

Analyzing the Performance of the Hungry Child in Korean Charities' Fundraising Advertisements¹

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Abstract

Performances of hungry children are omnipresent in Korean charities' fundraising advertisements. The children's state of misery in the videos is often dramatized enormously to maximize donation. Thus, hungry children are likely to be misrepresented, leading to their double victimization.

This study analyzes the performance of hungry Korean children in four fundraising advertising videos of two representative Korean charities: Korean Food for the Hungry International and Good Neighbors. Doing a detailed performance analysis of the advertisements, I explore the patterns that emerge across the cases, asking the following questions: How are hungry children represented in the advertisements? How are hunger and children paired in them? How does the pair affect the meaning-making process of the advertisements? How do the child ideologies relate to Korean dominant child ideologies?

Through the analysis, I reveal that culturally powerful child ideologies, hidden beneath the performance of hungry children, play a crucial role in naturalizing the performance of hungry children as helpless victims. The idea of the innocent child, the idea of the precious child, the idea of the child without agency and the idea of the child organically bound to the family all support the final message of the advertisements that hungry children unquestionably must be saved, through donation.

This study deconstructs the process of victimizing children in the Korean charities' advertisements and sets a stage for the meaningful discourse to problematize the misrepresentation of hungry children in the videos. This interdisciplinary study contributes to the field of Theatre for Youth and Childhood Studies.

한국 기아자선단체의 모금 광고에는 배고픈 어린이들의 퍼포먼스가 자주 등장한다. 그런데 모금 광고에서는 기부액을 최대화하기 위해서 광고 속 어린이들의 고통을 과장하는 경우가 많다. 그래서 배고픈 어린이들의 모습은 왜곡되며 이는 어린이들을 이중으로 희생시키는 결과를 낳는다.

본 연구에서는 한국의 대표적인 기아 자선단체인 한국기아대책기구와 굿 네이버스의 모금 광고 네 편에 등장하는 배고픈 어린이들의 퍼포먼스를 분석하였다. 연구자는 다음의 연구 질문을 중심으로 퍼포먼스 상세 분석 (detailed performance analysis)을 실시하여 네 편의 광고에서 드러나는 패턴을 탐색하였다 : 광고 속 배고픈 어린이들은 어떻게

재현되고 있는가? 광고에서 배고픔과 어린이는 어떻게 짝을 이루는가? 광고에서 어린이와 배고픔이라는 쌍(pair)은 광고의 의미화 과정에서 어떠한 역할을 하는가? 광고 속 아동상과 한국의 지배적 어린이 이데올로기 사이에는 어떠한 관계가 있는가?

분석 결과, 모금 광고 속 배고픈 어린이들의 퍼포먼스는 많은 경우 한국의 지배적 어린이 이데올로기들을 숨기고 있었다. “어린이는 순수하다,” “어린이는 사랑스럽고 귀하다,” “어린이는 행위 주체성이 없다” 그리고 “어린이는 가족과 유기적으로 얽혀 있다”는 생각들이 그 예이다. 그러한 아동관들은 광고 속 어린이들이 무력한 희생양이라는 사실을 자연화하는 데 있어서 결정적 역할을 하였다. 그리고 기부 행위를 통해서만 그들을 구호할 수 있다는 광고의 궁극적 메시지를 강화하고 있었다. 본 연구는 한국 기아자선단체의 광고 속 배고픈 어린이들의 퍼포먼스를 해체하여, 배고픈 어린이들을 지원하겠다는 명분으로 만든 광고가 오히려 그들을 희생양으로 삼고 무력화하고 있는 현실을 문제화하고 있는 점에서 의미가 크다.

Key words

hunger, child, child performance, child ideology, Korean charities' advertisements.

Introduction

This study analyzes the performance of hungry children in four fundraising advertising videos of two major Korean charities: Korea Food for the Hungry International (KFHI) and Good Neighbors. I did a detailed performance analysis of the advertisement videos in which hungry children appear and which have view counts on You Tube of more than 100,000 : *Sangolhyeongje Minung, Jiung* (산골형제 민웅, 지웅, The Brothers in the Deep Mountains, Minung and Jiung), *Yeoldusal Sanguwa Eommaui Nurungji* (열두 살 상우와 엄마의 누룽지, Twelve-Year-Old Sangu and Mama's Scorched Rice), *Yeoreum Banghageul Butakae* (여름 방학을 부탁해, Please Take Care of the Summer Break) and *Yuilhan Hankkiga Sarajin Ai* (유일한 한 끼가 사라진 아이, The Child Whose Only Meal Has Disappeared). I explore the patterns that emerge across the cases, asking the following questions: How are hungry Korean children represented in them? How are hunger and children paired in the advertisements? How does the pair affect the meaning-making process of the advertisements? How do the child ideologies relate to Korean dominant child ideologies?

Performances of hungry children are omnipresent in Korean charities' fundraising advertisements, as they are instrumental in attracting donations. Hunger and children are intertwined ideologically in the advertisements, and the pair substantially influences the meaning-making process of the advertisements. When hunger and children are paired, however, hungry children are likely to be misrepresented in the advertisements, leading to their double victimization. While the advertisements are based on non-fictional circumstances of actual children, the children's misery and hunger in the videos are often dramatized enormously to maximize donation in the name of hunger aid. And as hungry children's performances in the advertisements

are ideologically powerful, they ultimately influence children's reality. The performances construct a well-made reality of hungry children that affects people's ideas about who hungry children are. In this way, the representations become truths about hungry children that continue to affect hungry children's lives in the long run. Thus, it is necessary and meaningful to critically explore performances of hungry children in charities' advertisements.

Notwithstanding the significance of the topic, children in Korean charities' fundraising advertisements have not attracted much scholarly attention. Most of the existing studies related to Korean fundraising advertisements focus on the topic of how to increase donations (Kim & Hyun 2019, 425; Hong, 2020, 10). And among the extant research, only two studies deal substantially with the child. Kim and Hyun's quantitative analysis of 147 advertisements by Korean NPOs published between 2010 and 2018 focuses on the topic of stigmatization of children. Their study is meaningful because it emphasizes the omnipresence and danger of children's stigmatization in Korean fundraising advertisements. And Hong studies 50 advertisement videos of major Korean NPOs, focusing on the works' stigmatization of children and the issue of children's rights protection. While it is noteworthy that the author raises the issue of children's rights protection in a field where children are repeatedly victimized, the analysis could have been deeper: for example, the patterns of victimization in the works are described rather sketchily. And when it comes to the analysis of children's rights protection in the works, the author merely counts the number of relevant cases, without expanding the inquiry. On the whole, not only has research on children in Korean charities' fundraising advertisements been rare, but the few existing studies deal with the topic quantitatively. Through a quantitative analysis, however, it is difficult to deconstruct the nature of the advertisements on a deeper level. While "research on the narratives of the advertisement videos and a qualitative analysis on the images and way of expression is necessary" (Kim and Hyun 2019, 434), up to now such study has not been conducted in the Korean context.

Accordingly, the present study, as a detailed performance analysis of the performance of hungry children in Korean charities' fundraising advertisements, helps fill the gap in the literature and is meaningful. This research meticulously deconstructs the nature of the individual advertisements by analyzing the performances of hungry children and the ideas hidden beneath them. Because the storytelling of the fundraising advertisements depends heavily on the ideological pair of hunger and the child to build understanding among the Korean public, the study of the pair reveals interesting facts about the meaning-making process of the works. This interdisciplinary study contributes to the discourse aimed at problematizing the misrepresentation of hungry children by major Korean charities, illuminating the subject from the perspective of Theatre for Youth and Childhood Studies.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study has several theoretical underpinnings, listed below.

1. I work from a Theatre for Youth perspective, a field that includes the study of child performance. Thus, I honor children's existence and the authentic representation of children's life in performances by/for/about them. And I understand that cultural performances of children make children choose a certain world-view about childhood. "Representations of children quickly become truths about children, which in turn affect children's material existence" (Y. Kang 2015, 2). Some views are made to appear natural or invisible "so that they hardly seem like views at all," which is an "internalized form of social control" (Barry 2002, 164). Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a critical distance from the performed "truth" about hungry children in the advertisements. And as mentioned, one possible approach to do so is to analyze how child ideologies are naturalized in the child performances. Ultimately, I will reveal the child ideologies hidden behind the child performances. And I hope that my research will affect the material existence of children in the long run.

2. I work from a Childhood Studies perspective and regard childhood as "a cultural construct rather than a universal given" (Y. Kang 2015, 2), "something to which we ascribe meaning" (Sternheimer 2010, vii). Every childhood is a product of a specific time and space and differs depending on the cultural context. Examples of different childhood(s) abound, illustrating their diversity.

For example, the idea that children should not labor, but learn and play, is prevalent in westernized societies. Other examples of Western influential historical tropes of childhood are the romantic/natural/innocent child and the child as tabula rasa. Also, psychology and sociology are two dominant frameworks which heavily influence the idea of childhood in the West. As for Korean examples, the Confucian child is lower than adults and needs to obey them and show them respect due to the functioning of the age hierarchy. Another example of Korean child identity is that the child is inseparable from parents, family and other larger entities of relationship, which is a result of the typically Asian interdependent subjectivity (Y. Kang 2022, 10).

3. If all childhood(s) are "related to a particular cultural setting" (Jenks 2005, 7), "every childhood, including those in Korea, needs to be understood in the light of cultural contexts" (Y. Kang 2015, 5). Thus, when analyzing the child performance in the work, I consciously consider the socio-cultural uniqueness of the Korean context. This means that in my research I continuously examine the relationship between the tropes of childhood in the advertisements and Korean dominant child ideologies. In so doing, I can crystallize the uniqueness of the childhood in the advertisements as a product of the Korean socio-cultural setting. I can also expose how the child performances build understanding among the Korean public.

4. For the purpose of this study, child means a human being between 4 and 12 years old, elementary school age (Pyojun-gugeo-dae-sajeon 표준국어대사전, n.d.). This is the definition of eorini (어린이), the widely accepted and used Korean word for “child.”

5. For the purpose of this study, hunger involves the following: “1. a craving or urgent need for food or a specific nutrient, 2. an uneasy sensation occasioned by the lack of food, and 3. a weakened condition brought about by prolonged lack of food” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, n.d.).

Methodology

The methodology of this study is detailed performance analysis. I first did a close reading of each advertisement to understand the nature of the work. I studied the characters, how they behave, move and speak, and what this reveals about who they are and how they relate to each other. I also explored the setting of the scenes, the space, objects, lighting and music. I analyzed the narration and subtitles as well, since they play a significant role in the advertisements. Lastly, I studied what all of the above elements do in each advertisement, how they come together and how they contribute to the final message of the advertisement.

While thus studying the characteristics of each advertisement, I carefully observed: 1) how hunger and the child are each represented in the advertisement, 2) how the two are paired ideologically, 3) how the pair affects the final message of the advertisement, and 4) how the pairs in the four works relate to each other and whether there exist patterns across the cases.

Meanwhile, to analyze the performance of hunger, I scrutinized the hunger scenes, the scenes where the children’s hunger is represented directly. To understand and introduce the hunger scenes as precisely as possible, I created detailed descriptions of them. As for the child performances, I studied cases that are related to the child’s hunger or which are worthy of note because they have a major function in the meaning-making process of the advertisement.

Lastly, whether analyzing the individual works or the relationships among them, I considered how the child ideologies hidden beneath the performances relate to Korean dominant child ideologies. For example, if a performance bolsters a trope of childhood, I considered whether it reflects or challenges existing Korean child ideologies. Finally, I studied what the relationships between the tropes in the advertisements and Korean dominant ideologies reveal about the nature of the works. Meanwhile, for my study of Korean dominant child ideologies, I did research on the literature related to Western and Korean child ideologies, and on the representation of Korean children in the fields of theatre for youth, children’s literature and children's culture. I explored tropes of Korean children that appear repeatedly and are culturally familiar and/or influential.

Korean Food for the Hungry International (KFHI), Good Neighbors and Their Advertisements

The reason I selected fundraising advertisements of KFHI and Good Neighbors for my research is that they have considerable cultural power, which cannot be ignored when dealing with the topic of this study. This is first of all because both organizations' advertisements drive their fundraising and play a decisive role in sustaining them financially. KFHI and Good Neighbors are two of the biggest, most representative charities in Korea. As their annual fundraising amount is more than 30 billion Korean won [about 23 million dollars], which comprises a substantial part of their entire budget, both organizations can actively invest in the production of fundraising advertisements. And this leads to the increase of individual donors, which is crucial for the survival of the organizations (I. Lee 2021). The goal of all NPOs is to secure steady individual donors, as individual donations (63.9%) make up a much larger proportion of their budget than corporate donations (36.1%) (Son, 2019 1). Furthermore, the public gets to know these organizations mostly through their advertisements (Kim and Hyun 2019, 425). And Ye and Kang's study found that the advertisements affect people's attitude about both the organization and the action of donating (cited in Son, 2019 1). Thus, if the organizations' advertisements are substantial driving forces in maintaining their considerable budget, as above, this means that their advertisements are getting extensive exposure to the Korean public and attracting considerable interest. It also means that the advertisements are one of the major Korean sources where culturally influential representations of hungry children are produced continuously. Accordingly, the advertisements of KFHI and Good Neighbors deserve attention when dealing with this topic.

Among the advertisements of KFHI and Good Neighbors, four works are the focus of this study: Good Neighbors' *Sangolhyeongje Minung, Jiung* (산골형제 민웅, 지웅, The Brothers in the Deep Mountains, Minung and Jiung) and *Yeoldusal Sanguwa Eommaui Nurungji* (열두 살 상우와 엄마의 누룽지, Twelve-Year-Old Sangu and Mama's Scorched Rice), and Korean Food for the Hungry International's *Yeoreum Banghageul Butakae* (여름방학을 부탁해, Please Take Care of the Summer Break) and *Yuilhan Hankkiga Sarajin Ai* (유일한 한 끼가 사라진 아이, The Child Whose Only Meal Has Disappeared). Among the numerous advertisements of both organizations accessible via YouTube, I narrowed down the search by using the words "child," "hunger" and "rice/meal," and by ordering the works based on their view counts. Finally, I selected four works where hungry children play a role and which have high view counts. Each selected advertisement had been viewed more than 100,000 times. The above-mentioned advertisements were viewed 130,000, 160,000, 250,000 and 6,170,000 times respectively.

Hunger and the Child in Sangolhyeongje Minung, Jiung (산골형제 민웅, 지웅, The Brothers in the Deep Mountains, Minung and Jiung)

Sangolhyeongje Minung, Jiung is a Good Neighbors advertisement. The two brothers Minung and Jiung are the only children in an isolated mountain village. The children's father leaves for work at dawn and the brothers stay by themselves the whole day. The children eat only simple meals, which the older brother Minung has to prepare. The brothers don't have friends to play with, as there are no other children in the village. Their father constantly thinks about the children while he is at work. Minung is graduating from elementary school but cannot continue his education because the nearest middle school is too far from home. The family needs to relocate near a middle school but cannot afford to move. The advertisement shows the daily life of the poor but good-hearted brothers, and asks the viewers for support.

Hunger

Hunger in this advertisement is mainly represented in the brothers' breakfast scene. Early in the morning in the family's old, untidy kitchen, Minung scratches his head and turns on the gas stove in an unskilled way. He dips out soup from the pot but almost drops the soup bowl because of the heat, and shouts, "Oh, it's hot!" A subtitle says, "Older brother Minung, covering for his dad, who left for work at dawn, gets breakfast ready for his little brother." The brothers scoop rice from the rice cooker and sit at an old-style table on the floor. On the table are cold rice, soup and some basic traditional sauces. The rice and soup bowls are old-style stainless steel, the kind used long ago in Korea. The two brothers, sitting face to face, eat their food heartily. A subtitle says, "Even though there is nothing more than cold rice and a single bowl of soup, they eat well and don't complain." Soon after, one hears Minung's voice-over. He speaks in an innocent, cute way: "Of course, I like bread. Pizza bread. At those times [when I'm hungry for it], I just have to erase my thoughts." Soon another subtitle appears: "There are many things the brothers wish to eat, or need, but they are accustomed to being patient." Shortly thereafter, Minung wipes the table and washes the dishes.

Hunger in this advertisement is constructed as the lack of decent, nutritious meals and the unfulfilled desire for a tasty snack. In the first place, it is the simple table setting consisting of cold rice and soup, visualizing how poor the children's menu is. There are none of the additional side dishes that usually constitute a decent Korean meal. Also, Minung mentions that he craves pizza bread, which in Korea is considered a snack, not a regular meal. It is not easy for the boy to buy pizza bread, however, since he lives in the mountains and pizza bread is mostly sold in city bakeries. Thus, the children's hunger in this advertisement is caused by the lack of diverse, nutritious food and the unfulfilled desire for more delicious snacks.

When it comes to the attitude toward hunger, the children tend to endure it actively without complaint. For example, the brothers do not complain about their menu's simplicity, but eat willingly. Furthermore, even though pizza bread is Minung's favorite snack, he says that he is used to "erasing" his craving for it whenever he notices it. In other words, the children control their desires strategically in an experienced way. Therefore, the children in this advertisement are used to tolerating or controlling their hunger.

Meantime, hunger is related to a series of problems the children have: poverty, the absence of adult caretakers, and inaccessibility to the services the city provides, among others. In the first place, the reason for the monotony of the children's menu is the family's poverty. The poor household and messy kitchen, exposed throughout the advertisement, are the setting that becomes the stage for the children's hunger. A second major reason for the children's simple meals is that adult caretakers are not present so the children need to prepare their meals themselves. And as Minung's unskilled actions in the breakfast scene reveal, the children cannot prepare meals smoothly. Lastly, Minung's unfulfilled desire for pizza bread, which is purchasable only in the city, is closely related to the family's inaccessibility to city life. Thus, the children's hunger is closely connected to other problems that they have.

The Child

How is the child constructed? Firstly, the child in the advertisement performs innocence. When Minung talks about his desire for pizza bread, for example, he does so in the cute, carefree manner of an innocent child. Similarly in other scenes, the siblings perform playfulness or innocent child's play. Arriving home from school, the brothers enter their front yard cheerfully, doing dance steps. In another scene, Minung enjoys pushing a cart in which his little brother is riding. Later, Minung has his little brother in a head lock and is teasing him. And in another scene, the two boys play Korean chess.

Meanwhile, the advertisement represents Minung as the incomplete child. As mentioned, Minung prepares meals in a clumsy way and performs lack of skill in the breakfast scene. The children are unable to dish out hot soup safely and do not know how to warm up rice. And as mentioned, they cannot cook properly. A person can cook a better meal than cold rice and soup even with limited, low-cost ingredients, but the children are unable to perform this task. The breakfast menu might have been different if an adult character, for example, was in charge of the cooking. Thus, the child is a "human becoming" who is "changeable and incomplete and lacks the self-possession and self-control that would allow it the independence of thought and action that merits respect" (N. Lee 2001, 5). The child is an incomplete becoming.

Further, the child in the advertisement needs education. The ultimate message of the advertisement, for example, is that Minung needs support

so he can move near the city and access a middle school. Throughout the narrative, the possible break in his education is constructed as the most serious challenge. Also, a number of scenes sketching Minung's everyday life show how he learns together with his little brother. The video zooms in on his math paper, for instance. As such, learning is presented as an action that is part of the child's daily routine. Hence, the child in the advertisement needs education.

Interestingly, the above representations of Minung as the innocent, incomplete child who deserves education mirrors a well-known western dominant child ideology. According to Bissell, "The most representative example of childhood as an ideological construct is the idea of the innocent, vulnerable and passive Western child as the ideal norm: the normative child goes to school, does not work, plays happily and is protected from the harshness of adulthood" (cited in Y. Kang 2015, 8). And as westernization in Korea started more than a century ago, the above child ideology is well-known and well-accepted in the Korean socio-cultural context.

Meanwhile, Minung is a child who understands his father, willingly supports him, and suffers with the family. Minung takes over his father's household duties and patiently cares for his little brother. And the child is extremely considerate as he tries not to burden his father, who is already stressed sustaining the poor household. When talking about the family's move to the city for Minung's education, a move his father cannot afford, the child is extremely thoughtful and understanding. He says carefully and hesitantly, "If there happen to be any problems with the move, we can talk with dad and postpone it or something..." Thus, the child in this advertisement is supportive of his parent and endures difficulty for the family without complaining.

The Pair of Hunger and the Child

Then, how are hunger and the child paired? If, as mentioned, the advertisement normalizes innocent, passive children who should be able to learn and play in a carefree way, this idea is in line with the thought that children should be taken care of and nurtured. If so, the situation where the children are fed cold rice and even have to prepare meals themselves is undesirable. Meanwhile, as Minung is an innocent child, it is natural for him to speak simple-heartedly about his desire for pizza bread. On the contrary, it is abnormal that the boy has to "erase" his desire for it. And while Minung's generous understanding and suffering for his family is praiseworthy on one hand, his anguish makes him pitiable. Accordingly, the pair of child and hunger in the advertisement strengthens its final message that the child's hunger and the problems related to it should be removed.

Hunger and the Child in *Yeoldusal Sanguwa Eommaui Nurungji* (열두 살 상우와 엄마의 누룽지, Twelve-Year-Old Sangu and Mama's Scorched Rice)

Yeoldusal Sanguwa Eommaui Nurungji is a Good Neighbors advertisement. Sangu's mom has diabetes and cannot use her left hand. Since her collapse from cerebral infarction, she cannot walk properly. Sangu attends to his sick mother, takes care of the household and prepares meals. The mother and son cannot afford more than scorched rice porridge for their daily food. The advertisement exposes the family's poor household and the mother's sickness steadily throughout the advertisement. At the end of the advertisement, a Good Neighbors employee appears and emphasizes that Sangu's dietary life is problematic mostly because he does not get the nutrition necessary for his growth.

Hunger

Hunger is represented in the scenes where Sangu cooks meals and dines with his mother. For example, Sangu's mother explains, "I cannot cook at all. Sometimes Sangu just eats whatever is available." The camera zooms in on a bag of nurungji (scorched rice). Somebody pours water into a pot. Soon after, the viewers can recognize that it is Sangu who is boiling the nurungji. He turns on the gas stove and the tap water, and does the dishes. His mother's voice-over and subtitles follow: "I always say I am so sorry. Mommy is so, so sorry." [...] Sangu stands feebly at a humble door, gazing vacantly into space. After serving the scorched rice porridge in bowls, he sits at a simple table, facing his mother. He puts a spoonful of porridge in his mouth and munches. His face is sweet and pure. He gazes at his mother innocently and warmly. A subtitle says: "Watery scorched rice porridge is the only daily meal Sangu prepares for his mother." Mother's voice-over is heard: "He wants to eat kimchi stew cooked by Mom. He also wants to eat tteokbokki (stir-fried rice cake) cooked by Mom." Again, the mother and son eat together at the narrow kitchen table.

Sangu's hunger in the advertisement has a number of characteristics: first, his daily food is exceedingly monotonous and lacks nutrition. As in Minung's case, hunger here means a poor diet, which is represented by the child's only menu, scorched rice porridge. And as the Good Neighbors employee points out, the poor meals are a problem because they do not provide sufficient nutrition for a child to grow properly.

Another characteristic of Sangu's hunger is that he is hungry for mom-made food, a desire that is never fulfilled. The boy's mother explains regretfully that the child longs for mom-made kimchi stew or tteokbokki, which she cannot cook for him due to her illness. On the surface, this means that Sangu hungers for more diverse, delicious food than scorched rice. As

he says that he desires mom-made food, however, this also means that he longs for his mother's care. Thus, the child in the advertisement is hungry for decent mom-made food and also for his mother's care.

The Child

The child in this advertisement is the beloved, precious child. That is because the perspective of Sangu's mother, who is the main narrator of the advertisement, heavily influences the construction of the child in the video. For example, the mother says regretfully, her voice filled with emotion, that she feels sorry about her son's hunger, about not being able to cook for him. Her position thereby constructs the child as a being who needs to be nurtured and loved by her.

And Sangu performs the innocent child. As mentioned, in the scene where he dines with his mother, for example, the child looks at his mother warmly, and innocently performs a sweet attitude toward her. Another example of the performance of child innocence is the final scene, where Sangu's pretty, boyish face is zoomed in. The image emphasizes what a blameless, pure child he is. Hence, Sangu's attitude and facial expressions provide information that the boy is an innocent child.

Lastly, Sangu performs the patient, sacrificial, filial child as well. He takes care of his mother willingly and practices filial piety. The boy assists his mother's every move: he washes her feet, massages her legs, and holds her hand while she walks. Also, when cooking for her and dining with her, he serves her patiently. The child perseveres positively with his nursing duties, showing no sign of fatigue. Accordingly, Sangu performs the good-hearted, tolerant, filial child.

Meanwhile, many of the child ideologies above reflect Korean dominant child ideologies. I have already mentioned that the innocent child is part of the Western normative childhood image.² According to Y.Kang, however, the thought that children are beloved and precious, however, has long been a major Korean trope as well. "Indeed, the idea that children are precious has been common in Korea throughout the past century" (Y. Kang 2015, 100). Korea has had a very family-centered culture since the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910); in that Confucian culture children were regarded as valuable because they carried on the family line (Baek and Lee 50). Also, a number of historical records from the early 20th century, for example, point to Korean parents' excessive love towards their children as a huge problem (J. Kang 2008, 179). And there has been a general understanding among the Korean public that "parents love their children unconditionally, as the most precious beings" (Kim, Seo and Lim 40), which is reflected in multiple proverbs (38): "You can put children in your eyes and it will not hurt," and "One raises children as if they are gold or jade" (40), for example.

Furthermore, Y.Kang argues that the filial child who obeys and serves his parents patiently with a good heart is another well-known Korean child ideology that originates from Confucianism (2015, 101). As mentioned,

Confucianism was the state ideology of Korea's last dynasty, Chosun, and "its value system has left traces in contemporary Korean culture" (Y. Kang 2015, 101). "For all members of Chosun dynasty, practicing filial piety while one's parents are alive, holding a grand funeral after their death and performing ancestral rites was an overarching priority" (Cho 2011, 381). And Cho writes that among the morals of Confucianism, children had to cultivate the virtues of Bu-ja-yu-chin (morals on the close relationship between father and son) and Jang-yu-yu-seo (morals on the subordinate order between younger and older people based on their biological age) (cited in Y. Kang 2015, 101). This means that one of the children's most important duties was to respect older people and practice filial piety. And as the Confucian paradigm has long had strong influence in Korea, the Korean public is familiar with the idea of the filial child.

The Pair of Hunger and the Child

How are hunger and the child paired? As Sangu performs the precious, beloved son and the innocent child, the advertisement supports the idea that love, protection and nutrition should be granted him. Accordingly, the situation where all of the above are absent, which is revealed through Sangu's hunger, domestic labor and nursing care duties, is abnormal. As in Minung's story, Sangu's perseverance despite his fate, and his devotion to his mother, are valuable because he is practicing filial piety, regarded as a virtue in Korean culture. Nevertheless, the boy's suffering and hunger are heart-breaking when one considers what a golden child he is. Accordingly, Sangu needs to be saved. Ultimately, Sangu's performance of the beloved, precious, innocent, filial child bolsters the final message of the advertisement, that his hunger and anguish should be alleviated.

Hunger and the Child in Yeoreumbanghageul Butakae (여름방학을 부탁해, Please Take Care of the Summer Break)

Yeoreumbanghageul Butakae is a KFHI advertisement. The father of siblings Jeongeun and Jeonggyu lost his job during the Covid 19 pandemic and was diagnosed with lung cancer. Their mother needs to earn money for their father's medical bills and has to provide nursing care for him. Consequently, neither of the siblings' parents is at home and the children have to stay by themselves during the entire summer break in their hot, old, moldy, dark house. While many Korean children learn at private academies during summer, these siblings cannot afford to do so. Ten-year-old Jeongeun takes care of the household and prepares meals for her little brother. During the break, the children's meals are even simpler, without the usual school meals. All they can eat is food purchasable with government meal cards: convenience store food such as samgakgimbap (triangular rice balls wrapped

in seaweed) and instant noodles. The siblings want to grow up and become adults quickly.

Hunger

The scene which visualizes the children's hunger unfolds as follows. A subtitle appears: "During summer breaks, they cannot even eat school meals." The siblings sit at a small table in a dark, sparse, empty kitchen, eating samgakgimbap and instant noodles. A subtitle says: "The siblings' meal becomes even poorer." The camera zooms in on the siblings' mouths, chewing food. The little younger brother slurps noodles in a babyish, unskilled way. Gloomy music plays. The next subtitle explains: "Jeongeun's mom needs to go straight to the hospital from work. So Jeongeun covers for her and takes care of dinner, but..." Next, Jeongeun helps her little brother step out of an old alley near their house. Because he is so little, his walk is unstable. Another subtitle appears: "The convenience store is the only place they can afford to visit with their meal card."³ The children select goods from the display stand. The stand is so tall that Jeongeun must stand on tiptoe to grab a samgakgimbap. Jeongeun's voice-over is heard: "I wish I could become an adult quickly." The children crouch in front of the main gate of their house, eating instant sausages purchased at the convenience store.

In this advertisement, hunger means poor, unhealthful food. Hunger in the advertisement is visualized through a series of convenience store food: samgakgimbap, instant cup noodles and instant sausages. The children are hungry because they only have access to unhealthful junk food sold at the convenience store. And as in Sangu's case, the children's hunger is a challenge, as their diet jeopardizes their health and growth. This time, however, the problem is not just the absence of decent meals and balanced nutrition; the children's exposure to harmful food ingredients is an issue as well.

Another particularity of the hunger in this advertisement is that hunger makes the children fragile and fatigued. Hunger's effect on the children's mental and physical situation is made visible through the children's voices, appearance and movements, showing their gloominess and exhaustion. The children's situation is the result of complex factors that include not just hunger, but poverty, the summer heat in the old, moldy house, overwhelming duties, isolation, loneliness, and other negative conditions. Because hunger in this case again is closely intertwined with other problems the children have, it is difficult to argue that the cause of the children's fatigue is solely hunger. Nevertheless, hunger is certainly one of the major factors exhausting them. Thus, hunger makes children shaky and gloomy in this advertisement.

The Child

The children in this advertisement are extremely vulnerable, weak and incomplete. While the character Jeongeun is supposed to be ten years old,

for instance, her voice is thin, making her sound like a younger child. As stated earlier, her brother is very small, and eats and walks in an unskilled manner. In meals preparation, Jeongeun's capability is limited to purchasing instant food. Even that task appears challenging, as demonstrated in her need to stand on tiptoe to reach the tall display stand. Throughout the advertisement, the shaky way in which Jeongeun explains her situation shows that she is overwhelmed by her reality. As such, the children in the advertisement are constructed as feeble, powerless beings.

This advertisement furthermore upholds the idea that a normal child should be learning at school or playing at home under protection. For example, the children color a picture in their dark, desolate room. This shows the siblings immersed in playful activity, the way all innocent children do, notwithstanding their harsh reality. In another scene, the siblings' schoolbooks and multiplication tables are zoomed in. Shortly thereafter, subtitles indicate it is regrettable that the children cannot afford private education during the school break like other children. In this way, the advertisement supports the idea that normal children should be learning or playing.

Lastly, just like Minung or Sangu, older sister Jeongeun carries her parents' burden and suffers with her family. For example, she reiterates her mother's words: "Mommy is having a hard time after daddy's hospitalization. She says that we need to save a little more." While speaking, she acts in place of her parents, removing the mosquito net and folding the bedding. Throughout the advertisement, Jeongeun cares patiently for the household and for her brother. Therefore, Jeongeun is aware of the family's situation, is carrying the burden of her parents, and is enduring the family's fate.

The Pair of Hunger and the Child

Here again, the pair of hunger and the child contributes to the final message of the advertisement that the children's hunger should be removed. First, because children are vulnerable, weak, and in need of protection, the situation in which the siblings are fed cheap and unhealthful instant food becomes questionable. This in itself leads to the message that the children's hunger should be removed. Furthermore, because the children are constructed as incomplete, it then becomes plausible that they are overwhelmed even by the simple task of purchasing instant food. This strengthens the idea that the children are unable to alleviate their hunger by themselves, and that someone should intervene for them. Accordingly, the pair of hunger and the child in this advertisement supports the idea that the children's hunger definitely should be removed, with the help of other people.

Hunger and the Child in *Yuilhan Hankkiga Sarajin Ai* (유일한 한 끼가 사라진 아이, The Child Whose Only Meal Has Disappeared)

Yuilhan Hankkiga Sarajin Ai is a KFHI advertisement. 12-year-old Yoojung lives with her ill grandmother in an old house on a desolate hillside. Before the Covid 19 pandemic, she was accustomed to at least one decent meal a day at school or at the welfare center. Now both places are shut down due to the pandemic, and she cannot get a single proper meal anywhere. Sometimes she can buy a convenience store lunchbox or instant noodles with a government meal card. When the card deposit runs out, however, she fills her empty stomach with water or skips meals.

Hunger

In the scene staging Yoojung's hunger, the child is sitting at the door, guzzling water from a huge bottle. Soon after, she walks weakly along a back street and her voice-over is heard: "At times when I was really hungry, I used to eat at the [welfare] center. But because of Corona..." She sighs and stares ahead [perhaps at the shutdown center]. A subtitle appears: "Twelve-year-old Yoojung, who lives with her grandma, skips meals more often these days." Yoojung's narration: "We paid rent with the government aid, and I try to survive with my meal card somehow, but..." The next scene, in an outlying area, shows Yoojung walking slowly and looking fatigued. Her narration follows: "Usually, I can at least eat instant noodles or buy a lunchbox at the convenience store." [...] Then we see her in an old, run-down kitchen, pouring water into a pot, putting it on the gas stove, and opening the kitchen cabinet. She takes out ramyeon (Korean instant noodles) but discovers that the wrapping is empty. The pot of water continues to boil. Yoojung's voice-over: "At the end of the month, when the government aid runs out ... I often skip meals." [...] A subtitle appears: "A long, long afternoon when one feels endless hunger..." She sits weakly on a hill in her poor village. She speaks: "I hope Corona is over soon so I can go to school." 6th grade textbooks are zoomed in. The girl marks a star on the calendar and writes "School Day." Narration is heard: "At least at school you can eat school meals." [...] Yoojung climbs a barren hillside area, her mouth slightly open, her expression hungry and exhausted.

Hunger in this advertisement is related to the reality of skipping meals and/or having no food at all. Compared with the aforementioned advertisements, to crystallize the particularity of this case, Yoojung's hunger is more intense. For example, in the former cases, the children had at least something to fill their stomachs, even if it was simple or unhealthful food. As a result, they had the minimal energy necessary to function in their everyday life. Yoojung, however, literally skips meals due to lack of food. Thus, hunger in this case means starvation due to complete absence of food.

And as Yoojung's hunger is harsher, it affects the child's condition more severely. The child performer actively portrays how her extreme hunger changes her body. Whatever action the child performs, whether she walks, does chores, or studies at her desk, she moves feebly and slowly, sighing and displaying a disappointed, empty gaze. Her gestures and facial expression show plainly how hunger has influenced her emotions, muscles and pace. The active performance of the hungry child's fragile presence is the uniqueness of this advertisement. And such a performance shows that hunger can debilitate the child both physically and mentally.

The Child

In this advertisement, too, the child belongs to school or should be learning. For example, in the scene where Yoojung walks by herself, enduring her hunger, she carries her schoolbag, a typical sign of student identity in Korea. Also, even in the middle of her routine fight against hunger, the girl studies at her humble desk at home. The child carries on learning even in the worst situation. The video zooms in on the child's textbooks. And the child marks a star on the calendar day when her school opens again, and writes "school day," showing her eagerness to return to school. While a major reason for Yoojung's urge to return to school is to eat school meals and alleviate her hunger, her action reminds the viewers that the child belongs to school for various reasons. After all, the child belongs to school because it provides multiple layers of nourishment. And of course the child should learn.

Meanwhile, the child in this advertisement performs chores deftly. Yoojung skillfully carries out a series of household duties: boiling water, wiping the floor and doing laundry, for example. And as these tasks are usually considered to be adult duties in Korea, the fact that the child is not only responsible for the tasks but furthermore performs them smoothly, makes her appear different and out of place. And by continuously exposing the child's skillful domestic labor, an unusual sight, the advertisement disturbs the viewer. In this way, the advertisement indirectly supports the idea that the child should be free from domestic labor, protected from bitter reality.

The Pair of Hunger and the Child

Then, how are hunger and the child paired? Yoojung's straightforward, steady performance of weakness and gloominess makes it clear that the child is not doing okay. And as the narrative shows that hunger is the major cause of her negative condition, the child's hunger becomes inappropriate. This advertisement disturbs the viewer by visualizing the child's miserable body directly at the forefront, and leads to the idea that the child's hunger is wrong. While the graphic visualization of the hungry child in itself induces the thought that the child's hunger should be eliminated, other child ideologies

intertwined with the child's hunger invigorate such an idea. Firstly, the idea of the child who should learn is in line with Western normative childhood as introduced above, and reminds viewers that a normal child should be protected and taken care of. Thus, as in the case of Minung and Jeongeun, the performance of the Yoojung who deserves education and protection makes the child's hunger and domestic labor problematic. Secondly, as Yoojung performs the laboring child and the hungry child simultaneously, the child's suffering appears more extreme. Yoojung's anguish doubles as she has to endure two types of suffering: hunger and labor. This eventually intensifies the idea that the child's hunger should be eliminated along with all other related pains.

Meanwhile, even though elements of western normative childhood, such as the child in need of education, are instrumental in this advertisement, the sweet, simple-hearted, playful child, which is also an element of the western normative child, does not play a role here. Such particularity in this advertisement, making it different from the previous cases, is noteworthy as it reveals an interesting fact about the way hunger and children can be paired. In fact, Yoojung cannot perform the sweet, simple-hearted, playful child because she does not have the physical and mental room to do so, due to her serious hunger. Because the degree of her hunger is extreme, her performance of a sweet, simple-hearted, playful child would make the narrative less plausible. As it were, Yoojung is too exhausted to chat about a favorite snack like Minung does, to display a sweet gaze like Sangu's, or to paint drawings like Jeongeun does, for example. This reveals that it is difficult to pair the sweet, simple-hearted, playful child with a relatively severe degree of hunger or starvation.

The Pair of Hunger and Child Across the Four Cases

In the above analysis, I asked the following questions: How are hungry Korean children represented in the advertisements? How are hunger and children paired in them? How does the pair affect the meaning-making process of the advertisements? How do the child ideologies relate to Korean dominant child ideologies? And through the analysis, the following patterns emerged.

Hunger Across the Four Cases

In many cases, the children's hunger is related to a restricted menu, lack of balanced nutrition, or unhealthy food. And the children's hunger is visualized through the types of food they eat. On their tables, for instance, there are just a few dishes, minimal food such as scorched rice, or instant food from the convenience store. And as the hunger in the advertisement is connected to a poor and unhealthy diet, even if it does not jeopardize the

children's immediate survival, it endangers their well-being or proper growth. Yoojung's case is particular, because hunger for her means skipping meals, absence of food or starvation. This type of hunger is more serious and prevents the child from performing her everyday activities properly.

In addition, hunger in most cases is connected to a series of misfortunes the children are suffering, including the absence of patrons/education/protection/enjoyment, and poverty. And the advertisements reveal how the problems are intertwined. For example, poverty is the main reason for the children's hunger, and information about this is provided throughout the advertisements. Subtitles and narrations explain the reasons why the children's families cannot avoid being poor: the parents have low-paying jobs or are seriously ill. The children's poor households are continuously visualized: their houses are old, and the rooms, furniture and household goods are dilapidated. Sometimes items such as torn, moldy wallpaper are zoomed in; interior scenes are often dimly lit. And since hunger and its adjoining issues together are overwhelming the child in multiple layers, the necessity to support the child becomes stronger.

Meanwhile, the hunger scenes are effective methods to visualize the children's multi-layered suffering, dramatically and compressively. That is because hunger is a visceral experience, the effective performance of which can evoke strong empathy among viewers. Sights of children eating poor, unhealthful food or languishing due to hunger enable a graphic, tangible representation of the child's suffering. Additionally, as the child is a loaded metaphor, the juxtaposition of it with hunger creates rich meaning, exerting a powerful effect on viewers. Below, I will explain in further detail how exactly the scenes depend on child ideologies when dramatizing the children's hunger and pain. Thus, while hunger is mostly not the only pain the child suffers, hunger scenes play an effective role in making the child's suffering more vivid and objectionable.

Also, in some cases, hunger means not just literal hunger for food but also the children's desire for other elements they need. For example, Minung hungers for pizza bread, a desire for a tasty snack—in other words, for enjoyable life. Sangu's insatiable hunger for “mom-made food” shows that the boy misses his mother's care. Similarly, Jeongeun and Yoojung's longing for school meals implies that the children need the care, education and network that schools provide. Thus, the children's hunger in the advertisements is a mirror of the children's desire.

The Child Across the Four Cases

How is the child performed? A number of child ideologies appear across the advertisements. Firstly, many children perform child innocence. Most children's faces, voices, movements and attitudes make them appear cute, sweet, ingenuous and harmless. None of them looks ugly, dirty, clever, aggressive or evil, for example. Sometimes the children perform innocence by expressing their childlike desires in carefree ways: Minung, for example,

speaks about his appetite for his favorite snack, and Sangu longs for mom-made food. At other times, children perform innocence by performing children's play: Jeongeun and her brother, for example, color a drawing, and Minung and his brother play various games during their day.

Secondly, many children need to learn or belong to school. Scenes showing the everyday life of Minung and Yoojung expose how both children study. Jeongeun and Yoojung's schoolbooks and Minung's math paper are zoomed in, reminding viewers that children should be learning normally. On the other hand, situations where children are unable to learn are constructed as abnormal. For example, the main purpose of raising funds for Minung is to prevent a break in his education. As mentioned, Jeongeun is constructed as pitiable because she cannot attend a private learning institute. Furthermore, Yoojung is eager to go back to school, which is shut down due to the coronavirus. Many children in the advertisements learn, want to learn or need to learn, all of which is constructed as normal.

Thirdly, many children are incomplete and do not have agency or voice. All of the child protagonists lack the agency to overcome their poverty. While "children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live" (James and Prout 1997, 127), none of these children have material influence on their lives. All of them accept their fate passively and some become fragile and vulnerable in front of it. They are helpless and incomplete. None of these children can do the least thing about their hunger. For example, as mentioned, no child has the experience or technique to cook anything better than cold rice or scorched rice porridge. Some children perform incompetence even when doing the simplest tasks, such dipping out soup or purchasing instant food.

Furthermore, most of these children do not have voice and do not speak for their rights. Of course, Yoojung speaks a lot about herself, since she is the main narrator of the advertisement. Even in her case, however, the child actor is reading lines written by adult writers. And those adult writers, as seen above, often construct the child as a pitiful victim. Thus, none of the children speak for their own rights from their own perspective. Consequently, all the children in the advertisements lack agency and voice and are incomplete.

Fourthly, child and parent are firmly bound to each other as an organic family. In the first place, many children understand their parents' situation deeply, support and suffer with them willingly, or exemplify filial piety. As mentioned, Minung understands his father's situation profoundly and is extremely considerate when making demands, trying not to burden his father. Sangu patiently assists his sick mother's every step. Jeongeun reiterates her mother's words, showing that she accepts her mother's position and takes over her mother's duties. On the other hand, the advertisements show how precious the children are from the parents' perspective. Sangu's mother's narration makes it obvious how much she sympathizes with him and that the boy is her dear, golden son. Minung's father likewise says that he cannot stop thinking about his boys even at work. Thus, in many cases, there is a strong bond between the parent and the child.

Furthermore, each family in the advertisements is presented as an organic unit sharing burdens. For example, the children's hunger and suffering is framed as part of the family's fate. Each narrative provides a story about the children's family that functions as background information for the children's hunger. In those narratives, the parents' joblessness or sickness mostly decides the family's destiny, and the whole family carries the family burden together. The family is constructed as the basic unit of communal survival and suffering. Meanwhile, all of the family members in the advertisements support each other harmoniously, notwithstanding the challenges they face. Such performance of solidarity reinforces the idea that the family is an organic unit. After all, the strong bonding between children and parents and the suffering of the family members in solidarity show how organically children and parents are bound to each other as family.

At the same time, many Koreans are familiar with the idea that parents and children are intimately bound to each other. "Korean familism is based on Confucianism, where the family is the basic unit constituting the society, where family is the most valuable thing, and where members have to make continuous efforts to strengthen the family's solidarity" (Ryu 2007, 90). Koreans cannot be completely free from familism, as it still exerts strong influence in the Korean culture (S. Lee 2006, 234). Therefore, the idea that there is an intimate bond among family members has been well accepted in Korean culture. Moreover, the parent-child relationship in Korea is unique in the sense that parent and child regard themselves as one, rather than as separate entities (Ryu 2007, 89). While the significance of the parent-child relationship in the western context lies more in how individuated each person is, "the frequency of emotional interchange between parent and child, as well as the child's caring response to the parent's care, decides a person's growth in Korean culture" (Hyun 2007, 104). Thus, the Korean public is familiar with the idea that parent and child are closely connected to each other, a thought the advertisements are mirroring.

Conclusively, many of the child ideologies in the advertisements reflect dominant child ideologies that are influential in the Korean socio-cultural context: the western innocent child who learns in school or plays at home under protection, the child organically bound to the family, the filial child or the beloved precious child, for example. In other words, not many child ideologies in the advertisements resist or challenge existing Korean norms of childhood. Finally, the child performances in the advertisements depend heavily on well-known Korean tropes of childhood(s), to build understanding among the Korean public.

Additionally, the coexistence of Western and traditional tropes of childhood reflects the hybrid nature of the Korean socio-cultural context. As noted earlier, the Western normative childhood concept has been rooted in Korea since the start of society's westernization more than a century ago. And as mentioned, Korean familism and the idea of the filial child or the beloved child all originate from Confucianism, which prevailed in Korea's last dynasty, Chosun, and still has considerable cultural influence. Thus, the

analysis of the child performances reveals that “Korean childhood is a hybrid cultural assemblage, and elements from different historical periods have left their imprint on the current construction” (Y. Kang 2015, 117).

The Pair of Hunger and the Child Across the Four Cases

How are hunger and the child paired in the four cases? And how does the pair of child and hunger affect the meaning-making process of the advertisements? Child ideologies linked to performance of the children’s hunger play a crucial role in dramatizing that hunger. As mentioned, because most advertisements naturalize the Western norm of the innocent, vulnerable, incomplete child in need of protection, thereby the children’s hunger becomes questionable. Similarly, as the advertisements normalize the Korean trope of the beloved, precious child, children who are not nurtured or loved appear pitiable. As a result, the two culturally powerful child ideologies—the innocent child, an ideological construct of the West, and the beloved, precious child—strengthen the final message of the advertisements that the child’s hunger and suffering should be removed.

Additionally, the performance of the child who does not have agency or voice leads to the idea that the children are helpless against their hunger and need others’ support to eliminate it. As previously stated, none of the children are capable of overcoming poverty or hunger. Nor can the children voice their thoughts or feelings about their hunger in order to change their fate. These performances of children induce the idea that the children will never be able to remove their hunger on their own. Ultimately, this reinforces the advertisements’ final message that the children can only be saved with the support of others, and that the viewers should make donations.

Meanwhile, the idea of the child as an organic part of the family who perseveres in spite of hunger, is likely to make Korean viewers empathize deeply with the hungry child. Not only is the idea of inseparability between self and family culturally powerful in Korea, but within the Korean welfare structure as well, individual families are regarded as the basic unit to overcome poverty or illness. Park found that “notwithstanding the external growth of social welfare, it has been the emotional and economic support of the family which has protected individuals from the danger of market competition” (cited in Choi 2014, 82). Accordingly, while not all Koreans will have the exact same experience as the hungry child in the particular advertisement, that child’s endurance of hunger and sacrifice, taking part in the hardships of the family as an organic part of it, is likely to remind them of their own experiences as a family member. And if, for these reasons, Korean viewers can easily internalize the family identity represented in the advertisements, they can empathize with the family’s pain on a deeper level. And such empathy strengthens the idea that the advertisement finally supports the thought that the anguish of the family (and the child protagonist) should be removed. Thus, the above pairs of children and hunger mingle and reinforce the advertisements’ final argument on multiple levels.

At the same time, because all child ideologies instrumental in the advertisements are culturally powerful and subtly hidden behind the performances of the advertisements, viewers are easily persuaded to believe in the reality the advertisements are constructing. Not only do the child ideologies in the advertisements reflect the dominant tropes of Korean childhood, but they are hidden behind the well-made performances of each advertisement. Hence, viewers come to believe in the “truth” about hungry children the advertisements are building. Ultimately, the pairs of hunger and the child play a crucial role in making the performance of hungry children as helpless victims a plausible situation, and thus create a sense of urgency in the appeal for donations.

If the above analysis reveals the nature of children’s victimization in these advertisements, I want to question what all of this means for children, the humans who are (mis)represented, for whom the advertisements are meant to be produced. The children in the advertisements are transformed into powerless, voiceless beings who can do nothing about their hunger except to depend on donations, maximizing this need by selling their weakness, vulnerability and sweet, harmless images, and by patiently performing solidarity in the context of familism. I must ask, however: Are not voice and agency, of which children are deprived by these advertisements, vital in order for children to remain resilient and to overcome their harsh reality in the long run? While these advertisements are meant to support children, in the end they are eliminating children’s power to fight their hunger. And the performance of the hungry children in the advertisements can affect children’s reality in the long run. If so, what will the child performance as a pitiable victim ultimately do to children’s perception of who they are and what they are capable of?

Notes

1. This study started as a presentation at the 2022 Performance Studies International #27 Conference and was developed substantially thereafter. I sincerely thank the participants in my presentation session for their intent listening and honest comments, which encouraged me to continue working on this project. I also thank the three unknown reviewers invited by KAA for their meticulous responses, which helped me to improve my work.

2. I agree with one of my reviewers' comments that the idea of child innocence is "contested since the mid-to-late 20th century" in the West. What I mean by the "Western" idea of the innocent child is that the idea originated and started exerting cultural influence in the West. For example, historical ideas such as the romantic child constructed by the French thinker Rousseau contributed significantly to the ideological construction of child innocence. Of course, this idea has been influential in diverse places and responses to it have changed depending on the socio-cultural context, but in the field of Childhood Studies, it is generally understood to be a Western historical construct, as it was produced and gained influence in the West.

3. Korean local governments distribute meal cards to children who are recipients of basic living support or who come from lower income families. The cards are mostly used to purchase food at convenience stores.

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