

8

Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation: The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts

There is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak.
—Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Far from being natural, . . . bodies are "maps of power and identity": or, rather, maps of the relation between power and identity.
—Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography*

In February 1995, a former sex worker

(Kim Y n-ja) and two activists from Korea (a female, feminist writer and a male videomaker/photographer) led a three-week tour through eight major cities in the United States. The purpose of the tour was to raise Americans' awareness about the problem of militarized prostitution with foreigners in Korea and its impact on the lives of Korean women and their children. I was among many activists on the East Coast who helped to coordinate the speaking tour and in particular to organize a

Page 2

HYUN SOOK KIM

public forum for Korean Americans in Boston, which was their next-to-last stopping point.

The night before the activists were scheduled to address the Korean Americans, they were engaged in another forum at one of the major academic institutions where the audience was comprised of mainly feminist students and faculty. Feeling excited about the rare opportunity to meet with activists from Korea and discuss the militarized prostitution issue, I attended that evening forum. It had been three years since I had first met Kim Y n-ja in Songt'an, Korea, where another Korean-American activist and I had gone to investigate and write about two young boys who had been murdered by their American GI father. At that time, Kim Yon-ja had welcomed us to her home and shelter for bi-racial families called True Love Shelter (*Chamsarang Simt*);¹ she fed us, introduced us to the women who work in bars and clubs surrounding the U.S. military base in Songt'an, and openly discussed life stories of sex workers of Kijich'on (military camptowns), including her own.²

The evening forum in Boston began with the Korean feminist writer's lengthy analysis of U.S. militarization of Korea since 1945, followed by the videomaker's slide show displaying the images of poverty-

stricken Korea and Koreans from the 1960s and 1970s and the photos of U.S. military installations. The forum concluded with Kim Yon-ja's presentation of her experience of working and living in Kijich'on. Kim spoke in detail about the physical, psychological and economic hardship she endured in sexual labor for twenty-five years, from 1964 to 1989. She also discussed the importance of her religious faith as a source of self-empowerment which, she said, helped her to sustain hope and eventually to escape the life of a sex worker. Kim also mentioned that ever since becoming a preacher in 1989 she has used her missionary role to advocate the rights of working-class Korean women and their children living in military camptowns in Korea.

On the whole, the forum was successful in conveying important information about the history of U.S. imperialism in Korea since 1945 and the destructive impact of U.S. militarism on the lives of Korean civilians. However, as a Korean-American academic-activist sitting in the audience, I observed that the activists and the audience had very different ways of approaching the question of militarized prostitution. For

Page 3

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

example, the audience invited Kim to elaborate on her daily coping strategies in sexual labor, her views about the circumstances that forced her into sexual labor, and her views on patriarchy and militarism. Several students of liberation and feminist theology begged Kim to expand upon her description of how religious faith had guided her survival in (and eventual escape from) sexual labor. However, the young Korean American woman interpreter, who was responsible for providing simultaneous translation of questions and answers from English to Korean and vice versa, screened and censored the questions directed to Kim. Insisting that the forum time be devoted to the delivery of the group line, which aimed to "educate" Americans about the impact of U.S. imperialism and militarization on Korean lives, the activists overlooked and neglected to translate questions addressed to Kim. Attempts from the audience to ask about Kim's personal experience in Kijich'on were repeatedly ignored. The activists judged Kim's talk as "testimonial" and "evangelical" because her focus on the personal and daily struggle in sexual labor left no room for discussing the larger and, in the activists' eyes, more significant dimension of imperialism and domination of Korea by the United States.

Kim Yon-ja's testimony was relegated to the margins of this forum because the writer and videomaker analyzed the problem of military prostitution simply in terms of U.S. militarism and imperialism, thus locating the blame on Americans for the exploitation of Korean women working in Kijich'on. Their emphasis on the United States' culpability left little room to discuss the intricate relations of economic, cultural, and ideological hierarchies that reinforce women's subordination, including militarized prostitution among Koreans, in which Korean women provide sexual service to Korean soldiers near Korean military installations, and the role that the Korean dictatorships and patriarchy have played in encouraging Korean women into prostitution. Unlike Kim Yon-ja's story, which puts forward an alternative, "bottom-up" view of poor and working-class sex workers,³ the activists' elitist, "top-down" perspective privileges their own subject positions as nationalist, middle-class experts with "critical knowledge." Their perspective can be characterized as a nationalist-feminist view. Throughout this essay, the term "nationalist-feminist" will be used to refer to what I call "the conscious-

Page 4

HYUN SOOK KIM

ness of decolonization." This phrase effectively captures the sentiments of contemporary Korean feminist groups who share the nationalist views of social movement groups opposing neo-colonialism, militarism, and imperialism. The nationalist and feminist groups point to the problem of class and gender oppression as stemming solely from the structural domination of imperialism. Within this framework, Koreans are categorized as a unified subject occupying the victim position vis-à-vis the American oppressor.

The conflict between elite and working-class positions presents a fundamental challenge to middle-class Korean women, both feminist and non-feminist, when we speak of and about the poor and working-class women engaged in sexual labor, especially with foreigners. We must, however, ask the following theoretical and political questions: which ideological framework(s) should inform our discussions with American audiences about the problem of Korean prostitutes and foreign soldiers? Who gets to speak of, for, and about the working-class Korean women working in Kijich'on? Which boundary markers—i.e., the nation, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and/or class—help shed light on the complex problem of militarized prostitution?

Historically, the term "Yanggongju" has referred to Korean women who engage in sexual labor for foreign soldiers. We need to problematize the social construction of this term, which does not refer to women working with or for Korean men. Used derogatorily, it means "Yankee whore," "Yankee wife," "UN lady," and/or "Western princess." This epithet, "Yanggongju," relegates Korean women working in militarized prostitution with foreign men to the lowest status within the hierarchy of prostitution. Since the end of the Korean War, this category has been extended to include Korean women who marry American servicemen (pejoratively called "GI Brides"). In postwar Korea, the epithet "Yanggongju" has become synonymous with "GI Brides," so that Korean women in interracial marriages are also viewed as "Yanggongju." In the 1990s, a growing number of both popular and radical political texts that incorporate representations of "Yanggongju" have been produced and circulated. These include popular novels, films, and TV programs for the mass market, as well as radical political texts such as pamphlets, newsletters, journals, and books produced by leftist nation-

Page 5

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

alist groups fighting for national sovereignty—specifically, the national unification and independence of, and democracy in, Korea. Like the Korean activists who spoke at the Boston forum, the popular and radical texts focus only on militarized prostitution with foreigners and do not acknowledge or problematize militarized prostitution in Korea, which includes Korean women providing sexual service to Korean soldiers. The texts also use the term "Yanggongju" unquestioningly and uncritically, in its pejorative connotation.

I will interrogate this categorization of Korean working-class sex workers by examining how specific texts construct and sustain the notion of "Yanggongju." Curiously, critical studies of sexual labor with

foreigners in Kijich'on remained few and far between until the 1990s, and negative images of working-class Korean women as "Yanggongju" have left a deep imprint in the minds of Koreans. My essay emphasizes two main arguments: one, that although the term "Yanggongju" is used by middle-class nationalists and feminists to symbolize the nation, this use simultaneously erases or vilifies the lives and experiences of working-class women; and two, that despite being essentialized as "Yanggongju," working-class Korean women engaged in sexual labor with foreigners have agency, subjectivity, experience, and an autonomous point of view. Their self-representations contest and challenge the dominant representations of them as mere victims, as the oppressed.

To develop these arguments, this essay's first two sections will analyze Ahn Jung-hyo's novel *Silver Stallion* (1990) and Kang S k-ky ng's short story "Days and Dreams" (1989), respectively. Translated into English and introduced to the American mass market, these two texts present stereotypical, unidimensional representations of "Yanggongju" as "victims" of militarism and imperialism. The women are portrayed in terms of their object-position as poor, working-class, raped, abused "whores" for American GIs. The third section analyzes texts produced by radical movement groups, discussing specifically how these texts utilize the figure of Yun Kum-i, a young Kijich'on sex worker murdered in 1992 by an American soldier. How do the images of Korean military prostitutes in radical texts differ from those put forward in popular texts?

(Throughout the essay, the word "radical" refers to the leftist nationalist consciousness that opposes [neo-]colonialism and U.S. militarism and

Page 6

HYUN SOOK KIM

seeks national independence and unification of two Koreas.) I will argue that while radical social movement groups with nationalist and/or feminist consciousness have won some mainstream support to discuss militarized prostitution, largely because of the Yun Kum-i murder incident, they nevertheless discuss militarized prostitution only in relation to foreigners, particularly American soldiers. Not only is the issue of Korean women providing sexual services to Korean men thus ignored, but these radical groups are reinscribing and reconstituting elitist and patriarchal views of working-class Korean women of Kijich'on as "Yanggongju"—vulgar, low, dirty, and shameful social objects. Finally, the paper's fourth section returns to a discussion of the speaking tour. I will contend that although they have not been well received by nationalists and feminists, Kim Yon-ja's speeches about her religious spirituality as a source of self-empowerment cannot be dismissed as politically incorrect. Neither can we appropriate her experience to assert a false unity of heterogeneous Korean women while relegating the working-class, female sex worker(s) to marginality. In fact, the elite-versus-working-class conflict described above cautions us about the privileging of class and "expert" knowledge that occurs when middle-class academic-activists and working-class women join together.

In the late twentieth century, in the age of global or transnational capitalist culture, it becomes particularly urgent for us diasporic Korean women to recognize the differences among us in terms of class, ethnicity, nationality, and power relations. Korean women do not compose a monolithic group as "Koreans," "women," or "Korean women"; we do not share a unity of "Korean womanhood"; and the traditional under

standing of our locations in terms of the oppressed and the oppressor or the periphery and the metropole is inadequate. Thus, in re-thinking the politics of representation, elitist (feminist or nationalist) academics and activists must not assert a single, unitary identity constructed in terms of Korean nation, ethnicity, or womanhood and should not contribute to the silencing of the working-class women engaged in sexual labor with foreign soldiers. Instead of reproducing totalizing, unidimensional images of working-class Korean women who work in sexual labor for foreigners as victims of militarism and neo-colonialism, this essay emphasizes the importance of recognizing the self-representations of working-

Page 7

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

class women and their everyday resistance to the patriarchal and military-capitalist systems of power hierarchy. When considering the position of working-class Korean women, we need to deconstruct the essentialized category of "Yanggongju" and "speak to" the working-class Korean women who have been culturally and historically muted in the dominant narratives of the middle class, both nationalist and feminist. Imperial violence and male violence need to be theorized, but not in terms of middle-class cultural and political norms. Theoretically and politically, we need to understand Korean women, especially and working-class women as heterogeneous, material subjects making their own histories.

The Son-Centric View of the Raped Mother in Ahn Jung-hyo's Silver Stallion.

Ahn Jung-hyo's *Silver Stallion* is a story about how the Korean War transforms traditional mother-son, familial, and community relations.⁶ Ahn's popular novel represents prostitutes who service foreign soldiers as "Yanggongju" and allegorizes them as symbols of the nation. With his narrative of the "suffering mother" and the "victimized nation," Ahn vilifies the lives and experiences of the raped mother and women engaged in sexual labor.

The plot centers on the protagonist's mother, the widow Ollye, who is ostracized by fellow villagers after being raped by an American soldier when UN forces move into the small village of Kumsan. The author frames Ollye as a vulnerable woman who has neither husband nor father to protect her from the intruding soldiers. In Kumsan, no shops, inns, bathhouses, or boatmen serve a widow as their first customer because she is considered less than half of a person and is assumed to bring bad luck. Doubly stigmatized as a widow and a raped woman, Ollye is ultimately ex-communicated from her community. The villagers blame her for her own tragedy, ostracizing her and her children, although they dare not challenge the UN soldiers who intruded on their village and committed the crime to begin with.

At the beginning of the story, Old Hwang, the village patriarch, is portrayed as powerless and emasculated because he has failed to protect

Page 8

HYUN SOOK KIM

the local women from the soldiers. This image of helpless Old Hwang suggests that the local patriarchal order is threatened by the soldiers' arrival. The author does not explicitly equate the rape with the struggle between nations and patriarchies, but we can clearly see how the story inscribes the unequal power relations between Korea and the United

States and points to the ways in which such a rape can lead to the disruption of social relations among the villagers and can challenge traditional notions of Korean femininity and masculinity.

Ahn also (rather duplicitously) portrays the village women as prurient "Yankee prostitutes" who threaten and destroy the village mores by openly displaying sexual acts and relations. For example, the author paints a lengthy scene of village men, women, and boys taking pleasure in, gossiping about, and ridiculing how Ollye enjoyed being raped by the "*bengkos*." With the use of salacious language and sexual scenes, the author creates stereotypes of sex workers as titillating, erotic objects. For example, in the story, the village boys beg for C-ration cans and chocolates from the "*bengkos*"; they also become aroused as they watch Ollye and other sex workers "play" with the soldiers. Ollye's son, Mansik, does not understand the impact of rape on his mother, and when Ollye becomes a "UN Lady," he is also ashamed of her body which he views as dirtied and sexed for the first time. By trying to prevent the village boys from watching her sexually engaged with the soldiers, he attempts to protect and hide his mother's shamed body (227–237). Ahn dramatizes and derides "UN Ladies," including Ollye, as sex temptresses who drink and sell beer, smile, use tricks, and enjoy sexual intercourse with foreign (including black) soldiers, and imitate and speak broken and unintelligible English. The women constantly blurt out, "okay, okay," "hubba-hubba," "namba wang," "namba teng," "drink," "kiss, kiss," etc. (146–150).

In contrast to Ann's parody of sex workers, the so-called "UN Ladies," in my view, can be read as defiant women who rebel against traditional patriarchy and challenge the patriarch whose authority has been attenuated. When the soldiers move into Kumsan, they are followed by women from outside whom the villagers call "UN Ladies." When Old Hwang tries to prevent them from opening a brothel in Kumsan, they proudly defy him, mocking and ridiculing him because they consider

Page 9

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

him impotent and incapable of dealing with the changes set off by the war and the arrival of UN soldiers. To challenge his authority further, they assert themselves in terms of the pejorative labels attached to them by the villagers. On several occasions they exclaim boldly: "We're Whores!" (106).⁷ Although these labels are pejorative terms that both the villagers and the text assign to female sex workers servicing foreign men, we see that the women themselves appropriate these terms to challenge the patriarchal and nationalist stigmatization of the women's bodies and their labor.

Like the other so-called "UN Ladies," the protagonist's mother, Ollye, faces an uneasy conflict between the economic and survival needs of her family and the patriarchal taboo that marks her as a widowed, raped woman. When Ollye turns to sex work for American soldiers after being raped by one of them, she finds herself additionally castigated by the villagers. She is not like the other village women, according to the author and in the villagers' eyes, because her body has been "damaged" and "dirtied." However, we can interpret her decision to work in militarized prostitution with foreign soldiers as being strategic and rebellious, albeit contradictory. Her fear of the patriarchal social taboo turns into rage when she is directly confronted by villagers' ostracism and ridicule; she feistily refuses to be mocked or stigmatized as a "fallen" woman. Her

rage makes her determined to fulfill her maternal duty, and she turns to sexual labor in exchange for money and canned goods offered by American soldiers. Here, Ollye is caught between this double desire—on the one hand, to be freed from the Confucian patriarchal values that mark her as an outcast, and on the other hand, to fulfill her maternal duties as prescribed by patriarchy. Thus her engagement in sexual labor can be understood as a rebellion constituted within the constraints of a wartime economy and Confucian patriarchal notions of womanhood, as well as a forced choice.

With its fetishized descriptions of Ollye, the text collapses together the figures of the chaste, respectable mother and the sexualized "fallen" women even further. When Ollye becomes a "UN Lady," she discards the plain peasant clothes that hide her body, donning colorful Western dresses that expose her legs and arms in public for the first time. Her bare face is made over with powder, eyeliner, and lipstick. High heels,

Page 10

HYUN SOOK KIM

permed hair, a few broken words of English, and the drinking of alcohol further masquerade Ollye as a "modern UN Lady" who inhabits a landscape quite different from the rustic village world that has abandoned her (175). Wearing make-up and Western clothing may be read as Ollye's efforts to free herself from stigmatization and victimhood under her particular relation to patriarchy. At the same time, however, the Western dress and make-up serve to legitimize the brand as a "Yanggongju." The text imagines her as "showy," "gaudy," "noisy," "garish," and "colorful," pejorative views that render her more a commodified object of play than a self-determined subject.

At the end of the story, the raped woman achieves redemption by returning to a traditional maternal role. Ollye's conflicting female identities—the raped woman, the "UN Lady," and the mother—are reconciled only when she leaves sex work and resumes conventional motherhood, thereby regaining respectability in her son's eyes. In collusion with Confucian patriarchal mores, Ahn here reconstitutes a closed binary construction of Korean women in terms of the "good mother" and "bad Yanggongju"—mutually exclusive and essentialized roles for Korean women.

The last image we see of Ollye is that of a redeemed peasant woman wearing farm clothes—"loosech *g ri* blouse" and "baggy *monpe* pants" (116; 265). *ch g ri*, a traditional Korean blouse with sagging sleeves, and *monpe*, pants adopted from Japan, together suggest the layering of precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial Korea. Ollye herself symbolizes the changing Korean nation and a hybrid Korean culture that is both "modern" and "traditional." We can read in her image the uncertain possibility of hybridity in the postwar Korean nation.

This popular Korean novel fixes at the center of its allegory the fallen (raped) Korean woman whose vulnerability mirrors the nation's own "effeminacy" in contrast to Western masculinity (embodied by the wealthy, militarily powerful agents/soldiers who bring modernity and capitalist culture to the small, "backward" village of Kumsan). Literally and figuratively, therefore, Ollye represents a contested terrain for reconfiguring the meanings of what and who is a Korean woman. The foreign soldiers, the local patriarch, the villagers, the outcast woman herself, other "UN ladies," and the son identify and mark the raped woman

Page 11

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

in contradictory terms. In the end, however, Ann's text sustains and supports the Confucian patriarchal notions of femininity—such as the qualities of duty, self-sacrifice, devotion, and respectability—assigned to the "good woman."

Violence and Poverty in Kang S k-ky ngs "Days and Dreams"

In contrast with *Silver Stallion*, which chronicles the protagonist's view of his raped mother, the protagonist in "Days and Dreams" is the "outcast" woman herself, a Korean woman whose childhood memories are grounded in the period of American occupation of Korea, from 1945 to 1948, and during the Korean War. Lured by signs of wealth offered by American GIs, she runs away from her poverty-stricken family.¹⁰ She is resigned to the life she takes up doing so-called "Yanggongju" work, but expresses rage, angst, and a desire to be emotionally rooted in the family and the nation.

From a complex, nuanced, middle-class feminist perspective, Kang weaves a story of social dislocation, economic exploitation, and sexual violence in which poor Korean women are victims of both local/national and foreign/Western patriarchies. Unlike Ahn Jung-hyo, Kang does not vilify women engaged in militarized prostitution with foreigners. However, like Ahn, she essentializes the women of Kijich'on as symbols of the nation, thereby erasing their agency and subjectivity.

Whereas the rapist in *Silver Stallion* is a Western soldier, Kang presents the perpetrator of sexual assault and murder as the Korean male pimp who kills Mi-ra, one of the many women who work in camptown bars. Anticipating the actual, not fictional, barbaric murder of Yun Kūm-i, which will be discussed in the following section, he mutilates Mi-ra's body by sticking a pair of coal tongs between her legs. As summed up by one "bar woman," "[a] Korean man took her for all she was worth, and she ended up dead" (20). With the portrayal of the Korean male pimp, who is also a drug user and a gang member, Kang raises the spectre of misogyny and exploitation of women under Korean patriarchy. Yet she is also fair enough to explain this misogynistic behavior in terms of the man's poverty, economic dependence on sex workers,

Page 12

HYUN SOOK KIM

and emasculation. In the pimp's police confession about the murder of Mi-ra, we learn that the psycho-social motivation behind his anger and hatred stems from his wounded masculine pride. The pimp states that Mi-ra "would live it up with the GIs" and then "give him leftover sex." Receiving money and secondhand clothes that Mi-ra obtained from American GIs damages the pimp's self-esteem and makes him feel impotent. The sex workers are sympathetic toward the Korean pimp because although he controls and exploits women's sexual labor, he has lost his "manliness" and is materially dependent on American GIs. Indeed, the "bar women" understand the humiliation and damaged pride of Korean men who are forced into economic and military dependence on America. They also express defiant contempt for Korean men: "Why

should we sacrifice our money and hearts to these Korean pricks?" "What good are they?" Of the pimp accused of murder, the women ask, "Is he the only one who's eaten leftovers? This whole country's been living off other countries' leftovers" (20). Such statements are illustrative of the range of ambivalent emotions and contradictory allegiances held by the women. On the one hand, they resent Korean men, who abuse, exploit, and dominate them; on the other hand, they yearn for communication with men who share the same culture and language.

Ultimately, however, the women in this text are fully conscious of Korea's subordination to America. Kang suggests that Korea's poverty and economic dependence on the West force women engaged in sex work for foreigners to gravitate towards America. Kang presumes here that Korean masculinity and patriarchy are less powerful, less caring, and more oppressive than American masculinity and patriarchy. America, meanwhile, is seductive. One of the women working and living in Kijich'on says, "GIs are cold as ice when they turn their backs on you, but they'll propose if they like you. Basically they care for women. Can you think of a Korean man who would propose to one of us?" (21). Kang suggests that going to America may be the only hope for these women, depicting Sun-ja as a sex worker who dreams of America as an escape from Korea and Korean patriarchy: "I have to get to America. You think I came to this godforsaken area for my health? At my age? I'm not going to live in this country anymore. I want to leave any way I can" (13).

Page 13

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

While postwar poverty and the omnipresence of American soldiers in Korea has nurtured longings among many Koreans to emigrate to America, Kang's version of America as the ultimate escape route from Korean poverty is unsettling because none of the women seems to be conscious that her oppression stems from class inequality and Korean patriarchy. By focusing on the dream of escape, Kang evades the real problems of socioeconomic, cultural, and social dislocations faced by poor women who engage in sexual labor for foreign soldiers. At the end of the story, none of the women marries an American soldier or moves to the United States. In fact, no one gets married at all. The possibility of a lesbian marriage is flirted with in the text, but lesbianism is treated only as an abstract idea, a fantasy. For example, the narrator rejects the young black lesbian soldier named Barbara; Sun-ja also dies before she can escape to America with Barbara, who had proposed to Sun-ja. Why does Kang make lesbian marriage impossible? Is it because Barbara is a woman, because she is black, or because she is an American GI?

In Kang's story, there is no escape for the women from poverty, sexual violence, and sexual labor. Kang represents sex workers in the context of victimhood, as sites of death, destruction, and despair. Instead of rejecting marriage and patriarchal family ideals, her characters long to fill traditional feminine roles and identities. Kang romanticizes heterosexual female identity and desire for the love of and marriage to men. The choice she gives to her women characters is between death and acceptance by Korean men, through which they can gain a sense of belonging to the Korean nation. Needless to say, both are extreme and problematic options.

In the conclusion, we also find Kang's allegorization of the "bar women" and the camptowns as "islands"—the sex workers inhabit land

scapes which, as geographically and physically suspended areas, belong to no nation. These nation-less women thus act as spatial metaphors. The women experience extreme sexual violence and poverty, but the author is silent about the possibility of resistance and struggle to gain dignity through sexual labor. Instead, Kang's middle-class, heterosexual feminist treatment of the women of Kijich'on deploys the woman as victimized sex workers who are place markers and materials to symbolize the subordination of Korea to America.¹¹

Page 14

HYUN SOOK KIM

Reading Gender and the Nation in Radical Texts

What are the images of Kijich'on sex workers as presented in the literature (books, pamphlets, poetry, newsletters, magazines, and newspapers) produced by radical nationalist groups? What do these images reveal about the subject positions of working-class sex workers as constructed in the trope of the nation? How do these representations of the working-class sex workers in radical texts compare with representations in popular texts? To answer these questions, this section examines recent radical nationalist publications such as the *Hangy rae Sinmun* (One People Newspaper) and *Mal* (Talk) monthly journal, which represent two key voices of the radicalized nationalist opposition to the U.S. military establishments and military crimes in Korea. The aim here is not to analyze the history of Korean nationalist movements but to examine how radical texts create representations of women as "Yanggongju." *Yankee Go Home!* (1990), *Make Us Sad No More!* (1990), and *To the Sons of Colonialism* (1989), published with the support and endorsement of *Hangyora Sinmun* and *Mal* journal, document the crimes that U.S. military troops have committed in Korea since 1945. These crimes include murder, rape, physical and sexual assault, arson, mugging, all of which are considered to be racially and sexually motivated. In *Make Us Sad No More!*, journalist O Y n-ho describes the changing attitudes of Koreans toward American troops between September 1945, the end of Japanese colonialism and the beginning of American occupation of Korea, and the 1990s. He states that in 1945, those Koreans injured or assaulted by U.S. soldiers quietly endured the military crimes. During the 1960s and 1970s, victimized Koreans began to challenge soldiers verbally and shout back: "Why do you hit instead of talking?" Since 1987, with the rise of strong anti-American sentiments, Koreans have begun to cry out, "Yankee Go Home!"¹² O Y n-ho asks: Until when must we repeat these words to the U.S. Armed Forces in Korea? . . . But the U.S. Armed Forces in Korea have not listened to our cries. Today in 1990, from It' aew n to Tongduch'on, P'aju, Osan, Kunsan, the history of pillage and plunder continues . . . this land [of Korea] is a land of sin. A land of disgrace.¹³

Page 15

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

Similarly, in *To the Sons of Colonialism* (1989), another collection documenting military crimes, O Y n-ho asks, "The America that is inside the Korean peninsula—who are they to us?" From the "critical" stance of "the mass" (*minjungŭi ipchang*), the preface of the book states that its aim is to confront "the historical reality in which we face the national issues of self-determination, democracy, and reunification." Within this anti-U.S. and anti-imperialist framework, Korean male and female victims of military crimes are memorialized and personified as

symbols of Korean collective national suffering. With the nation held up as a primary concern, this trope occludes the gendered nature of such crimes as rapes and sexual assaults. The limitation of this trope is revealed in the following murder case.

On October 28, 1992, a Korean woman named Yun Kūm-i, who had worked in sexual labor in Kijich'on, was killed by an American soldier named Kenneth Markle. Yun was mutilated by a bottle stuck into her vagina, an umbrella stuck into her rectum, matches pushed into her mouth, and detergent powder spread all over her body. Her body was found in a pool of blood in the small room that she rented in Kijich'on. This incident certainly was not the first case of assault or crime committed against sex workers by American soldiers in Korea. However, given the escalation of anti-American sentiments among Koreans since the Kwangju massacre of 1980¹⁴ and the gruesome nature of Yun's murder, the incident awakened Korean consciousness about the brutality of U.S. military crimes.¹⁵

For feminists in Korea, the Yun Kūm-i incident created a new arena for discussing gender and sexual politics.¹⁶ Yun's mutilated body was material evidence of imperialist violence against the bodies of Korean women. These bodies were allegorized as the "victimized" and "suffering" Korean nation.¹⁷ By linking sexual violence against working-class sex workers in military camptowns to the victimization of the Korean nation, female bodies were subsumed symbolically into the national body politic. The body of Yun Kūm-i became a metaphorical boundary for the nation.

When alive, however, Yun Kūm-i was shoved to the margins of Korean society and viewed derogatorily as a "Yanggongju." The brutal way she was killed led Koreans to remember and reconstruct the image

Page 16

HYUN SOOK KIM

of her as a "good woman" passively victimized by "beastlike" (*maengsu*) American soldiers.¹⁹ This re-shaping of Yun's image is unusual: typically, Koreans and Korean Americans consider "Yanggongju" as "crazy women" (*mich'iny n*), "loose women" (*baramkkiga itnūn y ja*), and "women plagued by the longing-for-America-sickness" (*migukby ng g llin y ja*). Children born of Korean "bar women" and American GIs are similarly viewed as "bastards of the Western Princess" (*yanggongju saekki*), "seeds sown by GIs" (*gunindūri ppurigogan ssi*), and "darkies" or "niggers" (*kkamdungi*).²⁰ Thus the stigma for Korean women labeled as "Yanggongju" involves both being a sex worker and associating with American male soldiers.

Similarly, the documents published by the Committee on the Murder of Yun Kūm-i by American Military in Korea (*Chuhan Migunūi Yun Kūm ssi Salhae Sag n Gongdong Daech'aek Wiw hoe*) (hereafter, the Committee) also reveal radical and feminist nationalist delineation of who or what is "Yanggongju." The diverse spectrum of feminist groups include Christian women's groups, women's rights groups, labor and human rights groups.²¹ In a Committee document titled *Our Kūm-i* (1993) Yun Kūm-i is invoked as a symbol of the underprivileged Korean woman: she is "the daughter of poor family," "our (the Korean) daughter," "a female factory worker," "poor prostitute," and "our nation's daughter who dreamed for America" (5). A poem dedicated to Yun titled *Tongduch' n Kūmi*, for example, memorializes and sentimentalizes her in

the following ways: "your life hellish, your breath a pain itself"; "wretched was Kūm-i's life, pitiful is ours"; "a *Tongduch' n-woman* is not a citizen of this nation"; "under the Stars and Stripes, the colonized bodies of our women are thrown about"; "how did you get here [a military camptown], Kūm-i?"²² As reflected in these lines, Yun Kūm-i embodies the collective suffering of Koreans and the Korean female. In this slip page between ethnic/nation and gender identities as composed by the committee, Koreans are homogenized into one unitary subject. In this particular document dedicated to a Kijich'on sex worker, nationalist and feminist views coincide. The nationalist-feminist view emphasizes that Korean national sovereignty has been compromised by neo-colonial political and economic relations, whereby the U.S. political and economic domination is maintained by the division of Korea and

Page 17

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

the presence of the U.S. military bases on the southern half of the peninsula. Women's movement groups share the nationalist platform of the larger, leftist national democratic movement—participating in anti-U.S. military base rallies, human rights campaigns, and campaigns to institute social reforms such as better wages, the right to organize unions, the elimination of police brutality and corruption, etc. The overarching nationalist agenda, supported by women's groups, calls for the preservation of a common Korean ethnic-national identity that unifies men and women, regardless of class and gender differences, as common victims of U.S. imperialist oppression.

Feminist activist Pak Sun-Kūm, the Committee representative and the Chair of the Korean Church Women United, describes Yun Kūm-i's death as a symbol of the collective suffering of the nation:

The crime by the American soldier provoked the heart of this nation; this crime made us experience the stark reality of being completely robbed of our national sovereignty and dignity.²³

She adds that the dead body of Yun is like a weak animal that has been pierced severely by a cruel beast²⁴ and with this simile Pak also memorializes Yun as a victim and a symbol of national sovereignty. Similarly, Ch n U-s p, a renowned minister of Tabitha House (*Dabitaūi Jip*), expresses an equally sentimentalized view of the nation: "The death of Yun Kūm-i is not the death of an individual. It is the death of national sovereignty; the death of national [human] capital!" In Chon's analysis, Yun symbolizes the lack of sovereignty and independence for Korea as a nation. The murder of Yun, in Ch n's view, indicates the urgent need for the divided Koreas to be unified, the Korean peninsula to be de-militarized, and the American troops to be withdrawn as soon as possible.

Again, in these nationalist views, both feminist and non-feminist, the crime is U.S. imperialism. There is no mention of how Korean patriarchy, class inequality, and the state's economic policies have contributed to the re-colonization and marginalization of sex workers. Instead, masculinized nationalism is recuperated by activists, including nationalist-feminists. And in this recuperation, no space is opened to view sex

Page 18

HYUN SOOK KIM

workers in their class, gender, and sexual positions; the contestation, resistance, and challenge by sex workers to both the international and local capitalist-military patriarchy are also occluded. In short, discussions of working-class sex workers in radical texts do not counter or contest their representations in popular texts. The radical narrative about working-class women in militarized prostitution with foreigners is the same as the popular narrative in that the speaking subject at the center is the privileged activist and the local patriarchal power remains unquestioned. In both radical and popular texts, working-class sex workers are recognized only after gruesome death and violence, and when they do become visible, they are categorized as victims oppressed by U.S. imperialism/militarism. In short, any historical specificity of women's locations in particular social and cultural power relations as subordinate, marginal, or powerful, is effectively erased.

Viewing the Politics of Yanggongju from Within

Returning to the speaking tour with which this essay began, we have seen that activist Kim Y n-ja poses some important challenges to feminist and nationalist activists. Kim asserts that militarized prostitution and women engaged in sexual labor in Kijich'on will probably not be eliminated right away after the U.S. army withdraws. Simply, her view is that the military prostitution problem should rightly be solved through the elimination of American military establishments in Korea. However, that is not enough. She also tells us that the role that the Korean government and police play in punishing women and regulating prostitution is no less problematic. She challenges the Korean government's support of militarized prostitution for U.S. soldiers and speaks personally about her own experience of sexual violence, exploitation, and oppression stemming also from Korean military-capitalist-patriarchal culture. She is part of a protest wave building in a nation where critiques of military prostitution in general and Korean patriarchy in particular are not widely embraced or supported.²⁷

Furthermore, in her testimonies, Kim also articulates another dimension of oppression connected to sexual labor—namely, discrimi-

Page 19

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

nation based on unequal class positions. She states with disappointment that during the twenty-five years of her life in Kijich'on, from 1964 to 1989, not a single movement activist or feminist visited her or other women:

Without hearing the voice of the women working and living the life [of a sex worker], how can women's problems be solved? I don't know what a women's movement is, but the problem is that the person playing the leading role is always the woman-activist and the ancillary or supporting actors are us, the women in the sex industry. Are we simply frogs or materials for clinical demonstrations? The activists use us, the women of Kijich'on, as research materials, but how much effort did they honestly make to bring improvement of the lives of Kijich'on women?²⁸

What might be learned if women like Kim could position themselves at the center of political narratives, rather than being assigned to the periphery of politics? If we view working-class women in military prostitution from Kim's perspective, it is not difficult to recognize that her speaking personally about her life in Kijich'on is indeed political.²⁹ We

hear her challenging not only U.S. imperialism but more directly the repressive Korean government and the police, the Confucian patriarchy, and the classism and elitism of nationalist and feminist activists. As Kim Yon-ja has clearly delineated, both nationalist and feminist activists need to elucidate the ways working-class women of Kijich'on struggle to define the personal meanings of Korean womanhood and their self-representation as subjects of the Korean nation.

For example, in the booklet *Great Army, Great Father (Widaehan gundae, widaehan ab ji)* (1995), we find nationalist-feminist activists speaking with patronizing kindness about military prostitution: "The most victimized persons by the U.S. troops are 'Kijichon women and women who are interracially married to American soldiers.' We must protect the rights of Korean women" (83). Challenging this construction of prostitutes as passive victims, a short article in the same booklet on Kim Yon-ja shows evidence of Kim's anger, protest, and resistance against the ways women of Kijich'on are treated in Korean society. In *Great Army, Great Father*, Kim states that she cannot control her rage when the women of Kijich'on are judged from the perspective of anti-Americanism and

Page 20

HYUN SOOK KIM

labeled as "pitiful" or "wretched." In her view, when we inscribe the American military as "evil" and "Yanggongju" as objects of pity, we only cover up the roots of the problem. She insists that we also examine the psychological and emotional crises that sex workers face stemming from their experiences of sexual abuse, rape, and assault perpetrated by Korean men. These men, she points out, include Korean soldiers, Korean pimps, and Korean police and government officials. Furthermore, debt, drug addiction, alcoholism, and psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse trap the women in sexual labor and eliminate any hope of alternatives. Kijich'on is a "quicksand," Kim states, because once a woman falls in, she usually cannot get out.³⁰

While political protests have been organized by sex workers, they have received scant public attention. However, a few significant examples of collective action are worth mentioning. In May 1971, Kim and other sex workers organized a protest in Songt'an. The American soldiers had distributed leaflets that read, "Shoes \$5, Short-time \$5, Long time \$10." Equating women's bodies with merchandise, the soldiers were demanding that the price of sexual service be reduced. Kim played a key role in mobilizing over one thousand sex workers to demonstrate in front of the army base. "We are not shoes! We are human beings!" The women demanded that the soldiers who distributed the flyers be forced to resign. The women's demands were not only ignored, but they were forced to disperse by the Korean and military police.

In June 1977, in "America Town" in Kunsan, a sex worker named Yi Pok-hi was strangled to death and her body scorched. A month later, another sex worker named Yi Yng-sun was killed. An American soldier, Steven Warren Towerman, admitted to killing both women, but at the time of the incident, neither the Korean police nor the U.S. military police investigated the murders.³¹ Instead, the Korean police covered up the incident, declaring that there was "insufficient evidence." Then, apparently, no activists stepped forward to hold up these sex workers as national symbols, but Kim Yon-ja mobilized sex workers to demonstrate against the indifference and apathy of Korean and U.S. military police. As Kim Yon-ja and her fellow organizers have demonstrated, the sex

workers of Kijich'on are not simply victims; they are social actors who interpret and shape their own lives. With their brave acts of protest, they

Page 21

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

have called for critical engagement and moral agency, challenging the material and social circumstances that bind them. They have also fought against the further degradation of their commodified bodies and demanded that their rights be protected. However, women's collective resistance has always been suppressed by both Korean and the U.S. military authorities, and sex workers have not received material or emotional support from Korean authorities or from the public at large. In Kim Y n - j a s personal struggle, for example, she turns to the Christian faith, which she says has been her single source of hope and strength. She says she has also found spiritual healing by mobilizing other sex workers together in Christian fellowship. Kim founded the True Love Shelter (*Ch'amsarang Simt*) and continues to work as a missionary to promote hope in other sex workers and their children. It is in this personal-political context of everyday struggle against class, gender, nation-state, and imperialist subordination that we may find Kim Y n-jas actions and words as being strategic and historically specific.

Conclusion

This essay has examined representations of working-class sex workers for U.S. military in popular and radical texts, both of which fix the identities of the women as "bad"/"good" and treat the female body as a metaphorical map of the Korean nation. Their contradictory representations indicate that women engaged in militarized prostitution for foreign soldiers have become a battleground for nationalist-feminist politics in the 1990s.

Specifically, both popular and radical texts portray women engaged in sex work for foreign men as victims: the women are widowed, abused, raped, prostituted, and murdered. And within this construction of the female subject as passive victim, there is no space to view the woman engaged in sexual labor as a speaking and resisting subject; instead, her speech is muted, censored, and silenced. If what she says contradicts and challenges dominant representations of her subjectivity, she is further marginalized as an outcast—as were Ollye, Mi-ra, Yun Kūm-i, and Kim Y n-ja. Popular and radical discourses create and sustain the subject

Page 22

HYUN SOOK KIM

position of women in militarized prostitution with foreigners as "Yanggongju" and as an allegory for the Korean nation. Using the victim trope, these texts also treat the sexual-class subject position of military sex workers as secondary or subordinate to national identity. No space is allowed for discussing military sex workers in terms of their gender, sexual, and class positions simultaneously. Instead, the construction of this allegory for the Korean nation is premised on "masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope."³² In sum, we must recognize that military sex workers have not been completely colonized by patriarchy, militarism, and imperialism or neo colonialism; the women do assert agency and subjectivity as Korean women. In what ways do the outcast military sex workers resist, reject, and try to invert the power hierarchy that relegates them to the lowest

social standing? Do we retain the metaphor of nation as the representative discourse for collective unity and female identity, or can we develop an alternative discourse on/for military sex workers that will not re-colonize or subordinate their bodies and identities? This essay raises these unresolved questions and emphasizes the need to further investigate the ways in which the subject positions of working-class women in sexual labor are constructed in defense of the nation. The first step towards "pivoting the center"³³ may be to chart the multiple, fragmented subjectivities of working-class Korean women, such as military sex workers who have historically been excluded from scholarship and represented as passive objects in popular and radical representations. Answering these unresolved questions would thus require a critical feminist analysis of the power relations inscribed in the reading, writing and public presentations of women as the *victim*, the *oppressed*, and the *exploited*. Instead of essentializing the experiences of the women of Kijich'on as categorically "Yanggongju," we must begin acknowledging the agency, subjectivity, and resistance of working-class women.

Page 23

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

NOTES

1. *Chamsarang Simt* (True Love Shelter), located in Songt'an, Korea, was founded by Kim Y n - j a in October 1992. The shelter provides various after-school programs for bi-racial children of "bar women" who are discriminated against in Korean society; English and Korean language classes for "bar women" and American GIs respectively; counseling on family, marriage, divorce, battering, and racism issues; and Bible and spiritual renewal classes. Kim uses her role as a missionary to provide a safe and nurturing sanctuary for "bar women." Personal information noted about Kim Y n - j a is based on my communication with her during my visits to the shelter in July 1992 and in Boston in February 1995.
 2. I use the term *sex workers* throughout this essay critically, to refer to women, especially working-class women, engaged in sexual labor while not attempting to legitimize or reify sexual labor. Even with its problems, I prefer the term over *prostitute* or *yanggongju*.
 3. Foucault and Deleuze have stated that, if given the chance and via alliance politics, "the oppressed" of the First World "can speak and know their conditions." Gayatri Spivak asks whether the subaltern, "on the other side of the international division of labor from socialized capital," can speak. See Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988: 283.
 4. In the 1990s in the United States, various feminist perspectives on Kijich'on women have emerged, including two Ph.D. dissertations, two documentary films, and one book. See Diana Lee and Grace Lee, *Camp Arirang* (28 min., video, 1995); Katharine Moon, "International Relations and Women: A Case Study of U.S.-Korea Camp-town Prostitution, 1971-1976," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1994; Hei-soo Shin, "Women's Sexual Services and Economic Development: The Political Economy of the Entertainment Industry and South Korean Development," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1991; Sandra Sturdevant and Brenda Stolzhus, ed., *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*, New York: The New Press, 1992; and J.T. Takagi and Hye-jung Park, *The Women Outside* (58 min. documentary film, 1996, distributed by Third World Newsreel). The two documentaries, *Camp Arirang* and *The Women Outside*, are important resources providing an intimate view of military sex workers living in Kijich'on. The former focuses especially on racialization of sex—Korean women and American GIs offer their perceptions of each other's race and sexuality. The latter questions the presence of American troops in Korea and the role that sex workers play in global geopolitics, and attempts to convey the strength and resiliency of female sexual laborers.
 5. *Silver Stallion* was translated from Korean to English by the author, Ahn Jung-hyo, himself. Kang S k - k Y n g 's "Days and Dreams" was translated and published in English by Bruce and Ju-chan Fulton in *Words of Farewell*. See Kang Sok-kyong, Kim Chi-w n, and O Ch ng-hüi, *Words of Farewell: Stories by Korean Workers*, Seattle: The Seal Press, 1989.
 6. Ahn Jung-hyo, a reporter and columnist, has recently gained notoriety in South Korea and in the United States because of his two war novels, *Silver Stallion* on the Korean War, and *White Badge* on the Vietnam War. *Silver Stallion* was first published in Korean
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in 1984 but curiously did not become popular among Korean readers at that time. Subsequently, in 1990, after the author's own translation of the novel into English for the American market, it received recognition in Korea. *Silver Stallion* was also made into a feature film in Korea in the late 1980s under the title of *The Silver Stallion Is Not Coming* (*Ŭnmanŭn oji anŭnda*), produced by Chang Kil-su.

7. This statement needs a qualification. Although Koreans often single out those Korean women who engage in sexual labor with foreigners as being different from women who engage in sexual labor with Koreans, this boundary is not always clear. When business in camp towns surrounding U.S. military bases in Korea is slow, the same women who provide sexual service to foreign soldiers service Korean men, including Korean soldiers. The author of *Silver Stallion*, Ahn Jung-hyo, implies in this sentence that the so-called "UN Ladies" work "only for the Yankees," but even during the Korean War, there may or may not have been separate groups of women catering to foreign and Korean men.

8. In this context, the predicament of Olye or the raped woman is analogous to the subordinate position of Korea to the U.S., as in Korea's dependence on American economic and military aid after the Korean War.

9. Recent scholarship analyzes similar gendered constructions of motherhood/womanhood linked to nationalism. For example, the Nazi German state ideology defined women as the preservers of the family and the childbearers. See George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. In colonial India, nationalist leaders also constructed Indian women as bearers and preservers of cultural values of sacrifice, devotion, and spirituality/religiosity. See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, and Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 622–633. For related discussions on gender, sexuality, nationalism, and feminism, see: Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (eds.), *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, New York: Routledge, 1992; Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, *Real and Imagined Women: Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism*, New York: Routledge, 1993; and Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds.), *Recasting Women, Essays in Indian Colonial History*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990; Katherleen Uno, "The Death of 'Good Wife, Wise Mother?'" in *Postwar Japan As History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993: 293–322.

10. Like Mansik, the protagonist in *Silver Stallion*, the nameless narrator in this story, a child of the postcolonial Korean war period, remembers eating American hard candy, yellow cornbread, and C-ration leftovers to fill her hungry stomach. Like Mansik, her physical contact with American GIs also occurs at a young age, when she is in the eleventh grade; an old school classmate who works at an American military base entices her into sexual labor.

11. On discussion about the female body as a place marker, see: Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993; Anne McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family," *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 61–80; Catherine Nash, "Remapping and Renaming: New Cartographies of

Identity, Gender and Landscape in Ireland," *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 39–57.

12. O Y n - h o , *Make Us Sad No More! (T isang urirŭl sulp'ŭge hajimalla!)*, Seoul, Korea: Paeksan S dang, 1990: preface.

13. Ibid.

14. In May 1980 the citizens of Kwangju demonstrated against Chun Doo Hwan's military rule and for democratic elections. Korean military troops, whose power is ultimately controlled by the U.S. military command, massacred over 2,000 protesters and recaptured the city. The killing and repression, which was authorized by the U.S.–R.O.K. (Republic of Korea) Combined Forces Command, led many Koreans to question American military presence in Korea. For more discussion, see *The Kwangju Uprising*, ed. Donald Clark, Boulder: Westview Press, 1988.

15. Initially, the U.S. military refused to extradite Kenneth Markle to Korean judicial authorities for a trial, and this arrogant injustice outraged Koreans. Approximately fifty organizations, including political parties, feminists and women activists, clergy, students, youths, workers, farmers, academics, and human rights activists formed the Committee

on the Murder of Yun Kum-i by American Military in Korea (*Chuhan migunüi Yun Küm-i ssi salhae Sag n Gongdong Daech'aek Wiw nhoe*). Through the protests, the collection of petition letters, and press conferences as well as visits to prosecutors at the Korean Ministry of Justice, the U.S. Ambassador, and the Commander of the U.S. military in Korea by the Committee and its supporters (both inside and outside Korea), Kenneth Markle was finally tried and received a fifteen-year sentence. Since April 21, 1994, Markle has been imprisoned in the U.S. Army prison in Pyongtaek, Korea. For more discussion of this case, see *Our Küm-i (Uridürüi Küm-i)*, the Committee on the Murder of Yun Küm-i by American Military in Korea (*Chuhan migunüi Yun Küm-i ssi salhae Sag n Gongdong Daechaek Wiw nhoe*), Seoul, Korea: 1993.

16. Politically and conceptually, the problem of militarized prostitution, or Korean women selling sexual labor to American GIs, has not been connected to the problem of generalized prostitution for non-military Korean men.

17. Gayatri Spivak discusses this point about the homogenization of subject positions in the narratives of nationalism. She notes, "the elite culture of nationalism participated and participates with the colonizer in various ways" (246). In the process, various subject positions are "reactively" homogenized in terms of nationalism and ethnicity. See *In Other Words, Essays in Cultural Politics*, New York: Methuen, 1987.

18. For analysis of this "bad woman"/"good woman" dichotomy in the U.S. context, see *Bad Girls/Good Girls*, ed. Nan B. Maglin and Donna Perry, New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1996.

19. See *Our Küm-i* (1993), published by the Committee on the Murder of Yun Küm-i by American Military in Korea (*Chuhan migunüi Yun Küm-i ssi salhae Sag n Gongdong Daech'aek Wiw nhoe*).

20. An Il-sun discusses how the Yun Küm-i's murder case was an important moment of

Page 26

HYUN SOOK KIM

political awakening which transformed her view of "Yanggongju." As she ventured into *Kijich'on* to write about the life of Yun Kum-i, An met Kim Y n - j a ; their meeting served as a catalyst for An Il-sun to problematize military prostitution as a nationalist-feminist issue. Visiting Kunsan, Tongduch'on, and Songsan for the first time, An says she became conscious of her own prejudices about "GI towns" and "Yanggongju." Based on An's communication in Boston, February 1995.

21. The Committee has been endorsed by groups such as Korea Church Women United (*Hanguk Kyohoe Y s ng Y nhaphoe*), Korea Women's Associations United (*Hanguk Y s ng Danch'e Y nhap*), Korea Women Theologians Association (*Hanguk Y sinhakcha Hy püihoe*), Catholic Women's Welfare Commission (*Katorik Y song Bokjihoe*), Korea Women's Hotline (*Hanguk Y s ngui J nhwa*), Korean Sexual Violence Counseling Center (*Hanguk S ngp'ongny k Sangdamso*), My Sister's Place (*Turebang*), Special Commission for the Law Regarding Sexual Violence *S ngp'ongny k Tukpy lp' p che-chongchujin Tukby lwih nhoe*), National Committee of University Students (*Ch nguk Taehaksaeng Daep'y jahy püihoe*), National Committee of Labor Movement (*Ch nguk Nodong Undong Danchehy p ihoe*), National Coalition of Democracy and National Unification (*Minjujuüi Minjok T'ongil J nguk Y nhap*), and the women's committees of political parties, to name a few.

22. This three-page-long poem, "Tongduch'on Küm-i," was written in Korean by An Il-sun, November 13, 1992. The lines translated and quoted here have been taken from an unpublished copy of the same poem, given to me by An Il-sun. I would like to thank Hyun Joo Yim for translating these lines. An abridged version, in Korean, is published in *Our Küm-i*, by the Committee on the Murder of Yun Küm-i by American Military in Korea (*Chuhan migunüi Yun Küm-i ssi salhae Sag n Gongdong Daech'aek Wiw nhoe*), 1993.

23. See *Our Küm-i*, 1993: preface.

24. *Ibid.*

25. A statement made by Ch n U-s p, the minister at Tabitha House (*Dabitaüi jip*). See *Our Küm-i*, 1993: 6-7.

26. For an analysis of how the South Korean and American governments have used sex workers as instruments of foreign policy and economic development, see Katharine Moon's essay, "Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations," in this volume.

27. Ever since the U.S. military has occupied South Korea in September 1945, approximately 35,000–40,000 troops have been stationed there in a given year. There are one hundred military bases in South Korea (see An Il-sun, "Great Army, Great Father" in *Great Army, Great Father*, 1995: 16). While the number of camptowns servicing the "needs" of American soldiers and the commodification of sexual labor of Korean women have expanded rapidly since the 1960s, no social movement or feminist movement has focused specifically on this issue until recently. Unlike the "Comfort Women" problem, which has become a national political issue since 1991, the problem of "Yanggongju" or militarized prostitution, as discussed in this essay, has not been embraced as a political issue on national and international levels.

Page 27

YANGGONGJU AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE NATION

28. See An Il-sun's interview of Kim Y n - j a , "The Yanggongju I Met, The World of American Military Crimes" (*Naega kkyoun Yanggongju, Migump mjoeüi Segye*), in *Mai (Talk)*, a monthly journal from Seoul, Korea (December 1993): 148-155.

29. Katharine Moon has pointed out to me that the women working and living in Kijich'on see themselves as "the real women" or "the macho women" of Korean society because they feel they have the license to behave in ways other Korean women cannot. For example, it is considered a norm for "bar women" to drink and smoke, behavior considered taboo for middle class women. This is an important point to consider in the further development of our feminist analysis about the different meanings embodied in Korean womanhood.

30. Based on talks given at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Korean Methodist Church of Boston, and my communication with Kim Y n - j a during their three-day tour, from February 11–13, 1995.

31. SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement), which is a mutual defense treaty between South Korea and the United States, first signed in 1967 and revised in 1991, provides the U.S. armed forces in Korea with the legal jurisdiction and authority. This unequal treaty relegates the Republic of Korea (or South Korea) as a subordinate to the U.S. and gives no authority to intervene in the U.S. military territories inside Korea. See *Great Army, Great Father* (1995).

32. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990: 44.

33. Karen Sacks, "Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender," *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 543.