they got it done because it was fashionable?

Kim Bong Kyu: Yes, there were people that had the surgery twice, then there were people that saw me, and then got it done. Two of my friends at work, and one from the neighbourhood. And then two more from the neighbourhood, because of me, there were five people that got it done. We helped each other out with recommendations. And they said if you get older to come back, but I didn't go back.

[...]

Christin Yu: Why was having a double eyelid more desirable?

Kim Bong Kyu: There were lots of Westerns coming into Korea at the time, whose eyes were big. East Asian people tend to have smaller eyes. It was perceived that your eyes were ripped, it was to insult us. And it was perceived that bigger eyes were prettier, and [recording is difficult to hear]. There were lots of young women in school who had all had the surgery, and in the magazines and newspapers, there were constant reports of people getting surgery. It kept being reported upon.

Christin Yu: Were celebrities engaged in the practices?

Kim Bong Kyu: Yes, of course.

[...]

Christin Yu: My father also relayed to me that you worked as a textile worker.

Kim Bong Kyu: Yes. [...] When I was young [...] In my neighbour, there was a friend's sister who worked as a sewing machine operator. When I went to visit, she asked me whether I was interested in trying it out. I couldn't hand-sew, so I wondered how I could use a machine. But I helped her out, a little. She encouraged me to try it out. So I learnt slowly, that unni (older sister) used two machines, so my friend and I ... at lunch time, I would try out the machine. It wasn't using a step pedal, but it was motorised. If you made a mistake, you could cut your hand open, so I initially I wasn't allowed to do it. But I tried it slowly, and it worked. I began to practice on trouser hemlines, then she encouraged and taught me further. I learnt from there, and then went on to bigger factories. So then I worked, from that first step, learning little by little. I did not make clothes, but soldiers' hats, because it was war time.

Christin Yu: When did you work as a technician?

Kim Bong Kyu: ... when I was 17?

Christin Yu: In 1957?

Kim Bong Kyu: Yes. It was an incredibly difficult time to live. I had no brother,⁶⁸¹ your grandmother took your father and went to live with her family. When [your father] was really

⁶⁸¹ In the interview she refers to having no grandfather, although in the context of the conversation she seemed to be referring to my grandfather, her older brother.

young, we were all together, but as he grew older, your grandmother took him to live with her family in the countryside for many years. I could not make a living, but I had to eat and live. We rented a room in a share house, and I went to work. We still could not make rent, even though I was working. I also had to get your great uncle educated. If he wanted to go to school, we had to make money. Education was not free, even middle school you had to pay for it. I worked so I could send your great uncle, my younger brother, to school. In the past, women could work and stay at home, whereas men should be educated. It was not just me, but many women worked so they could educate their brothers. Men went to school, then they went to the military, and women had to work. Even our mothers, they were in the markets selling goods. If there was no work in one factory, you had to go to another factory. Do you know what time I woke up to go to work in the morning? It's become a habit, so I still wake up at five am. I would wake up at dawn and walk to work before six am. I walked four to five kilometres to work, at least one hour. The ones that lived farther [from the factory] would have to walk further. If we didn't arrive by 8 am, we couldn't work. We got paid per piece. If we made 10, we got paid for 10. We went early and worked late. We had to pack our lunches, we didn't have time to eat before we left, so we were hungry. We ate a little on our breaks. It was a hard life, and it wasn't just me. This younger generation is fortunate because they don't have to work like that, they have parents that supported them. They are fortunate to not be hungry.

Christin Yu: Where were the factories located?

Kim Bong Kyu: In Seoul, the friend's place was in my local neighbourhood, Hoegidong. Your grandmother's house was also in Hoegidong. It was our neighbour, so it was accessible. I learned how to sew in the neighbour. The factory where I went to actually make money was in Hannamdong. By Koryo [Korea] University. Right by Koyro University. Including men and women, there were about twenty of us. As you work, you gain a greediness for money. So the fastest you work, the more money you get paid, so there is a sense of wanting more money in that way. Other companies might come by you, they'd promise to raise your wages. They'd offer twenty won more per piece. Because you gain a sense of greed [or thirst] for the money, you might do it. But then you'd have to take a bus to Cheongnam. When I think back about that time [...] I was barely an adult. So I continued in that factory in Hannamdong for five years.

[...]

Appendix G. Charlotte Horlyck, interviewed by Christin Yu about Chunghie Lee's 'Fashion in Motion' show in 2001, 26 May 2022.

Charlotte Horlyck transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin: Okay, so the [Fashion in Motion] event was a while ago, so it was in 2021, no sorry, 2001. But if you could describe with as much detail the event itself.

Charlotte Horlyck: So, I mean, there is a file on the event in the V&A archive, just for your information. I mean, no doubt you will, I hope that you know about that. So, that, of course, can be assessed, but nevertheless, so. Have you looked into the background of this Fashion in Motion event projects that were launched at the time?

Christin: Yes.

Charlotte Horlyck: Okay. So you know, that it was right at the beginning, when the V&A launched the 'Fashion in Motion' scheme. And I believe it was within the first year of it being in place. And my department had, by then, already hosted, had already organised one 'Fashion in Motion' event, and that was featuring the designer Vivienne Tam, that was organised by Andrew Bolton. And then, I then put in a bid to the 'Fashion in Motion' team, suggesting that we host an event featuring the artist, Lee Chunghie. So you see with the 'Fashion in Motion' event that of course, it was organised by a team that of course, sat outside the department of Asia. They were in... I mean, you probably know that better than me. I can't remember which team were they in? I think at the time there was a contemporary team. So a team that was set up especially to manage events regarding contemporary art. I think that's how it came about, because at that time, of course, the V&A was very much trying to find focus on the contemporary and there was a huge drive to get curators and departments to forefront projects, object acquisitions and so on, regarding contemporary art. So from what I recall the 'Fashion in Motion' scheme form part of that plan.

Christin: Yeah, they have their own department now and I was talking to Oriole Cullen but the file for Lee Chunghie event wasn't there and there was no recordings of the event. Maybe it got lost in a departmental hire or I'm sorry, a departmental transfer. But yeah, I was trying to find it on the online databases as well, but I couldn't find information but it's good to know that the file exists so I'll have a more thorough look for it.

Charlotte Horlyck: Yeah, I mean, I certainly thought it would exist, unless I made a mistake as a curator, but I certainly would have thought that I created one of these orange files for it. But in any case, and so the reason why I decided to ask Lee Chunghie to feature in this event was because the V&A, of course already had a number of her pieces in the collection that had been acquired by Beth MacKillop through the introduction of, through the support of Park Young Sook. So it was Park Young Sook who initially knew Lee Chunghie, and so when Beth MacKillop was put in charge to set up the Korean gallery, Park Young Sook introduced Lee Chunghie to Beth McKillop. That's how I understand that relationship being formed. And so I think that's also what how, from recollection, that's how there was the jeogori and there were a matching pair of trousers, so not a chima but trousers that into the collection at that point. And Professor Park Young Sook, she also introduced me to Lee Chunghie. So that when I was in Korea in 200-, no... I'm trying to get my years right here ... When did I ... 19 - Yeah, so when I was in Korea in ... Oh, gosh. And I ended up in my position to 1990 ... I completely lost my

counting here. That must have been 1998. I met Lee Chunghie for the first time in Korea, okay. And I was very much taken by her and I liked her. I found her extremely creative. And that's why I reached out to her to ask what, what she felt about what she felt about creating work specifically for this 'Fashion in Motion' event.

Christin: Okay, that's interesting. Because, of course, I'm familiar with her work as wrapping cloths and as kind of, standalone objects that are mainly exhibited within the context of an art gallery space. And this kind of embodied movement, that was so specific of... I mean, Claire Wilcox recalls this in the podcast about how that was so specific of 'Fashion in Motion' to show the clothing moving. And I was wondering if this was the first display of Lee Chunghie's work on the body and whether the relationship between her work and fashion design, whether she, you know, was had she seen the clothing moving? I don't recall from her from my research of her that she has that that she was designing fashion other than these one-off art pieces, so?

Charlotte Horlyck: Well, yeah, um they're quite ... in what you just said, there are quite a few strands there that that that one could pick up on. So to go back to what Claire Wilcox was saying about 'Fashion in Motion' being about clothes that move, that you see was so crucial to the initiation of the 'Fashion in Motion' events that at that time, it was all about having persons, whether mortals are not, wearing the garments, and walking *through* the galleries. And then people could choose to follow them or not, and so on. In later years, the 'Fashion in Motion' event became more akin to a catwalk. So I don't know if you've seen them, or participated in them. But there's basically where they set up a catwalk-like space in the in the galleries, right off the main lobby. But in those early years, that didn't happen. So also when Vivienne Tam did her, she wasn't physically there, but when Andrew Bolton organised that 'Fashion in Motion' event, the models, they were professional models, they walked through the galleries, wearing the garments, and there was a man walking at the front, who, with a laptop with music and he had it basically strapped to his body. So it looked a bit like that looks like a rucksack. But it was sort of very technologically driven that that particular event. But Lee Chunghie's 'Fashion in Motion' event was just very different, of course. Due to the fact that, as you say she was not a fashion designer, she's an artist. And the budget, of course, was also extremely limited. So there wasn't of course the money to go out and pay for new music to be done and, and hire a whole army of professional models and everything. I mean, the budget was extremely, extremely limited. I'm trying to think, how much was it perhaps? 2000 pounds in total?

Christin: Okay, yeah. In comparison to modern day fashion, show budgets. That's yeah, that seems very low.

Charlotte Horlyck: But I think you see, you keep referring to it as a fashion show. That I think is incorrect. Because the concept was not a fashion show. It was all about the 'Fashion *in* Motion.'

Christin: No, absolutely. Yeah. Sorry. I've misspoken.

Charlotte Horlyck: But I think you see when you look at, I don't know if they still do the 'Fashion in Motion' shows now. But I think later on, as I said, took on a much ... it took on the nature of a more conventional fashion show. But initially, that wasn't the aims of it. It was about initially, the way I saw it and interpreted it, initially the aims of that project was the '*in motion*' part, not the fashion. It was the 'In Motion', it was about seeing garments, textiles, *in motion*. And I think that perhaps also answers your question as to why choose Lee Chunghie, as she's not a fashion designer per se. So why did I choose her? And really my, the reasons why was because I've always been extremely impressed by her. I just I always felt that she was extremely creative.

And I have in my meetings and interactions with her, I've always seen her wearing her own creations. And she would gift myself and others scarves that she made. So I was very much aware that her repertoire, artistic repertoire and practice included more than, say, installations, or I guess it's essentially installations of various kinds, right, which I guess she's most well known for. And also, because I knew that for years, she's had taught at RISD in America. And I think certainly she was, she would always talk to me at great length about the work that she did with students. So I knew that she was interested in the concept of dress.

Christin: Could you talk about the show itself, and I'm really interested in ... I've seen the objects, obviously, in the archive, but I haven't seen them on the body. And I was just interested in knowing how they moved, how was the actual show itself, or the performance or the walk through? I know that there is Chung Jiwoong, music and drumming that accompanied that. But I was just wondering if you could maybe help me situate myself in the memory of the event itself? And if you could recall,

Charlotte Horlyck: I can send you a pictures of it.

Christin: That would be wonderful. Yeah. You don't have any recordings of it...

Charlotte Horlyck: Well because it wasn't recorded. Yeah.

Christin: Okay. That's so interesting, because I did see a DVD from the LCF Library ...

Charlotte Horlyck: Yeah, I mean remember, this is a time being, I guess, nowadays, right, you would film an event that and put it on the website? Yeah. That wasn't at all, it wasn't even part of the discussion.

Christin: Yeah, that's so interesting. Okay. So that motion aspect wasn't important to archive initially.

Charlotte Horlyck: Well, exactly, it wasn't a case of ... at that point. yes, the museum wasn't taking that into account in terms of recording that, first for posterity and reaching out to a wider audience, in contrast to what I guess any museum would do nowadays, right. But what it was a basic, so I gave a free hands (?). And I said that the 'Fashion in Motion' concept is about three shows in one day. And then, I think the first ... The first one maybe started, I can't remember, but it was, I guess, on a Wednesday, late night, right? So maybe the first one would be at 11 o'clock, and the next one, maybe at three and then one later on in the evening, early evening. So there are three shows. And until then, all the 'Fashion in Motion' events had repeated the same show three times. So the garments had been the same. But she was extremely ambitious, and decided that she would do three different shows. Okay, so each of these three shows, the concept behind the garments was slightly different. And the garments were made of different materials. But, the music was, I think the music was essentially the same. And she of course had commissioned her son to do the music because he was a music student, he was studying the music. And then I can't remember how, but she then got introduced to two young music students who were playing flute. And then they were then hired to play those parts of the compensation. So her son walked first. And basically set the beat with two wooden sticks. That you know, the kind of type wooden sticks you use in Korean percussion, music. And then, and then those two young British musicians, a boy and a girl, or man or a woman, a young man and young woman, they then play the music. Maybe he also at one point played the flute as well, I think he actually did. And then we have five models. And I use the term 'model' loosely, because of the budget, of course, of course, you know, there wasn't money to hire any professional

models and so on. But what had happened in the past was that when the museum had reached out to very well-known designers, like for example, Vivienne Tam, they simply provided their own models. So this project was one that, at the time was very much built on expectations of goodwill, on behalf of the artist. Right, but of course, Lee Chunghie didn't have the funds, right. And so what happened was that I roped in my sister, who would do it for free, and she had taught in Finland for a while. So in fact, one of her finished students flew to London, because and volunteered to participate. And then yeah, and then we were introduced to another two models through a friend of a friend. So they're all women, young, young women. And there were four and then Lee Chunghie, herself also wore different garments that then matched the concept of each particular show. The first, let me see, I should call up the images, but the first one was where all the models were wearing garments made of *hanji*. So they were quite subdued colours. And the last one was where each of the models were wearing colours based on the *obbangsaek*. So the five primary colours and then Lee Chunghie was standing at the front wearing all five colours, whereas each of the otherwise the models behind were each wearing one colour. So that that was the concept of it. And the *durumagi* that entered the collection, following the fashion and motion event that was from that last show, the *obbangsaek* concept. Because I think it was I think it was the *durumagi* that the Finnish student or she was quite tall, as well.

Christin: Did you describe it like a procession? Because you described how her son was walking in the front. And I've seen I've seen the images from the courtyard but I was just wondering if there is movement through the galleries as there was in previous 'Fashion in Motion' ...

Charlotte Horlyck: It wasn't really a formal procession. It was rather the case of the musicians walking and deciding on the direction. Right. And then the models would walk afterwards, and we would deliberately really try to make sure to remind them to move your arms. So that we can see the clothes in motion. And for one of the shows, she had also made little hats, so we told them, make sure you take their hat, on and off, and, and so on. So the more movement, the better. You can turn around on the spot if you like. And of course, in some cases, the visitors wanted to take photos with them. So you see, it was all just really informal. And so they would just kind of walk through, I think so we started off in the, in the lobby and then walk through the end of that sculpture gallery. And then I guess, through the ... they didn't, we weren't allowed to walk through the cast gallery. So actually, I didn't know that at the time. So initially, we did. I think for the first one, but otherwise, we then walk through the Korean gallery and through the Chinese gallery and out into the garden. And so cumvolution the fountain, and then back. So it was also nice, you see to see how difference in light, with being inside versus outside impacted the visual experience of the garments.

Christin: I can imagine with the translucency of the *durumagi*, yes, for example, that would make such a difference.

Charlotte Horlyck: Exactly. Yeah. It Exactly. Exactly. So that was, again, that was something that I was really keen to do.

Christin: And could you do you recall the audience? Or who is kind of around during the event itself? Was it was it kind of a happening that was happening? And?

Charlotte Horlyck: Well, they were very varied. I mean, certainly when we set off. So she would wait with the models up at the staircase, you know, where the cloak room area is, up that staircase, just there. And I would then stand in the lobby and announce the beginnings of the show. And then they would walk down and walk, kind of, do one about I was about to say so circumvolution, but they would circle the lobby, and then they would walk there and set off into

the sculpture galleries. But I remember the lobby being packed. And, and also that I didn't actually expect people to keep following the models. But some people did. All the way out into the garden. So yes, and as I said, the audiences were really packed.

Christin: Yeah, it sounds fantastic when Claire Wilcox describes the first couple of events about how the audience didn't know how to quite interact with it. And yeah, what what you couldn't expect what would happen, it was almost like a happening itself.

Charlotte Horlyck: Well, I'll tell you what, I think, what I really liked about those initial 'Fashion in Motion' shows was that they were more akin to performances. And I say, that's really the way if I were to retitle those early shows, I guess I would call them 'Dress and Performance,' or something akin. To get away from the concept of the catwalk and also really to emphasise that there were, they were more of a performative nature. And were targeted around interaction. As if that was to me also another great attraction of those early year 'Fashion in Motion' events was that one concept to certainly, as I interpreted, was to break down the barriers between objects and visitors. That here you had, what could essentially be seen as museum objects, even though of course, they hadn't entered the museum collection at the time. But there were artefacts that could be considered museum objects. But people could actually, if they wanted to, they could actually touch them. Right, they could go up to the models, look at them very closely, take pictures and see the objects in different light outside glass cases. So I think that that certainly was a really positive aspect of that project, as it was initially devised.

Christin: Did you witness any of that happening? This close examination, or were the audience members slightly uncertain of that, that kind of looking.

Charlotte Horlyck: No, not necessarily. I think that they, well the way I saw it was that they looked really closely. If anything, I guess, in the case of Lee Chunghie's show, all of the girls, they looked young, they didn't look like intimidating, tall, skinny models. Right? Of course they were pretty, I guess that in of itself was part of the particular attraction of that particular show.

Christin: Was there interaction between the models and the audience, or was it kind of, more of a contained, kind of procession and performance

Charlotte Horlyck: I wouldn't call it contained, I mean to be honest, I can't exactly remember. Because of course, each of the models walked at their own pace. So I don't exactly remember what each of them were doing at any one given time. But, and of course Lee Chunghie is a real people's person, so she likes talking to people, so if anything they were also interacting with her. And she of course, was also wearing garments that matched, as I said, the concept of that particular show at that specific time.

Christin: So I guess there was no stage direction, was that all determined by her, or did it let it happen organically. I'm just trying think about how it was...

Charlotte Horlyck: Yeah I would say that 'let it happen more or less organically' is probably a good description of it. I mean what we did, of course, I'm trying to think. The secretary in the Far Eastern Art Department, she was the one who walked first. Lee Chunghie's son was told, 'just follow her', because of course, he didn't know his way around the museum. So, she was basically leading the way, and I had said to her, well look go through the East galleries, and so on and so on. And so that was as organized as it was. But in terms of how each of the models interacted, say with the people, or any of those spaces, that was up to the individual model right? So they didn't walk in a linear line, they were zigzagging the place. In order to get as much

movement, and of course to fill the time. I can't remember how long each show was, I don't know, half an hour? Or something?

Christin Great, these descriptions really help to visualize what was happening, so it's been really fantastic to hear. I have a couple more questions, before you mentioned that you had been working with Andrew Bolton on the Vivienne Tam performance, but I was just wondering about the interaction of the departments for this specific showcase, were you in collaboration, or how was it situated? Was it a collaboration between the two departments?

Charlotte Horlyck: No, what happened, from what I recall, departments were invited to submit bids, and I think at the time there was a Fashion in Motion once a month. Or maybe every second month, and then at that time, the Fashion in Motion team had a budget, and I think each bid was given the same amount. So that of course was also why we were really short of money, because of course part of the money was spent on her flight, she even paid for her own flight. We didn't even pay for the flight.

Appendix H. Iris Yi Youn Kim, interviewed by Christin Yu about first-person essay and blepharoplasty experiences, 5 April 2023

Iris Yi Youn Kim transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin Yu: Okay, great. And do you have any beauty or wellness rituals now? And can you describe them?

Iris Kim: Yeah, I would say just in terms of, you know, mid 20s, and hopefully growing out a little bit of wanting to look like what other people or what other people look like, I think right now my focus is mainly skincare, and which is inherited from a lot of, you know, my aunts and my mother's who like Korean, I think Korean women are also so focused on anti-ageing. And so I've had it drilled into me, like from my early 20s that like I need to start applying like eye wrinkle cream now. And like retinol cream and sunscreen is something that also like I've learned to apply religiously ever since I was like in high school, like twice a day just because, you know, we can't get wrinkles and that's you know, I feel like there's a common saying that Korean women say and maybe it's just my family, the women in my family, but they say like, beauty doesn't matter when you get into your middle ages onwards. Like it's all about how young you look. And so yeah, I would say my main focus is probably like different creams and eye creams and skincare and sun care.

[...]

Christin Yu: So in your essay, you recall this moment of watching these Korean stars on screen with your aunt, and you recall her talking about 'sangkapul susul'. And so I was just wondering, I mean, this this is so I can't even remember when this came into my memories. But I can you remember when you first started hearing about the 'sangkapul'. And, you know, just kind of the ideas behind it and thinking about?

Iris Kim: Yeah, I think it was at a really young age, it was probably those first summers that I was kind of sent back to Korea. So either like seven or eight is when I probably first realised like what it even was, and what the difference between like being having monolids and then also having double eyelids was and it was, you know, it was definitely what I mentioned in the article in terms of seeing these pop stars and actresses on screen. But it was also probably from my family as well. Like my mom and my aunt, they have double eyelids. And so they you know, the difference between having it, not having it and how I didn't have it, it was pretty clearly kind of reinforced from a really young age. Just because I think I also noticed the difference between like my eyes and my aunt eyes, and she has really big eyes. And so that was something where I was wishing that I could look more like my aunt or like my mom, who both have natural double eyelids

Christin Yu: And it was it just kind of observed by you, or was it also a conversation within your family? Or?

Iris Kim: Yeah, yeah, I honestly, I can't really remember the exact conversations. But I like the difference between our eyes was pointed out by the women in my family from a pretty young age too. So they would say like, oh, like your eyes are so cute because you they're so far apart and you don't have monolids. And like, because I was a baby like it they they thought it was like a really cute feature at that time. But then I would say things like, Oh, but I want I'd like yours.

And then that's when they would say like, oh, that's not a problem. Like when you get older, you can always get the surgery. It's not a big deal. And so yeah, I think it was pointed out as more of like an endearing, affectionate kind of thing in the beginning by the women in my family. But then on top of that there was also that added notion of like, Oh, don't worry, though, if you don't like that, if you continue to not like them, you can always change them at any point by undergoing the surgery.

Christin Yu: So can you describe when you first started thinking about getting the surgery?

Iris Kim: Yeah. Yeah, I would. Again, I would say probably. Yeah, it was probably ingrained in me from a really young age like the first moments when they started pointing out the differences. And so because it was so ubiquitous, you know, every single star on screen seemed to have double eyelids, whether they were surgically altered or not. And so from that age, I was like, Okay, this is something that I can do at a later age. And yeah, I think it was probably seven or eight when, when I conceptualised surgery and then also started thinking about the fact that later in my late teens, I could probably get that with my mom and my aunt's support

Christin Yu: And can you also describe, in your essay to how you discussed with your friends at school they're getting the double eyelid. And so can you describe like the local attitudes that people had? And were other people getting plastic surgery or? Yeah, I mean, were they beauty-centered?

Iris Kim: Yeah, so I had like, two different friend groups, I kind of had my Korean church friends. And a lot of them were also, you know, they had kind of grown up with the same beauty standards that I had in terms of like a weird mix of Korean and Western ones. And so I would say, a couple of my friends, like my female friends from Korean church, were also talking about wanting to get the surgery. And then there was one particular close friend I had, who was a year older than me. And she got it the summer before she went to college, which is kind of I think the time when a lot of people do get it just because they can go into college and kind of reinvent themselves. And she came back and her eyes looked amazing. And you know, to my 17 year old self at that time, and they had like, tripled in size. And so I remember being like, Okay, I definitely that was like something else where it was like hammered into me. I was like, Okay, if she can look like more beautiful after getting the surgery done, then I'm going to do this next summer, too. And then I would say in terms of, yeah, like my middle school and high school friends, I had a lot of Asian friends, but they weren't Korean. And so I think they didn't really get the nuances of like monolid and double eyelid. And so starting from like, eighth ninth grade, I would joke about like, oh, you know, guys, I'm gonna get the surgery when I after we graduate high school. And then they would like ask me, as we were like, putting on makeup and stuff like, Oh, what do you what does that even mean? Like, what's the difference between a monolid and a double eyelid? And I would like show them by like, putting on like, tape and then show them like the difference. And I'd be like, Oh, look like you have it naturally. But this is, you know, I have to put on tape to do it. And so yeah, I was explaining to like, my Asian, but non-Korean, and then white friends like what a 'sankapul' or double eyelid even was. And yeah, I think those were kind of the two different friend group experiences that I was having.

Christin Yu: And was there, I know in some high schools, people were also getting cosmetic surgery, but was there like an influence of that? Or were there kind of prevalent beauty kind of modifications going on, as well?

Iris Kim: Yeah, so in my high school, thankfully, no one was getting plastic surgery done. Like I know, after coming to USC, I actually realised that a lot of like, high school experiences and, like

near LA actually, like a lot of people get like nose jobs and things even from a younger age. But yeah, thankfully, my high school we didn't, no one was getting, you know, operated on at an early age. But there was still like, from middle school, my friends who had like, larger noses than the defined beauty idea, like they would talk about how they really wanted to get a nose job to later on when they could afford it by themselves or, and, you know, also talking about like, you know, breast enlargement and wanting to their boobs to be bigger and so that was kind of, like we did speak about, like, oh, you know, if we could do all the things we wanted to like, what would we do and the surgery modifications that we like, wish we could afford? But yeah, no one was actually getting the surgeries done. Until at least like there were a couple Korean girls at my high school too. The summer after they graduated, they went on got their double eyelid surgeries, but that wasn't during school.

[...]

Christin Yu: And so can you describe the procedures in themselves and the processes or any of those memories? I know you talk about it in your essay...

Iris Kim: Yeah. Yeah. For the procedure itself. I I think I you know, lay down on the operating table and then they kind of had like a sterile blue like sterilisation sheet that was placed, like over my head and my body with like cutouts for the eyes. And then they, the doctor, injected local anaesthesia, so I wasn't put to sleep. It was only kind of I think to like the head region that was, yeah, that was injected with anaesthesia, and it was, was two or three shots to each eyelid, which were incredibly painful. And then after that, you know, I really didn't feel anything during the surgery. But you know, just because the pain is gone, it's not that you don't feel like the sensations of the surgery. And so I did feel them like kind of cutting and tugging and kind of those sensations as well. And the smell of like, Just the smell of like chemicals and skin like burning a little bit. And especially Yeah, when they like, started making the stitches to stitch my eyelid to, to the top of my eyelid, or my bottom of the eyelids and on top of the eyelid. Like I can feel them making those stitches as well. And then yeah, I also because like I always awake from the corners of my eyes, I could also see like, kind of like blood and yeah, like red liquid. And then it was fairly quick. I think it was only about like an hour and a half or maybe an hour and so the whole operation didn't take too long. And then afterwards, I stepped out and then I, I'm not sure if I looked at a mirror because it was I think there was also a lot of guaze that they gave me to keep to stop the bleeding. And then my mother and I basically like immediately drove back up to the Bay. And yeah, for that.

Christin Yu: Okay, so did you did the stitches just stay in your eyes or?

Iris Kim: Yeah, so the stitches were supposed to stay for about a week. And so then a week later, we drove back down to K-Town to get kind of also a checkup, like the doctor wanted to make sure that it was healing properly. And then the stitches were I think some of them were removed by the doctor and then they were also the type that they kind of naturally dissolve. And so yeah, it was like a checkup slash I think he wanted to check in on the stitches.

Christin Yu: And can you describe the healing process or those kinds of moments within? I don't know, I mean, if you can recall any kind of emotional or Yeah, I mean, was there like a thought process that was involved in the actual events

Iris Kim: Yeah, yeah, no, I didn't really properly take a look in the mirror just because like you know, I had to be pressing gauze to stop the bleeding at all times. And so even during that drive up to the Bay which is like a six hour drive or so like you know, I had ice packs like on both

eyelids to lower the swelling and then also the gauze just stopped the immediate bleeding and so yeah, I really didn't like you know, take a look at what it looks like and then once I got home too it was pretty much like trying to stay horizontal so that you know the bleeding and swelling would kind of naturally settle down and so I was in bed for I think like you know, three or four days and it was the same kind of thing where it was like gauze at all times and then the doctor recommended really icing it 24/7 Or the during the hours when I was awake because the more icing the more quickly the swelling would go down and so yeah I and then I think after three or four days like I kind of that was one of the bleeding like finally kind of stopped and the swelling went down enough where I could open my eyes a little bit more they were also really really swollen and so I could barely kind of like open them and then I looked in the mirror and like it looked really grotesque just because like the stitches are still into and so they were kind of holding up the eyelid fold and so yeah, it was really grotesque I was you know, the whole eye region too is really swollen. I remember like the areas under my eyes she were looks a little bruised from the surgery as well just because of all the blood kind of rushing up there and so my whole face was well you know, the upper half of my face was swollen as well and so I kind of looked at the mirror once and I was like scared myself off a little and so decided not to look at it again until at least the stitches were completely gone and the swelling had gone down more. So so yeah, I remember thinking to myself, like oh my god like this looks awful and you know and I hope it gets a lot better than this and that I achieved the desired look that I want. And but also like reassuring myself like you know, I'm sure this is how everyone looks after surgery and if I gave it like a month or two I'll look way more normal and then I can start college looking. looking normal. Yeah.

Christin Yu: Can you can you describe the more that the 'desired look' that you wanted and then also 'looking normal' like what kind of standards those were for you?

Iris Kim: Yeah the desired look that I wanted was definitely the large eyes that I saw in K-pop girl groups or some Korean drama actresses and I was hoping that once all the swelling went down my eyes would look more like theirs. That was the kind of normal I was aspiring for, I guess. But I was also hoping that it wouldn't be too swollen by the time I started college at USC and that it would look natural enough that people wouldn't point out...or that people wouldn't notice that I had gotten the double eyelid surgery. But then again, only Koreans really notice the difference. So I wasn't worried either, because I knew that going to college, there wouldn't be that many Korean kids in my dorm at least.

[...]

Christin Yu: In the essay you write that in the first few months after the surgery you hated the way your eyes looked. Can you describe that in a bit more detail?

Iris Kim: Yeah, it goes back to what I was saying with the swelling and all of that, making my face look really puffy too. And the doctor had warned, and I knew from my older friends that got it too that the swelling doesn't completely go down for three to six months, which is when it goes down to its completely non-swollen, "natural state." And so, I was living in this limbo of I don't quite look like what I want to yet, and it looks unnatural to me, at least, when I look in the mirror. I was just waiting for the swelling to go down I guess, so that I could look more natural. But even as the swelling was going down in a month or two, it became pretty apparent that the eyelid fold that the doctor had created were mismatched, so left fold was maybe even a millimetre or half a millimetre bigger than the right one and it was pretty noticeable, at least to myself, and my mother and my family members in Korea. Like my aunts, the next summer when I went back they commented on it. Even though its such a small thing that I don't think anyone

that wasn't Korean would notice. My mom, even a month in, started voicing how she was really dissatisfied how it turned out, because from her point of view, she was like 'we paid thousands of dollars to get this done, and he should have made them completely parallel, but instead, they came out mismatched.' She was like 'oh he's a quack doctor' And she suggested actually that we should go back and demand that they fix it, because they should. I kept saying, you know its because the swelling hasn't gone down yet, we should wait and see what it looks like once, in three to six months, maybe its just that the right side is healing faster, or that the swelling is going down faster than the left, which is why they look mismatched. And then, also there was a fear in me too, that I didn't want to go through that whole process again. I didn't even know what that would be like, if I should go in to redo the right eye, especially with college approaching, I didn't know if that meant that one eye... you know the one that I would reoperate on would get even more swollen than the left. I just didn't want to botch anything up. And then after three to six months it became pretty clear that the left eye, the fold on my left eye was just going to remain larger. And I was pretty self-conscious about it for, I would say the first, two or three years after the surgery. I tried to adjust the way I put on eye makeup on my left versus right eye. Because my left eye looked bigger, just because the fold looked bigger. It enlarged the eye more, so I would put on more eye makeup onto my right eye, so it would look more even. I remember I didn't like the way I smiled, because to me when I smiled my eyes looked like they got a bit more crinkled and it made the difference even more apparent. So there was a certain way that I would stand for the camera, so that when I was taking pictures my right eye wasn't closer to the camera. And all of these internalised, minor things were effecting by the mismatching seeming huge to me when I looked at myself.

Christin Yu: Is it, how do you process your aunts telling you its mismatched, or your mother saying that? Is that something you had an emotional reaction to?

Iris Kim: No, so I wasn't annoyed at all, or angry, when they pointed it out, because I knew it came from a place of they wanted to help. And they were like, we can fix it for you, and why don't we fix it. We can always fix it. But it was more of reservation of, if we go back and... like what are they going to do? Are they going to redo both eyes, are they going to redo the right and that becomes more swollen than the left. So I just didn't really see a practical solution as to how they could, how the doctor was...you know he could create even more of a mismatch. And I also kept telling them I don't really have time. It's not like I had ... I was constantly in internships and travelling, I don't have time to lay in bed for three weeks like I did when I got the surgery. I was like its fine, I'll just live with it the way that it is. Because I'm also unhappy with the way that they turned out and I wish he hadn't messed up, but I would tell them its fine, thank you but it's fine.

[...]

Christin Yu: Can you talk about writing your essay then, what motivated that, what that felt like to write it, your feelings about reading the reception of it, what significance that had for you.

Iris Kim: I think, I wrote the essay during the pandemic when I was stuck at home with my parents. Writing was my only outlet. It was inspired by doing this Wikipedia rabbit hole into Dr. Ralph Millard and reading his academic papers, and reading those racist statements. For the first time, realizing that I had never really unpacked why and how I was influenced to get the plastic surgery. And so I started writing almost like a journal entry of my first recollections of realising that I didn't have double eyelids and I wanted them. From those summers back in Korea, you know, when I was seven or eight watching those K-pop idols on screen to growing up and then constantly hearing from my family members, if I wanted the surgery I could get it done. It was,

it's almost considered a minor procedure in Korea. It's the most minor procedure you can get done. And so, people go to work a week after they get the surgery done. So kind of internalizing that it wasn't a big deal and it was a choice that I could always make. So I kind of wrote my adolescence down, so how this idea that I was going to get the surgery when I graduated high school really became so fixated, I really became fixated on that idea. And then I wanted to write down everything I learned about Dr. Millard the and origins of the Korean plastic surgery industry and put that down as well, and then I kind of traced it, I traced the essay to present day where I was getting those comments, I was still getting those comments from my mom and my aunt about the mismatch and my right eye fold being almost completely gone. Their offers to pay for me getting it fixed and so I kind of wanted to end in ambiguity to show that, you know there is no really happy ending to... My surgery experiences are really mixed. And to show that there is no right and wrong. I think that some people pass judgment on Korean women for getting this, for getting plastic surgery. But Korea is a pretty patriarchal and sexist, conservative society, so women are forced to look a certain way in order to survive within that society as well. And not just Korea, but also in America, and so to show that, I really wasn't trying to pass judgement on myself or people who choose to go under the knife. It's like we're pressure to. By societal standards. That was kind of the process of writing the essay. And then I sat on it for a while, I kind of kept picking at it and revising it over two years. I also felt that every time I returned to Korea, I go back almost every summer. Every time I returned, my relationship with how I looked and my body also changed every time. And I think it's a constant play of when I go back to Korea I kind of revert into wishing that I could look like other Korean women on screen or on the streets, and then coming back to America and realising how toxic of an environment that is in Korea. It's a constant tug ... a pull and push. So the essay kept shifting as well and then last fall, I reached out to the beauty director of Harper's Bazaar because she was looking for unconventional stories on beauty, and so I worked with her on finalizing the essay. The reactions have been mostly positive, especially from friends and acquaintances who are Asian-American. And even though I had expected my relationship with my eyes to be a very unique Korean experience. I had Asian American women, who are Chinese-American or Taiwanese-American, them reaching out and saying, 'I've always struggled with my monolids as well and have felt really pressured by my family who has commented on the shape of my eyes, so your essay, even though you are talking about the Korean-American experience, I really related to it.' So that's been really gratifying too. And that was one of the main reasons I wrote it as well. I saw a lot of ... more journalistic features or podcast, or listened to podcast episodes that were reporting on Korean beauty standards and the Korean plastic surgery industry and Dr. Ralph Millard and all of these things. But I hadn't seen a first-person account or essay, even though I had googled and tried to find those, so I was writing into a void a little bit. Because I knew this would be something that would resonate with a lot of readers but I didn't see out there.

Appendix I. Jiyeon Chae*, interviewed by Christin Yu about blepharoplasty experiences, 3 August 2022

Jiyeon Chae transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin Yu: Okay, great can you describe the environment that you grew up in both your initial place and Seoul.

Oral History Participant: To be honest, when I lived in Chungju, I was too young at the time, just an elementary school student so I don't really remember, or I didn't really care about my environment, but in my teenaged age, I went to a special music middle and high school. You cannot get into the school right away, you have to take a test to get into the school and obviously all students need to be on stage to perform. So everyone is more sensitive on their appearance and then other normal just students. And I have been growing up with that environment, always being on the stage. I remember once, when I was a university student some students have had to play, had to perform on the stage once a month, in front of the all the other university student. And one of our members didn't have the makeup, and the Professor found her and she kicked her out because she did not wear makeup. So my case is a bit different from other normal people.

Christin Yu: And we're such things regulated in the school? Appearance? Because of the performance?

Oral History Participant: No, there were no specific rules or regular regulation, but professors in music the traditional music industry always think that you have to be prepared to be on the stage. In terms of the performance, or all your appearance, costume and make-up, everything.

Christin Yu: Okay, and can you describe the instructions, how did you know that they wanted you prepared?

Oral History Participant: There's were no specific instructions, no one taught us, but we could naturally learn from our seniors because we were all exposed to those environments together. So we learnt from them.

Christin Yu: Okay, and you said that this was university or when did you what age, did you start experiencing this?

Oral History Participant: I started the music from middle school and high school, but at the time we were not allowed to wear makeup as students. But there were specific regulations for our uniforms, like the students in the UK here.

Christin Yu: Was a gendered or was it coed?

Oral History Participant: It was together, but because it music and dance school, the number of man we considerably low. Only 10% were boys.

[...]

* Pseudonym have been used to anonymise the participant

Oral History Participant: Obviously I'm not a musician anymore, but I still play, perform time to time here. On those occasion I have to wear the traditional Korean costume and makeup and hair, as well. Because the host wants to present Koreanness through my appearance and music. But in normal days I just teach students. And I feel much more comfortable being in London, because no one really cares what how I do my hair or my clothes, compared to living in Seoul. In Korea, even my mother is always saying that you should wear makeup when you go out for even for a supermarket or something.

Christin Yu: Can you go into more detail about that the differences in terms of the pressure of appearance.

Oral History Participant: To be honest, there was not much pressure when I lived in Korea. I didn't know that was pressure, but it's just the atmosphere of the whole of Korea. You have to be ready to be seen by other people. As you know, all Korean girls are very into makeup and into fashion. So they are all very much interested in how other people decorate themselves. But here, no one really cares about others. If you wear something, because is what he wants to wear. But in Korea, you have to follow the fashion of the time. For example, these days, short tops are very trendy. So if you go to Korea, everyone wears short tops. Regardless of whether you like it or not. You have to be one of them.

Christin Yu: Can you describe that more like what does that mean, and how do you feel that pressure.

Oral History Participant: I think it is because of the cultural differences. Koreans don't want to be... All Korean people want to be a member of a group. A community. The group and community, they are more important as a person. But here, individuality, and to show your individual differences is important in Western society. But in Korea, you have to follow. You have to be one. If everyone's wearing white and then you should be wearing white. You shouldn't be wearing red or something too bright.

Christin Yu: How do you feel that pressure? Does someone say something to you?

Oral History Participant: Yes. Korean people are very straightforward, and they don't think that is rude. For example, if you say 'oh you don't look great', that's very rude here. But that's a very usual thing, it's very common in Korea. Korean people don't hesitate to make a point about someone's appearance, like oh you look like you lost weight, or you look like you gained some weight. I didn't even know before I lived here that that could be a very personal issue, because that is very normal in Korea. I do FaceTime very often with my mom. And every time I phone her, she always talks about my appearance.

[...]

Christin Yu: So again, you said that you grew up from a very young age, being a performer and understanding, these beauty rituals. So where do you think that your influences of understanding beauty and appearance came from you said, your mother and from being a performer or were there other influences as well.

Oral History Participant: To be honest, rather than my mother. The biggest influence of comes from my friends, obviously. And the music and dance school. Not the music students, but the dance students, they had to post their height and weight in front of the classroom, once a

week, because the weight is very important for dancers. And obviously, these days, people you know, Korean people are really into Instagram. Because they really like that image. Most, I think, 95% of my friends got the plastic surgery as well.

Christin Yu: Okay, great so, can you actually and can you describe, when you first started thinking about getting cosmetic surgery and the memories of the procedure.

Oral History Participant: You know Koreans, there's a saying, that in a kindergarten class, only one in 10 will have the double eyelid, by the time they go to university, only one in ten will not have the double eyelid. All Korean girls want to have big eyes. So as soon as they get into the university, I think 70-80% of people have all the double eyelid. That was in my days. I was told that these days are the single lines are getting more trendy. So less people get the eye surgery.

Christin Yu: So, can you describe, and you know the procedures or the memories of your procedures from the first consultation, the aftermath of the process and what was happening in your life.

Oral History Participant: Yes, after finishing all the tests for university. The friends could not contact each other very well, because they all got surgery, before getting into the university. And we just talked, like 'I'm going to have a surgery this winter' and we asked where are you going to go? So it's usually friends that introduced each other, "oh I did here." I did my eyes with five others friends, and we all went to the same hospital in different times, of course. One of my friends did it very well, she got the good result, then, other friends asked where did you get it? So, usually friends just introduced each other [to the good clinics].

Christin Yu: And can you go into detail about 'good result', what does that mean?

Oral History Participant: You know, I'm specifically talking about double lines. The best results that you can have for eyes is that you don't have a scar. Like a visible scar. The best thing, best result that you have is that it looks very natural. So without a scar. But if you go to a not very good doctor, not skilled doctor, I've seen some people have a scar when they close their eyes.

Christin Yu: And does natural mean anything else besides scar?

Oral History Participant: Yeah and yeah, it's not just a scar. One should be like that's your natural beauty.

Christin Yu: Okay, and can you describe, then the procedure that you got and how long it took and the consultation.

Oral History Participant: Yes, usually in the plastic surgery clinic, there's a specific person for the consultation. You get the consultation, mostly from the consultant rather than the doctor. Obviously you meet the doctor, the doctor suggest to you the methods. 'Because of your skin type you need to use this method.' He explains, the doctors explain the methods, but a part from that method, for example the price and how to recover, that kind of other explanation that comes from that consultant. It is called, have you heard of sangdangsiljang?

Christin Yu: I think so yeah.

Oral History Participant: Yeah. They are called siljangnim.

Christin Yu: And I've actually gone to a consultation myself so I'm very familiar but what was the procedure that you got and was there, an incision and do you remember anything about..

Oral History Participant: Yeah it wasn't all that long procedure. It was just it...I got anaesthesia, only in the eyes. Obviously I was awake, just chatting with the doctor while procedure was happening. To be honest, these days the double eyelid procedure is not considered a serious surgery in Korea. Because it's a very short time and everyone does it.

Christin Yu: And did you get it cut? How did the procedure go?

Oral History Participant: Oh, it was just like, just stitching. Yeah I didn't, because my skin is a very thin, that's what the doctor said, so yeah I didn't need to make a cut but the stitch was enough.

Christin Yu: And just stitches here [gestures toward inner eyelid] or throughout the eye?

Oral History Participant: Throughout the lines, like three four stitches.

Christin Yu: Okay, and then okay so, and can you describe the healing process?

Oral History Participant: They gave me some ice pack, so that I can put on my eyes. And 'just rest'

Christin Yu: Okay, how long did it take to heal?

Oral History Participant: It's...[hard to remember] as it was more than 10 years ago. I think three-four weeks. Oh it was almost 20 years ago.

Christin Yu: And so you are graduating from university, you said, or entering university?

Oral History Participant: Entering university. Everyone does it before they get into university.

Christin Yu: And can you describe the environment of the clinic, what neighbourhood, you said 'the hospital'...

Oral History Participant: You know there are famous places for plastic surgery clinics in Gangnam, Apugujeon, that area. People here, if they hear the word 'hospital' they think it's serious, but in Korea, any kind of, not just plastic surgery, but any kind of clinic it's easy to get in, because it's not too expensive, and even, as you know, just even if you get a cold, you go to the clinic. So no one has a fear about getting into the clinic.

Christin Yu: Was there anything specific about...

Oral History Participant: [Shaking head] There is nothing special. I don't think, nothing.

Christin Yu: So, were the results as you expected and did you notice differences in your everyday life? Can you describe how your life changed afterwards.

Oral History Participant: Everyone knows that it is a form of self-satisfaction. Obviously people want to hear, 'oh you look pretty' from someone else. But most importantly, having the

surgery is for your own satisfaction. And the beauty standard includes having big eyes. It might be different these days though.

Christin Yu: Can you, maybe describe how you know that the beauty standard is big eyes, where do you know that from?

Oral History Participant: Watching TV show. There are some celebrities who are famous and popular in Korea. I think they are the standard.

Christin Yu: And do you, did you notice a difference, in your attitude when you had the procedure done afterwards?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, of course, because it gave me more, self-confidence.

Christin Yu: Can you describe that in a bit more detail what that means to you.

Oral History Participant: To be honest, plastic surgery is not a big deal in Korea, and specifically the double eye lines. That doesn't change that much, it does not change the world. It's just one of the daily life for Korean people. So maybe I had a bit more confidence, but it's not a huge change. You know, there are some big surgeries like chin cutting, then *they* might have *more* satisfaction or they might think their life has been changed. But eyelashes [eyelids], everyone does it. So it's not a big deal, no one cares these days.

Appendix J. Sarah Park*, interviewed by Christin Yu about blepharoplasty experiences, 18 February 2022

Sarah Park transcript (truncated version)

[...]

Christin Yu: What about your skincare regime, when did you begin doing that?

Oral History Participant: I think that was always did it, too. I think my mom just always told me to put on toner and everything, and then obviously, face cream. But I think, as I got older, there are more steps to it. I started getting more expensive stuff, before I would just get drugstore stuff, but now I'm looking at the ingredients. I'm trying to get things that are longer lasting. I also try to get things with SPFs in the mix of it, so I can, if I can double up, if possible. As well, I get more wrinkle cream now as well, so I think it all kind of just adds up. I think I got more and more as I've gotten older, I think.

Christin Yu: So for as long as, you've always used [skin care products]?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, there's always been, I can remember my mom put cream on my face, even when I was a baby. I remember her doing it for me, maybe not like toner, but there was definitely skin care.

Christin Yu: Yeah, and does your mom have a good skin care regime as well?

Oral History Participant: I think so. But my mom and dad have pretty good skin, considering their age, and they don't invest as much. Because I think, coming from, as an immigrant, they don't want to waste so much money on skincare. So they don't use the best best brands, but they use good brands at the same time. Definitely my dad doesn't care as much, because I think he's a male and he's never needed to [care]. He only does it because my mom has it. But my mom, like she doesn't really put that much effort. I think she naturally just has good skin.

[...]

Christin Yu: I know that you spoke about your first job and your job now, working with clients. I don't know how much client interaction you have, but then you also spoke about being a teacher, and I was wondering if your appearance matter in these environments. You spoke about how in Korea you were told that you have to look good in public, have these ideas persisted in you? Do you carry them? Are they important to you still?

Oral History Participant: Yeah so, I think in Korea, when I was a teacher they gave us a uniform, so there was nothing that I could or couldn't do. We were provided the school uniform. We had to wear it. There was nothing difficult with that, it was just, obviously, when I went on the weekend grocery shopping and stuff like it. They don't want us to look unpresentable, they always said. It was my aunt, and my [grandmother] would say that to me, like my grandma. Then even my friends said, in Korea, you just can't go out looking like a bum.

Christin Yu: What would your grandmother say in Korea?

* Pseudonym have been used to anonymise the participant

Oral History Participant: Well, you can't. She'd be like [you can't wear sandals to the market]. Because they were for the house. I'd say, 'What? What do you mean? You just went to throw out the garbage, I'm allowed to go to the grocery store.' I'd be like ok, because flip flops here are so normal. You wear it everywhere, but no, not in Korea.

[...]

Christin Yu: Okay. Alright, so approximately around that time. Okay, so can you remember when you first started thinking about cosmetic surgery?

Oral History Participant: Oh, yeah. So that was, I think when I was young. It was just a known thing. Everyone's like, 'when you graduate school, when you graduate high school, you get your eyes' if your Korean. It was just a very, very known thing. I don't even, to be honest, you might ask where it came from, but I honestly have no idea where that thought even came from. I was just like I'm gonna get surgery. It was just automatic. But when I got to Korea, so my mom told me that I had to get a certain grade and I have to go to university to get the surgery. I remember specifically in grade eleven and twelve, I studied my ass off to get a 90 average to go to university. So I did it, and then she took me to Korea. I got my eyes done, but then when I got to Korea, I always just thought it was a very simple procedure. You just go and get your eyes done, how hard could it be right? Because back then, I know this isn't even that long ago, but, youtube wasn't that big back then. There was no Instagram, I didn't know how else to research, it was just based off my mom's connections, I guess. And my cousins who lived in Korea that would tell us where to go. But in Korea, once you get there, you have to interview. It's so weird. You actually have to interview multiple places to figure out which one's the best match for you. You go into different plastic surgery places, and then they'll tell you different things you can do with your face. What kind of surgery do you want? But to me, when I was in Canada, I just assumed they were going to give me double eyelids, I didn't know there was going to be an intricacy to it. It was really interesting, because someplace would tell you, basically, 'Oh, this is where celebrities come and get their eyes done.' And other places would say supposed 'this is the top in this area.' They obviously had different ways to sell it to you, I think. Um. They would go, they would look at your face. Take photos of it. Front, profile, all that stuff, and then from there they would then, not diagnose you, but tell you what kind of surgeries you can get.

Christin Yu: Okay, and can you remember any of those meetings? Can you talk about some of those consultations?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, for sure. When you go in, basically you don't even talk to the doctor. You talk to a consultation lady. You don't even get to see the doctor until after. So you first talk to the consultation lady. You tell her what kind of thing you want to get done, and I'm like 'I want my eyes done.' Then she'll take a photo of you, left, right, all the different angles. Then you go in to see the doctor, and then the doctor says, 'Oh, if you do this to your eyes it'll look like this.' Then they start playing around with it a bit, and then depending on where you go, obviously, the prices are different. Each doctors' style is different, but it's basically just a small ... it looks like a dentist. You go to a dentist's clinic right? You see your receptionist, they then walk you to your dental chair, and then the dentist comes in and fixes you right, and then you have hygienist and all that, so basically like that, but with plastic surgery. It is this very much like a clinic.

Christin Yu: Okay, there's two things that I want to pick up on: you said 'everyone spoke about it.' Can you detail that, specifically?

Oral History Participant: So all my friends that I know, like my Korean friends, all got double eyelid surgery. Basically, it was a thing. Some got it a little bit earlier, in grade eleven versus some got it in first year university. It just depended on timing, but everyone just wanted to get eyelid surgery, I think, when I was there. I don't know if it's a big thing anymore. I've heard now in Korea, because everyone's already did their eyelids they go to other parts of their face. I think right now there's butt surgery. I feel like in Korea it's based on trends. Because everyone does what you need to do, and then everyone kind of ends up looking the same, anyways, right. But yeah, everyone has it, like all my friends. Yeah, I think, even in my family, we would always just talk about [double eyelids in Korean] sometimes, because I don't think a lot of my family members have it. Back then, at least right? Yeah, I don't think it was a big thing in my family for anyone to have [double eyelids] so I think it was a topic, once in a while. I don't know if it was like a major topic. But yeah.

Christin Yu: It was something that you could remember?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, yeah.

Christin Yu: And you spoke about your cousins, is that on your mom's side?

Oral History Participant: My mom's side cousins have double eyelids, but I think my dad's side. I don't think anyone has double eyelids, at least back then. I don't think others had it. My brother doesn't have it. [discussion of family member maturing to have double eyelids] [Her cousin] grew up into it. So my dad, he kept telling me that I would get it when I'm older. Because everyone in my family, all my aunts got it when they were older too. Yeah, yeah, [he said] 'they all got it when they were older, so you'll get it.' My dad was actually really against it.

Christin Yu: Okay, interesting.

Oral History Participant: He was *really* against it. But what's he going to do? I was crying, I was like 'I need it. I can't wait.' But then, now that I think about it, technically the surgery that I got, because I think my mom was worried, and that was my first time too. We did what they call 'incisions.' It's not a cut. It's ... I don't know how to ... they put three they pinch three parts of your eyelids, and then there's a ball so it clamps it together. The stitches, stick it together, so it creates a double eyelid, but you don't cut it. It's a procedure, not a surgery they call it.

Christin Yu: So it's a *sisul* [surgical procedure] not a *susul* [operation].

Oral History Participant: Yeah yeah, a *sisul* not a *susul*.

Christin Yu: Okay, and can you describe where in your eyes?

Oral History Participant: Yeah if you like, touch your eyes, you have your eyes they're kind of like a circular shape, right? So they'll put it on the top where your pupil, I guess, is, and then, like each side, so you'll have three. One in the inner corner of your eye, the middle of your eye, and then the end. So then they get a ball of a stitch, I don't know how to explain it exactly, but it feels like a little ball on your eyelid. And then it clamps it together.

Christin Yu: Okay.

Oral History Participant: They said they don't cut it, so they flip your eyelids, I guess. Inside, they stitch it together as if they're pinching it. So you have a pinched eyelid to make the double

eyelid. So I did that, and then basically, in the last four or five years, it's disappeared. I don't have it anymore, but because of, I think my wrinkles or my age, I don't know it, but I'm getting eyelids. I'm getting double eyelids again [naturally]. Maybe my dad was right, we get it when we're thirty.

Christin Yu: And can you describe, you spoke about speaking to several different people, and how your mom knew connections [to plastic surgeons], how did you decide the one that you chose? Can you describe the day of the procedure and the aftermath of it, as much as you can remember in detail?

Oral History Participant: I think we just chose it because, we had my cousin go with us, and so me, my mom and my cousin, and obviously she knows the Korean culture more. I think we chose the person we chose, because it was a bit of a smaller boutique place. It wasn't as sales-pitchy. Then when the guy was explaining my surgery, he seemed a little less salesy. He didn't try to push a thousand different things. He was just like 'if you want your eyes done, just do that.' If anything, he said 'you don't even need it right now, you can do it when you're older.' He was very nice. The other ones were like 'We had celebrities. Come here. You want to come here.' They were very pitchy, you know. But at the end of the day, my mom had the most say. It's true. It was her money. She chose where I went. Then, basically once you decide on the doctor then you go back to the consultation lady. You figure out a price. They'll give you the price, you can kind of cut it a little bit. Get a bit of a discount, they call it, or whatever. And then you book your surgery, usually it's a day after it. Because there's a pretty much ... the surgery is really quick. I think it was an hour or something. It was really short. Then they come. The doctor does the surgery. Then they put you into a little room, you rest for thirty minutes, and then you're off.

Christin Yu: Okay, and did you have a general anesthesia or local anesthesia?

Oral History Participant: I think they put you to sleep. But then they wake you up in the middle of you, to tell you to open your eyes because they need to see if it's even. So then they woke me up for a bit. They told me to open my eyes, look left, right. I remember this because I was so confused. They suddenly woke me up, told me to look up, look down, look left, right, and then turn my eyes. And then they put me back to sleep. And then I was okay.

Christin Yu: And then the aftermath, you had to wait there for an hour. But when you went home how were your eyes?

Oral History Participant: They were puffy. I couldn't wear contacts. I couldn't shower for a week, because of the incisions. You have to go back and get the cut and all that stuff. Basically, the stitches pulled out because they have to set, right? So then, when they take stitching out after a week, honestly, that was so painful because they don't numb you. They just pull it out. It's supposed to be melting, but the ones that don't melt, they just take it out right? They don't put you under for that. And then after that, I was swollen for maybe, it didn't look natural for six months, I would say. But apparently now, after two weeks, you look natural.

Christin Yu: Interesting. Okay, so there's just so much more innovation.

Oral History Participant: Yeah, the technologies are probably so much better.

Christin Yu: And it was puffy and bruising as well?

Oral History Participant: It wasn't bruising that much, considering, I guess I got sisul done. But yeah, it wasn't too bad. And the pain, there was hardly any pain, to be honest. I think it hurt more when I got laser surgery done, in my eye, to get better vision that hurt way more.

Christin Yu: Oh, you got laser eye?

Oral History Participant: Yes

Christin Yu: You said that you got it right before you went to university. So that would have been 20-?

Oral History Participant: 2012, no 2008.

Christin Yu: So you spoke about this before, but were the results as you expected?

Oral History Participant: I actually wanted my eyes to be bigger, because I think I had a vision of my eyes being huge after. But then they looked too natural to me.

Christin Yu: Okay, interesting.

Oral History Participant: Yeah, so if I could have gone back now, I would have just gotten the cuts on my eyes. So the double eyelid wouldn't disappear, because the cut is way more permanent. You're literally cutting and stitching it, right versus like clipping them together. So if I were to go back and do it, from what I know now, I would just get it cut, and I would make it a little bigger.

Christin Yu: And did you not want to do that because you were afraid of how drastic the look would be, or your mom didn't want you to get an invasive surgery?

Oral History Participant: I think both. Yeah, the doctor said that at my age it's just better to not cut it, because he said that I'm still really young. It could come in naturally and stuff, so he wanted a less permanent solution. So he did tell me in years, that it would go away, but I think to me, years meant *years*, not like ten years, right? And then, yeah, also, I was the scared of what I would look like after, because I didn't know what I would look like with different eyes. It's kind of confusing too. I think I was half-scared, but the other half, the doctor said it was better to go more natural for the first one. Because I think in Korea, they do it multiple times.

Christin Yu: Interesting. Do you know people that have had it multiple times?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, I had two friends that went in and did it again. Because one girl, hers disappeared faster than mine. So she just went in and got it cut. And another girl too, it became like lopsided. One stayed the way it was supposed to, and the other one kind of disappeared. She had one sankapul, and she had one no sankapul. So she went and got it redone. A lot of people didn't get a cut back then as well, I think.

Christin: Did you notice differences in your everyday life and can you describe how your life changed after that?

Oral History Participant: I didn't wear so much eyeliners. Because my eyelids were doubled right? Before, because I had sankapul, it would go in, so I would have to literally colour in my eyes to show some a line at the top right? But now, because I don't have, because I have

sankapul, I just do one line like a normal, what I would think is a normal person. And it would just show. So I think makeup was easier, obviously my eyes were bigger, so it was great. But no, I think that was a major difference. I didn't have one of those ... I know with some people, when they do, major surgery they have an association ... they can't associate their face with their body, but I never had that. I think it was so natural. I wanted it bigger, I didn't think it was that different.

Christin Yu: Okay, so were you happy with the results initially? But now they faded?

Oral History Participant: Yeah, yeah, I was really happy with it up until ... I mean considering what I wanted was a little bigger. But for what I bought, I was happy. And then four years ago, it started disappearing, because it was when I started dating my husband now. A year after I started dating him, the double eyelid started disappearing. But the way it disappeared was weird, because it would come and go depending on my tiredness, and I guess, if I slept more, if I was less swollen, it would come back. But if I was swollen, it would go away. It's definitely not ... I can't feel the bumps as much anymore, either. I think it's pretty much gone. I try to crease my eyes to make my own natural one, and it comes once in a while, but it'll probably still need a few years.

Christin Yu: Interesting. Okay, so the stitches made a scar tissue that would make a crease.

Oral History Participant: I think it was ... yeah, maybe that's what it was. I don't know, but I could feel bumps there. I definitely felt three bumps in my eyes initially. But now I don't feel it as much when I'm touching it.

Christin Yu: Yeah, okay, so. And would you recommend the procedure to others?

Oral History Participant: I would just tell them to cut it. If they're going to go through with it, I would just say, just cut it. There's no point of you half-assing it at this point.

[...]

Appendix K. Participant Project Information and Consent Form (Interviews)



Participant Project Information & Consent Form

(One signed copy of this form should be retained by the Participant and one copy by the Project Researcher)

Fragments and Borders: (re)constructing ROK through patchwork

For further information

Supervisor:

Dr. Sarah Cheang

+44 (0)20 7590 4183

sarah.cheang@rca.ac.uk

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Dear Potential Participant,

I am Christin Yu, a PhD researcher in the History of Design department at the Royal College of Art. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research project entitled *Fragments and Borders: (re)constructing ROK through patchwork*, and the project is externally sponsored by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP). You are invited to take part in this research project, which explores the (re)construction of South Korea (1948 – present day) through Korean patchwork cultures. By examining Korean patchwork as different forms: jogakbo (a patchwork version of the Korean wrapping cloth, bojagi), patchwork fashions and finally, cosmetic surgery cultures as a metaphor for describing patchwork wrapping as skin, I explore ROK's post-war reconstruction and national rebuilding, through the question of the Korean woman.

If you consent to participate, this will involve:

- The interview that will take one to two hours and you can withdraw at any moment.
- The interview will be either audio taped, or digitally recorded.
- In the interview you may be identified by name, subject to your consent.

Research Office Royal College of Art Kensington Gore London SW7 2EU
 t +44 (0)20 7590 4126 f +44 (0)20 7590 4542 research@rca.ac.uk www.rca.ac.uk/research

Appendix K. continued

- You may also be identified by name in any transcript of such interview, subject to your consent.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time and there will be no disadvantage if you decide not to be interviewed. All information collected will be confidential. All information gathered from the interview will be stored securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and once the information has been analysed all individual information will be destroyed, upon request.

Images or quotes, which may allow you to be identified will only be used with your express permission.

If you have any concerns or would like to know the outcome of this project, please contact my supervisor, Sarah Cheang at the above address.

Thank you for your interest.

Appendix K. continued

I (*please print*) have read the information above and all queries have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research and give my consent freely. I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the project up to the point of publication, without penalty, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that all information gathered will be stored securely, and my opinions will be accurately represented. Any data in which I can be clearly identified will be used in the public domain only with my consent.

Participant Signature.....

Researcher Signature.....

Date:

Complaints Procedure:

This project follows the guidelines laid out by the Royal College of Art Research Ethics Policy.

If you have any questions, please speak with the researcher. If you have any concerns or a complaint about the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the RCA Research Ethics Committee by emailing ethics@rca.ac.uk or by sending a letter addressed to:

The Research Ethics Committee
 Royal College of Art
 Kensington Gore
 London
 SW7 2EU

Appendix L. Participant Project Information and Consent Form (Oral Histories)



Participant Project Information & Consent Form

(One signed copy of this form should be retained by the Participant and one copy by the Project Researcher)

Mending Fragments: A Modern History of Women and Patchwork

For further information

Supervisor:

Dr. Sarah Cheang

+44 (0)20 7590 4183

sarah.cheang@rca.ac.uk

Friday, July 29, 2022

Dear Potential Participant,

I am Christin Yu, a PhD researcher in the History of Design department at the Royal College of Art. As part of my studies, I am conducting a research project entitled *Mending Fragments: A Modern History of Korean Women and Patchwork*, and the project is externally sponsored by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP). You are invited to take part in this research project, which explores the (re)construction of South Korea (1948 – present day) through Korean patchwork cultures. By examining Korean patchwork as different forms: jogakbo (a patchwork version of the Korean wrapping cloth, bojagi), patchwork fashions and finally, cosmetic surgery cultures as both a metaphor and literal description for patchwork as skin, I explore the ROK's post-war reconstruction and national rebuilding, through the question of the Korean woman.

If you consent to participate, this will involve:

- The interview that will take one to two hours and you can withdraw at any moment.
- The interview will be either audio taped, or digitally recorded.
- In the interview you may be identified by name, subject to your consent.

Research Office Royal College of Art Kensington Gore London SW7 2EU
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Appendix L. continued

- You may also be identified by name in any transcript of such interview, subject to your consent.
- If you choose to remain anonymous, you will be identified by a pseudonym.
- The interview may be placed into a repository for future use, subject to your consent.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time and there will be no disadvantage if you decide not to be interviewed. All information collected will be confidential. All information gathered from the interview will be stored securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and once the information has been analysed all individual information will be destroyed, upon request.

Images or quotes, which may allow you to be identified will only be used with your express permission.

If you have any concerns or would like to know the outcome of this project, please contact my supervisor, Sarah Cheang at the above address.

Thank you for your interest.

Appendix L. continued

I (*please print*) have read the information above and all queries have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research and give my consent freely. I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the project up to the point of publication, without penalty, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that all information gathered will be stored securely, and my opinions will be accurately represented. Any data in which I can be clearly identified will be used in the public domain only with my consent.

Participant Signature.....

Researcher Signature.....

Date:

Complaints Procedure:

This project follows the guidelines laid out by the Royal College of Art Research Ethics Policy.

If you have any questions, please speak with the researcher. If you have any concerns or a complaint about the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the RCA Research Ethics Committee by emailing ethics@rca.ac.uk or by sending a letter addressed to:

The Research Ethics Committee
 Royal College of Art
 Kensington Gore
 London
 SW7 2EU

Appendix L. Participant Project Information and Consent Form (Oral Histories) – in Korean



Participant Project Information & Consent Form

(One signed copy of this form should be retained by the Participant and one copy by the Project Researcher)

Fragments and Borders: (re)constructing ROK through patchwork

For further information

Supervisor:

Dr. Sarah Cheang

+44 (0)20 7590 4183

sarah.cheang@rca.ac.uk

Sunday, February 13, 2022

잠재적 참여자님,

Dear Potential Participant,

저는 영국 로이얼 거내지(Royal College of Art)의 디자인사 박사 과정 학생인 유겨희(Christin Yu)입니다. 현재 *조각과 가장자리: 패치워크를 통한 남한 재건 (Fragments and Borders: (re-)constructing the ROK through patchwork)* 이라는 제목의 연구 프로젝트를 진행하고 있습니다. 프로젝트는 LAHP(London Arts and Humanities Partnership)가 외부적으로 후원하고 있습니다. 한국의 패치워크 문화를 통해 한국의 (재)재건을 탐구하는 이 연구 프로젝트에 귀하를 초대합니다. 한국어 패치워크를 다른 형식으로 검토함: 조각보, 패션 패치워크 하고 패치워크 피부를 비유한 성형수술, 한국 여성의 역사에 대한 질문을 통해 한국의 전후 재건과 국가 재건을 탐험한다.

I am Christin Yu, a PhD researcher in the History of Design department at the Royal College of Art. I am conducting a research project titled *Fragments and Borders: (re)constructing ROK through patchwork*, and the project is externally sponsored by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP). You are invited to take part in this research project, which explores the (re)construction of South Korea (1948 – present day) through Korean patchwork cultures. By examining Korean patchwork as different forms: jogakbo (a patchwork version

Appendix L. Korean continued

of the Korean wrapping cloth, bojagi), patchwork fashions and finally, cosmetic surgery cultures as a metaphor for describing patchwork wrapping as skin, I explore ROK's post-war reconstruction and national rebuilding, through the question of the Korean women's histories.

참여하기로 동의하실 경우:

If you consent to participate, this will involve:

- 인터뷰는 1~2 시간이 소요되며 언제든지 철회할 수 있습니다.
- 인터뷰는 오디오 테이프나 녹음하거나 디지털로 녹음합니다.
- 면접에서 귀하의 동의에 따라 귀하의 이름을 확인할 수 있습니다.
- 귀하의 동의에 따라 해당 인터뷰의 모든 기록에서 귀하의 이름을 확인할 수도 있습니다.
- 익명으로 유지하기로 선택한 경우 인터뷰는 번호로만 식별됩니다.
- 인터뷰는 사용자의 동의에 따라 향후 사용을 위한 저장소에 저장됩니다.

- The interview that will take one to two hours and you can withdraw at any moment.
- The interview will be either audio taped, or digitally recorded.
- In the interview you may be identified by name, subject to your consent.
- You may also be identified by name in any transcript of such interview, subject to your consent.
- If you choose to remain anonymous, the interview will only be identified by a number.
- The interview will be placed into a repository for future use, subject to your consent.

참여는 전적으로 자발적입니다. 언제든지 참여를 철회할 수 있으며 인터뷰를 하지 않기로 결정하셔도 불이익은 없습니다. 수집된 모든 정보는 기밀로 유지됩니다. 인터뷰에서 수집된 모든 정보는 영국 정보보호법(Data Protection Act 1998)에 따라 안전하게 보관됩니다.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time and there will be no disadvantage if you decide not to be interviewed. All information collected will be confidential. All information gathered from the interview will be stored securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and once the information has been analysed all individual information will be destroyed, upon request.

사용자가 식별될 수 있는 이미지 또는 따옴표는 사용자의 명시적 권한으로만 사용됩니다.

Images or quotes, which may allow you to be identified will only be used with your express permission.

우려되는 점이 있으시거나 이 프로젝트의 결과를 알고 싶으신 경우, 아래 주소로 저의 지도교수님이신 Dr. Sarah Cheang 에게 문의하시기 바랍니다.

If you have any concerns or would like to know the outcome of this project, please contact my supervisor, Sarah Cheang at the above address.

Appendix L. Korean continued

감사합니다.

Thank you for your interest.

본인(인쇄체로 적어주세요)은 영국 Royal College of Art 의 디자인사 박사 과정 학생인 Christin Yu 가 진행하는 조각과 가장자리(Fragments and Borders) 연구 프로젝트와 관련된 정보를 읽었으며, 모든 문의에 만족스러운 답변을 받았습니다.

본인은 이 연구에 자발적으로 참여하는 데 동의하며 자유롭게 허락합니다. 본인은 프로젝트가 본인에게 주어진 정보지 사본에 따라 조사될 것임을 이해합니다.

본인은 언제든지 불이익 없이 프로젝트에 대한 참여를 철회할 수 있으며 철회 사유를 제시할 필요가 없음을 이해합니다.

I (please print) have read the information above and all queries have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research and give my consent freely. I understand that I can withdraw my participation from the project up to the point of publication, without penalty, and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I understand that all information gathered will be stored securely, and my opinions will be accurately represented. Any data in which I can be clearly identified will be used in the public domain only with my consent.

Participant Signature.....

Researcher Signature.....

Date:

불만처리 절차:

이 프로젝트는 왕립미술대학 연구윤리정책이 제시한 지침을 따른다.

Appendix L. Korean continued

문의 사항이 있으시면 연구원과 상담하시기 바랍니다. 본 연구의 수행 방식에 대해 불만이나 불만 사항이 있는 경우 ethics@rca.ac.uk 으로 이메일을 보내거나 다음 주소로 서신을 보내 RCA 연구 윤리 위원회에 문의하십시오.

Complaints Procedure:

This project follows the guidelines laid out by the Royal College of Art Research Ethics Policy.

If you have any questions, please speak with the researcher. If you have any concerns or a complaint about the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the RCA Research Ethics Committee by emailing ethics@rca.ac.uk or by sending a letter addressed to:

The Research Ethics Committee
Royal College of Art
Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2EU

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