

Modernization, Authoritarianism, and Space in Korean Shamanic Exorcism Cinema

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Abstract

This paper examines how space is used in Korean exorcism cinema to expose spatial and temporal anxieties. These spaces reflect developmental ideologies that place rurality in opposition to modernization. Recent religious scandals involving shamanism and syncretism have reignited similar representational models in contemporary exorcism cinema. By analyzing spatial constructs based around the dichotomies of traditional/modern, urban/rural, and masculine/feminine, I suggest that the recent trend of religious orthodoxy in Korean exorcism cinema is an extension of authoritarian and nationalist tropes. As such, rurality as a traditional and gendered space represents contradictory aspects at the heart of how national identity is constructed and expressed spatially.

본 논문은 한국의 엑소시즘 영화에서 공간적, 시간적 불안을 드러내기 위해 공간이 어떻게 사용되는지 알아본다. 이러한 공간들은 농촌성을 현대화의 정반대에 두는 개발이데올로기를 반영한다. 샤머니즘과 싱크로티즘이 결부된 최근의 종교 스캔들들은 이러한 엑소시즘 영화에서 유사한 재현 모델을 불러 일으켜 왔다. 본 논문은 전통/현대, 도시/농촌, 남성/여성의 이분법을 중심으로 영화 속 공간구성을 분석함으로써 최근 한국 엑소시즘 영화의 종교적 정통성에 대한 추세가 권위주의와 민족주의적 수사법의 연장선에 있음을 제안한다. 이처럼 전통적이면서 젠더화된 공간으로서의 농촌은 국가 정체성이 구성되고 공간적으로 표현되는 방식에 있어서의 모순을 보여준다.

Key words

shamanism, cinema, exorcism, space, rural, modernization, *musok* (Korean shamanism), authoritarianism, orthodoxy, religion.

Introduction

This paper seeks to address the contemporary trend in Korean exorcism cinema of portraying the traditional shamanic remedies for spiritual sickness as ineffective. For generations, the ritual and rites of sha-

manic exorcism successfully resolved cinematic depictions of maladies of the soul. However, contemporary representations of shamanism in Korean horror films portray a practice on its last legs. The once-powerful shaman and her rites of exorcism have been replaced by the orthodox rites of the Christian, Catholic, and Buddhist traditions. I argue that this contemporary westernization of Korean exorcism cinema is the logical conclusion to centuries-old anxieties concerning shamanism's place in the shifting discourse of the nation.

The propensity of authoritarian developmental themes represented in the history of Korean exorcism cinema is fertile ground for examining the familiar exorcism trope of tradition at odds with development. While exorcism cinema reflects this fear of others and sociocultural change, the tension often depicted spatially is exacerbated during times of cultural and economic stress.¹ These fears partially explain the shift in attitude and style in Korean exorcism films following the 2008 economic collapse and subsequent internationalization of Hallyu cinema. For the purposes of this article, the rise of authoritarian-like religious orthodoxy and its associated sentiment further reveals how exorcism cinema portrays the empowerment and subsequent disempowerment of marginalized identities. In this instance, a series of recent scandals and tragedies have created a 'shamanic panic' that has reignited Korean exorcism cinema's oppressive discourse surrounding representations of rural women, women in non-traditional roles, and the new religious movements and folk traditions native to Korea.

Contemporary shamanic exorcism films like *Possessed* (2009; Dir. Lee Yong-Ju), *The Wailing* (2015; Dir. Na Hong-Jin), *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave* (2015; Dir. Kim Hwi), *The Piper* (2015; Dir. Kim Gwang-Tae) *The Priests* (2015; Jang Jae-Hyun), *Metamorphosis* (2019; Dir. Kim Hong-Seon), *Svaha: The Sixth Finger* (2019; Dir. Jang Jae-Hyun), and *The 8th Night* (2021; Dir. Kim Tae-Hyoung) contain and suffuse many of the spatial tropes found in Korea's long history of shamanic horror and exorcism cinema. In step with the discourse of development and compressed modernization, the masculine urban environments embody authority and modernization, and the feminine rural environments embody superstition, backward thinking, and chaos. Historically these tropes have reflected a pervading uneasiness with shifting urban demographics and family organization under an androcentric, modernizing authoritarian hand. They are the result of cultural and political policies designed to reshape the minds and bodies of Koreans around modernization, urbanization, and the partially unintended consequences of internationalization and westernization. However, the contemporary depictions of ineffective shamanism in Korean exorcism cinema articulate a specific discourse around space, modernization, and gender that, as a product of the tropes present in earlier films, reflects more contemporary anxieties concerning shamanism at odds with the influence in orthodox religion in Korea today.

This discourse is the latest incarnation of a long history of oppression reignited by recent public sentiment concerning a series of contemporary scandals involving New Religious Movements (NRMs from here forward) and shamanic syncretism. Reflecting similar anxieties and a perceived violation of morality as found in the ‘satanic panic’ of 1980s United States culture, Korea’s ‘shamanic panic’ reached a fever pitch in 2017 but in fact, began years earlier. NRMs have a long history of influence and mystery in Korean culture. From the nation that originated the Unification Church (colloquially referred to as the moonies) in the 1970s, NRMs have a diffuse and shady history of financial crimes and mass suicide in Korea.² More contemporarily, these NRMS have been implicated in the sinking of the Sewol Ferry in 2014, which killed over 300 people, mostly young students. The owner of the ferry, Yoo Byung-Eun was revealed as the founder of a cult called the Salvation Sect.

Another contemporary scandal involves former-president Park Geun-Hye’s unseemly relationship with the founding family of a syncretic cult. Unpacking the 2016 Park Geun-Hye scandal is no easy task. Park’s financial crimes aside, for many, the more egregious transgression involved her decades-long attachment to a syncretic cult and the influence wielded by Choi Soon-Sil (The cult founder’s daughter) in governmental policy decisions.(Kim 2016) While belonging to an NRM is not a crime, circulating facts and rumors told of the Choi Family’s influence on Park’s presidency. Choi Soon-Sil’s late father, Choi Tae-Min, has even been described as the “Korean Rasputin,”(Yi 2016) for the control he supposedly held over her. The scandal divided the country along religious and political lines, culminating in the candlelight protests calling for Park’s resignation and indictment from October 2016 to March 2017. The South Korean public directed outrage at the fact that religious matters were brought into the political sphere. As Choo Mi-Ae, chair of the Minjoo Party described it, Park Geun-Hye’s inappropriate reliance on Choi Soon-Sil seemed to signify “a terrifying theocracy.”(Ser 2016)

Other such scandals have shaped the most recent incarnation of the ‘shamanic panic.’ Most recently, the shadow operating Christian doomsday religion Shincheonji was at the heart of the early stages of COVID-19 pandemic. After contact tracing and an investigation, Shincheonji’s messianic founder, Lee Man-Hee, was forced into a public apology for the group’s responsibility in spreading the disease among Shincheonji’s members and thousands of others, even as the group’s founder and leaders refused to be tested for COVID-19, citing their religious beliefs and privacy. Shincheonji members also resisted government attempts at tracking the spread of the pandemic and all but ignoring social distancing rules which prompted the Seoul City government to file legal complaints to state prosecutors against twelve leaders of the sect accusing the group of homicide, causing harm, and violating the Infectious

Disease and Control Act.(Kim 2020) And despite reported records in the number of believers affiliated with NRMs, their connections to corruption, political influence, disasters, and pandemics, in addition to their secrecy and opacity when dealing with their roles and culpability in scandals like the ones discussed in this section, have led to a general distrust of many of the fledgling organizations in the public forum.

This most recent ‘shamanic panic’ is not a newly crafted fear, rather a cathartic shift in public sentiment articulating a culmination in decades of demonization and marginalization of otherness. In an increasingly urbanizing Korea, today more than ever, the percentage of Christians within South Korean politics is disproportionately high. Lee Jin-Woo best articulates the prevailing Christian attitude in overcoming shamanism’s influence in modern Christian churches in Korea. He notes that “most of the prevalent Christianity-like heresies in Korea are rooted in shamanism.”(Lee 2000, 162, 44) This article will trace the spatial tensions that have historically positioned shamanism at the periphery of modern culture and religion in Korea through the genealogy of cinematic representations in horror cinema and specifically the shamanic exorcism film. To examine examples of the contemporary trend of religious orthodoxy in shamanic exorcism films, I will analyze the similarities and differences in how the spatial constructs of contemporary shamanic exorcism films amend or eschew those of previous periods. This spatial construct reinforces shamanism as the Other, repressed by dominant religious ideology and cultural orthodoxy, through its associations with rurality, female subjectivity, and uneven development.

By examining the history of shamanic exorcism cinema and its political and sociocultural influences, I hope to lay the foundation for discussing how space reinforces the authoritarian themes present in contemporary shamanic exorcism films. The metamorphosis of Korean cinemas’ depictions of shamanism reflects much of the shifting national sentiment echoed in or created by the political and religious climate surrounding modernization. That is not to suggest that exorcism cinema is wholly ideological, but more accurately the recycling of iconography, themes, and allegory symptomatizes a broader cultural discourse in which shamanism, rurality, modernization, and orthodoxy interplay as popular cultural tropes that shift and change with time.

Exorcism Cinema as a Social Barometer: The Shamanic Panic

The ideological underpinnings of exorcism cinema offer an access point from which to read the films in this study. In their contextualization of the traditional exorcism narrative, Olson and Reinhard suggest that the social concerns often found in the exorcism subgenre represent “prevailing anxieties in any given historical period”(Olson and Reinhard

2017, 60) especially concerning groups like women and minority cultures. Kyle Bishop describes the portrayal of these groups in horror cinema as subaltern monstrosities that have been othered and “oppressed by the dominant, symbolic order.”(Bishop 2008, 146) The films themselves reflect anxieties the audience may not be able to fully articulate or understand.(Lowenstein 2008) When read as reflecting societal anxieties, exorcism films have precedent for articulating ideological and sometimes physical conflicts regarding the oppression of other non-dominant groups or marginalized individuals.

Similarly, Sotiris Petridis observes that the proclivity of similar images, tropes, and symbolism depicted in exorcism films of the same period reflect the anxieties of the period in which they are produced. He goes on to suggest that film genres and subgenres experience cycles of growth and decline, in part because they are “influenced by the social, political and economic aspects of the period that they were/are produced in.”(Petridis 2014, 77) In this case, Petridis’s observation particularly applies to horror cycles, to which the exorcism subgenre belongs. It has been noted that exorcism films primarily function as allegories for widespread sociocultural concerns regarding female sexuality and non-dominant groups, and therefore “the subgenre’s effectiveness waxes and wanes in relation to such fears.”(Olson and Reinhard 2107, 87) The traditional exorcism narrative allows producers and audiences to create allegories that enable them to find and relieve what Stephen King has referred to as “national phobic pressure points.”(Petridis 2014, 74) The question then is, what pressure points have traditional Korean exorcism films addressed and where did they originate?

In her 2021 book, *Contemporary Korean Shamanism: From Ritual to Digital*, Liora Sarfati devotes a chapter to depictions of shamanism in television and film. Our studies are similar in that we are both invested in analyzing how films about or involving musok “define and articulate meanings, values, and social roles” which stem from “historical social and cultural developments.”(Sarfati 2021, 61) However, Sarfati, as a cultural anthropologist, is invested in examining “plot (how *mudang* (a priestess of Korean shamanism) fit in the film’s narrative), depiction (visual and textual representation of *mudang* and musok), social acceptance (how the film shows the social relationships of *mudang*), and presumed features (how musok is expected to develop).”(Sarfati 2021, 62) While she does a more than satisfactory analysis of some of the early examples of musok in films I will discuss in this article, some differences of focus should be addressed before beginning an analysis.

Her analysis more generally addresses the range of musok and *mudang* depictions across genres, emphasizing government regulation and censorship, and less emphasis on the declining profile of shamanism in film. She ends with a conclusory focus on *mudang* and musok documentaries which she describes as chronicling how the cinematic me-

dium has been used as a vehicle “of cultural processes.”(Sarfati 2021, 79) While I provide context, both historical and cinematic, for the early depictions of mudang and musok specifically in horror films, the ultimate purpose is not to analyze early depictions of musok, but rather to orient them as place markers or standards to contrast the extreme contemporary cinematic representations.

The early shamanic exorcism films of the 1960s and 1970s positioned the practice at odds with modernity and authoritarian government. The films produced specifically during this authoritarian period articulate the political rhetoric and establish connections between orthodox religious practice with modernization and development created under Korea’s compressed modernity. The decline of shamanism paralleling the policies of the Park Chung-Hee Regime has been adequately explored in a contemporary context by several contemporary historians.³ The best and most practical description of the positioning of shamanism at odds with modernization is the complex integration of Christian and Buddhist orthodoxy with economics. As one of what Konstantine Vassiliev and Kirsteen Kim call the “twin engines of Korean modernity”(along with industrialization),(Kim 2010, 212) Christian orthodoxy in particular had a powerful shaping hand in policy, cultural practice, and government. More important than necessarily fleshing out the complex history of shamanism as a religion and cultural practice is the oscillation shamanism has undergone when demonized as oppositional to the Christian, Confucian, and Buddhist ideologies closely aligned with modernization under Park Chung-Hee. Historically the loose shamanic organization have been both denigrated as pro-communist and later, their cultural significance usurped by the state as a tool of identity politics. The diversity of shamanism in Korea and its position in the public sphere is further complicated by the burgeoning syncretism of many NRMs during the 1960s and 1970s, which had incorporated folk religious practices and contributed to the shifting definition of what precisely shamanism is or means in a modernized Korea.

By the 1980s and 1990s, shamanic exorcism cinema became the subject of preserving traditional culture rather than religious practice and a metaphor for reconciliation. When *goegiyeonghwa* and *gongpoyeonghwa* (early names for supernatural horror films) returned to Korean cinema in the late 1990s as *horeoyeonghwa* (contemporary horror films) as noted by Baek Moon-Im, it marked some significant shifts in the exorcism genre partially born from the IMF crisis, the dissolution of the nuclear family, and the desire of women to economically contribute to society in the workplace.(Baek 1999, 267) The female demon or ghost was often depicted as an amorphous and fetishized commodity, and the possessed woman is merely repeating the trauma of women they never knew. This marked a shift for spiritual conflict and religion from the subject of melodrama, as a mode that dominated much of the period’s cinema, toward spiritual conflict as the stuff of horror.

These two somewhat distinct periods of shamanic exorcism cinema offer a point of access to examine how contemporary exorcism cinema is built on the tropes and legacy of previous iterations while also revealing some of the more interesting differences or gaps in representation.

Parallels: Shamanic Horror Then and Now

Through close analysis of the texts, it is crucial to examine how the contemporary set of shamanic exorcism films embody or challenge the ideological positions of their originals while signifying their own contemporary anxieties. These connections are especially important considering how the shamanic exorcism films of previous periods can be read as nudges toward the religious and cultural orthodoxy of contemporary examples.

If the contemporary iterations of shamanic exorcism in horror films contain textual elements like themes, characters, and locations, that are similar to their predecessors regarding these ideological positions, should they not be viewed as extensions or reaffirmations of the dominant hegemonic portrayals? As such, the films symbolically and allegorically address contemporary shifts of national sentiment, which “gain attractive power by thematically developing concerns of special appropriateness for the period in which they were made.”(Carroll 1990, 159) In the following sections, contemporary exorcism films and their predecessors are organized around the themes of space and gender, revealing the downward spiral of cinematic sentiment toward shamanism. While interrelated in many ways, space and gender offer two tangible and observable frameworks through which we can perceive the transformation of shamanic representation in film and its relationship to the transformational period of Korea’s modernization.

Modernizing and Traditional Spaces

The spatial tensions between the urban and industrial forces of modernization and traditional rurality are a theme ever-present in the oeuvre of shamanic exorcism cinema. While contemporary shamanic cinema often reads like a variation on many of the same themes, it continues to reflect the dichotomy as constructed around modernizations discourse of homogeneous time. Bliss Cua Lim suggests that the fiction of a homogeneous national culture is founded on this ascendancy of homogeneous time.(Lim 2009, 34-35) For shamanic horror films, which often complicate notions of a singular national culture at any given point in history through the overlapping and influencing of disparate ways of being, like the coeval existence of the traditional and the mod-

ern, is itself a critique of modernizations' unifying mirage of progress. The inability of shamanism and modernization to coexist in shamanic horror films reflects underlying tension of traditional national character at odds with post-colonial identity.

The contemporary shamanic exorcism film is very clearly influenced by the films, foundational tropes, and motifs from previous generations of musok cinema. *Ssal* (1963; Dir. Shin Sang-Ok), for example, while more social and political melodrama than horror, offers a good starting place for understanding shamanism's role in Korean cinema and how easily it flows between the traditional, the ecological, the authoritarian, and the horrific. *Ssal* is an early film that depicts the shaman as oppositional to the country's development, and technological and economic advances that supposedly benefit the common man. In the film, a shaman confronts a developer with plans to build a new irrigation system. Unable to sway the project manager's opinion, the shaman turns their attention to the villagers themselves by spreading fear of retribution from the mountain spirits. Though devoid of exorcism and many of the tropes of spiritual sickness associated with the more frightening representations of shamanism in Korean cinema, the film is a harbinger of things to come. Released mere months after the military coup that installed Park Chung-Hee to the Korean presidency, the film demonstrates the prevailing shamanic hangover manufactured mainly during the development of colonial modernity and modernization some 50 years earlier.

The perception of shamanism as an outdated and rural practice was largely cultivated during the Japanese colonial period. The Korean press often scapegoated musok as a rural practice to rationalize concerns over the dramatic urban transformation of the 1930s. In her doctoral dissertation, Hwang Merosé traces how government, industry, and the press each had a hand in the earliest criticisms of shamanism during modernization. She cites several period newspaper articles about the pollution of urban society by backward rural practitioners of musok, most of whom were women who had migrated from the more rural areas outside the city to take up work in factories. A number of these articles, like the 1932 *Silsaenghwal* (True Life) journal article which warned that "rich urbanites" were being tainted and ruined by rural "superstitions" (Hwang 2009, 117) are repeated in some of the most apparent, tropes which position musok as an ancient superstition with little to no functional spiritual power in the modern world.

This fear of superstitious rural belief infiltrating and destabilizing the economic progress offered under early modernization underpins the spatial ethics of much of Korean shamanic and exorcism cinema. Such ethics built upon cultural distinctions created during the colonial modernization play on urban stereotypes of a migrating rural labor force. Hwang similarly explains how historically and culturally during the modernization period, "the city was the place of privilege and ethical

distinction while the poor and morally deserted resided in the “outskirts” which serves to reinforce the “socio-economic spatial segregation of inside and outside the urban.”(Hwang 2009, 117) This is reflected in the way, throughout much of the history of Korean cinema and particularly horror cinema, shamanism via rurality is squarely placed as provincial practice, out of step with progress and therefore articulates the kind of modernization propaganda first promoted during Japanese colonial modernization in Korea. This delineation of spaces and times pits the influx of Christian influence as an agent of modernization, which conflicts with the practices of the previous generations’ folk religion.

In the 1970s, the shamanic horror films reflected this conflicting association of space and ideology. Director Choi Ha-Won’s *A Shaman’s Story* (1972) pioneered a trend of representing the spiritual practice at odds with contemporary society and its’ partnership of modernization with Christianity. Based on a novel by Kim Dong-ree, *A Shaman’s Story* depicts generational conflict as a proxy allegory for the cultural conflict of shamanism with modern Korean society. The plot centers around the experiences of Mo-Hwa (performed by Yoon Jeong-hee), a local mudang, when Christianity gains a footing in her village. As a result, Mo-Hwa’s divine power declines, and uneasiness grows when she learns that her son, Wuk, has studied western theology. She performs an exorcism *kut* (rite) to rid her son and village of evil spirits, eventually tearing up a bible. The conflict between mother and son destroys their relationship and her son. Mo-Hwa, floundering in a losing battle, decides to show the spiritual superiority of shamanic practice and is asked to perform an exorcism for a drowned woman. Her performance of exorcism rites to draw the woman’s spirit and body from the water ends in vain. In her hubris, Mo-Hwa refuses to capitulate and is herself gradually subsumed by the water, never to return. *Eulhwa* (1979; Dir. Byeon Jang-Ho) the 1979 remake of a revised edition of the same Kim Dong-Ree novel *Munyeodo*, similarly reflects the central tropes of generational conflict as representing musok’s opposition to Western culture as modernization.

The typical backdrop of musok films is an isolated place like a small island or remote fishing village, where the mudang holds significant influence on local people. Along with *A Shaman’s Story* and *Eulhwa*, films like *Oyster Village* (1972; Dir. Jeong Jin-Woo), *The Early Years* (1977; Dir. Lee Doo-Yong), *Divine Bow* (1979; Dir. Im Kwon-Taek), and *The Placenta* (1986; Dir. Ha Myeong-Jung) are such examples. In places alienated from modernized social systems, the mudang controls the daily life of people as a dominant socio-cultural figure. *Iodo* (1977; Dir. Kim Ki-Yong) is the prime example of isolation and the anachronistic relationship musok shares with contemporary society. *Iodo* is an isolated and remote island that has resisted modernization, economic, social, and spiritual, and stands un-

touched by influence. One day, a tourism company plans to build a set of luxury hotels on the island. Squarely within the horrific mode, the film offers a murder, which the superstitious and backward villagers ascribe to a sea demon. However, when the tourism company manager becomes the only suspect, an exorcism is performed to exhume the dead man's body from the briny deep. Hand in hand with the deceased man's widow, the mudang performs the ritual kut and raises the body from the bottom of the ocean. The power of the mudang is absolute, and her horrific control over the inhabitants and spiritual sanctity of the island results in the widow being spiritually impregnated by the corpse of her dead husband and the seduction of the tour company manager by the sexually dominant female bartender of the island.

As a point of emphasis, these early shamanic exorcism films reveal the importance of space and boundaries and their relationship to development. In essence, they critique the points of contact where tradition meets progress. These same contact points expose the uncanniness at the heart of horrific depictions of traditional rurality. Fred Botting notes the gothic (and by extension horror) draws heavily on themes of a metamorphosing a once amicable space into one defamiliarized. (Botting 2014) Things become unstable, uncanny, and not what they seem. The juxtaposition of rurality and urbanity in early exorcism cinema plays on insecurities of development. Side by side, ancient religious practices and contemporary Korean society are askew. The gothic concepts of time, space, and the uncanny share many similarities to Kim Hyun Kyung's concept of "defamiliarizing the familiar"(Kim 2011, 26) and similarly addresses the creation of this liminal space as an engagement with Bliss Cua Lim's assertion that the coexistence between the real and the fantastical elements in East Asian cinema articulates "symbolic excess through which the active force of the supernatural provides a mechanism of critiquing capitalist enhancements."(Lim 2009, 135) Whether the development of an isolated island or a small village infiltrated by foreign religious practice, the themes of tradition and modernity consistently reveal spatial implications.

This conflict occurs through a collapse of the boundaries, usually separating the elements of fantasy and reality, which in the traditional lineage of the Western Gothic are much more clearly defined. The Gothic film is a "medium through which things are allowed to pass, from the past into the present, from death to life, from the beyond to hear and back again."(Kavka 2002, 236) Gothic film works through the iconography of the visual tied to the otherworldly presence in a way that sets the viewer's "nerves on edge."(Kavka 2002, 236) It is this kind of liminality that collapses the present into the past is an essential element of exorcism cinema and horror in general.

Historically, the liminality that is so essential to gothic horror was a reality for a Korean society under compressed modernization. During this period of condensed social change and complex social order gov-

erning South Koreans' life, the portrayal of the family structure which Chang Kyung-Sup has described as the most crucial micro foundation of South Korea's economic, social, and political life, reflects the social strain of development.(Chang 2010) In this case, the liminal clash of the traditional and modern occurs by proxy. Generational conflict, typically between mother and son, is a staple of shamanic exorcism cinema. It should then be no surprise that in the 1970s, during a decade of dramatic transformation under Park Chung-Hee's *Saemaul Undong* (The New Village Movement) that musok became the central focus of a number of Korean films one might describe as portraying the strains of modernization through the motif of generational familial strife which takes place through the trope of the hometown return. This spatio-temporal transgression is representative of the gothic mode and also complicates a simple reading of shamanic exorcism films as constructed within a pure urban/rural dichotomy. Later exorcism films offer the return to one's roots as a spatial embodiment of revisiting the traumatic past.

The idea of spatial restoration, as the integration of the past within the present, is a key element of many of the shamanic films of the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, filmmakers like Im Kwon-Taek who often portrays deeply held traditions and traditional culture in his films and allegorizes the spiritual practice as one of reunification of family and country. For example, So-Hwa in Im Kwon-Taek's *The Taebaek Mountains* (1994) is a healer that conducts *sitkim-gut* (consoling ritual) to resolve the historical tragedy and lingering national sickness that resulted from the division of the Korean Peninsula and the ongoing acute ideological conflicts between South and North Korea. The representation of the shaman instigating transgenerational healing speaks to previously mentioned divides between the traditional and modern which haunt much of contemporary Korean horror cinema. A theme echoed in films that feature hereditary shamans and the idea that shamanic visions and calling are as much a curse as a blessing, as evident in *Daughter of the Flames* (1983; Dir. Im Kwon-Taek).

Daughter of the Flames is a film adaptation of Han Seong-Won's novel, and while not necessarily horrific, its backdrop of a rural village as a palimpsest between periods and generations suggests the countryside, while a traditional space for musok, is plagued by the backwardness of Confucian patriarchy and sexual violence. In a mashup of themes previously discussed in this section, the film tells the story of Hae-Jun (performed by Park Keun-Hyong), whose daughter is in a non-responsive trance. His unwillingness to pray for her well being with his devout Christian wife and her equally devout mother becomes a point of contention. After a series of nightmares which are composed of shamanistic chanting and paraphernalia, he divides to visit a psychologist where it is revealed that his mother was a shaman, and that in order to deal with his condition, he must return to his spiritual roots,

his hometown. In his search for answers, Hae-Jun meets a series of men who each have dubious relationships with his deceased mother. His mother, Yong-Nyeo, is revealed to have taken her own life by immolation after being abused, raped, or worse by these men. In the end, her abusers each justify their treatment of Yong-Nyeo as an act of trying to save her from herself, as practicing shamanism was an illegal act in the 1960's. After a spiritual awakening Hae-Jun becomes a practicing shaman, and returns to rescue his daughter from the prayer circle of his wife and her mother. After revealing his new faith, his wife slaps him, and he returns to a mudang he visited at the beginning of the film with his daughter in tow. Though shamans are almost always female, men can also become shamans. Hae-Jun's disturbing visions are a symptom of the illness that often precedes becoming a full-fledged shaman. It also explains his daughter's illness as a form of *shinbyeong*, a state of preparation by the gods or spirits. Though primarily used symbolically to represent the generational transference of *han* (generational pain and resentment), the film incorporates the idea of shamanic heredity as a stand-in for the larger theme of oppression tied to the human horrors of superstitious rurality.

In general, a mudang's spiritual power is thought to be passed from generation to generation, especially from mothers to daughters. So it should come as no surprise that the repeated motif of fractured families and identity is of singular importance in much of the shamanic exorcism cinema of the late 1990s and early 2000s. The daughters of mudang are portrayed as both ominous and spiritually strong figures in many more contemporary shamanic horror films such as *Whispering Corridors* (1998; Dir. Park Ki-Hyung), in which Gio (performed by Kim Gyu-ri) is ostracized by her classmates because her mother is a mudang, but her spiritual power provides important clues in solving mysteries at her school.

Side by side with contemporary depictions of shamanic horror and exorcism, the variations on the theme of generational tension between mothers and daughters offer some complex differences. While *Possessed* portrays the possession of a pubescent young girl, her mother, as a supremely devout Christian and single head of household, offers a reversal of the power structure from earlier films. The shaman is a fringe character who manipulates the tenants of an apartment building into worshipping the possessed girl. As noted by Nikki J. Y. Lee in her analysis of the film, "the film's Korean title, *Bulsinjiok*, connotes social implications in relation to the religious practice of Christianity in Korea. It literally means that disbelievers will fall to Hell, and is one of the commonly used phrases by people who promote Christianity in Korean public spaces."(Lee 2013, 107) The title alone, when compared to those of previous periods of the sub-genre, indicates a dramatic shift in how Christianity has usurped the influence of power that once belonged to shamanism and now receives top billing.

The Chosen: Forbidden Cave offers a compelling contemporary counterpoint as the spiritually afflicted Geum-Ju is under the possession and influence of her deceased shaman mother. Her possession necessitates her return to a rural village on Jeju Island, the site of her mother's murder. The film tells the story through competing timelines which gradually reveal the historical relevance of her mother's murder and the inescapability of her familial and spiritual roots. This sort of hereditary haunting involving the recurrence of events works to undo the homogeneous space and the linear time consciousness, departing from "notions of progress and historical chronology." (Lim 2009, 149-151) Not only does this disrupt the perceived progress of modernization, but for the purposes of this study, further articulates the significance of spatial roots, tradition, and historical trauma as foundational to the contemporary shamanic exorcism film.

More often than not, the modern and the traditional spaces of contemporary shamanic horror reflect this intersection of disparate temporalities in which the spiritually ill originates from or is drawn to the countryside. In *Svaha: The Sixth Finger*, *The 8th Night*, and *The Wailing* rurality features as the site of supernatural and paranormal encounters. The rural environs are anachronistic when compared to the urban spaces. They appear unchanged by time, populated by spirits of the past. An important aspect of the 'shamanic panic' in contemporary Korean exorcism cinema is the delineation and demarcation of space. Where examples of early exorcism cinema were preoccupied with the encroachment of development into the traditional villages represented in the respective films, contemporary exorcism films are preoccupied with the underbelly of uneven development embodied by villages lacking access to modernization, and some dying out due to urban migration. These films often concern characters who traverse the boundaries between modernized urban Korea and the rurality of the past. These characters are often men who impose the will of modernity on the chaotic and uncanny past. Their eventual resolution of the spiritual sickness is both the product of exorcising a demon or spirit from the body and exorcising the past from the present.

An emblematic example of characters who traverse from modern faiths and spaces to impose the orthodoxy of linear time is Pastor Park in *Svaha: The Sixth Finger*. As the go-between of the two competing spaces/times and religions, Pastor Park is left to solve the mystery of the Deer Mount Cult. In doing so, he must sort out its threat to and legitimacy within the contemporary Korean religious landscape. The points of contact connecting the urban and rural spaces are a means for Park to examine the past and present through his investigation, and his position as religious authority presupposes his colonial privilege as an agent of modern religious practice. Park embodies Ken Gelder's assertion in a similar concept in his reading of religious horror and exorcism films, emphasizing post-colonial rhetoric concerning the trans-

gression of boundaries and a kind of “circulation; one thing passing into another, mutating, even melting identities along the way.” These films also portray the “conflict between the modern and the traditional,” which manifests in “clashes between science and religion, or in tensions between Eastern and Western ideologies.”(Gelder 2000, 35-38) Similar spatial tropes are observable throughout much of Korean exorcism cinema.

The implication of time and history as reflected through space further supports the idea of spatial transgression as one involving access to the past and history. The act of transgression exposes the gaps between the past and present, rural and modern, while also attempting to unify the dichotomy under a single aegis of contemporality. The past haunts and possesses the present just as the fear of retrogressive rurality and associated practices threatens progress’s sanctity under modernization and urbanization.

The oeuvre of Korean exorcism cinema continually uses the themes of duality and dichotomy; twins, rural/urban, indigenous/imported to list a few examples, the idea of melding or overlapping of the two distinctly oppositional spaces of religious practice within exorcism cinema in particular “exists at th[is] intersection of the tensions between tradition and modernity.”(Olson and Reinhard 2017, 72) As such, the spaces of the film cannot be simultaneously both identifiably urban and rural, so the pathways and transgressions of boundaries also connect the different spaces and are symbolically significant. Who or what transgresses these boundaries reveals the temporal and spatial power structure of the film. The authority enforced upon the past by the present is often counterintuitive, as conservative ideology often skews traditional. However, the religious authoritarianism in exorcism cinema often reinforces traditional gender roles within contemporary religious frameworks. In this way, the gendered discourse of the Korean exorcism film also reflects a gendering of space. This discourse aligns with the established nationalist rhetoric of development in which masculine ideals represent modernization and modern spaces, while rurality and retrogression are closely aligned with femininity.

Gendered Space and Religious Authority

The urban and rural tensions articulated in early shamanic exorcism cinema and position tradition and modernization in opposition also reinforce the gendered discourse of nationalism. As an example of gendered modernity’s continued role in contemporary shamanic exorcism cinema, we can understand this dichotomy as the spatial segregation of spirituality and ethics. This segregation of space primarily applies to the rural woman, who, time and time again, has been “inextricably tied to the print media’s discussion of mudang, revealing the coloniality of this discourse.”(Hwang 2009, 123) Hwang’s examination of this phenomenon

hinges on the intersection of gender rights, urban migration, and capitalist development under colonialism and how they are processed by a modernizing Korean population. She also raises important debates about how the institutionally pervasive discourse surrounding musok has been used to “reinforce a spatially gendered dichotomy between the masculine city and the feminine countryside as settlement spaces expanded in and around cities.”(Hwang 2009, 123) This continuation of associating the musok with the rural woman is an extension of “a discourse of displacement ... [meaning] such women did not belong in cities, that they were outsiders.”(Hwang 2009, 130) These rural women, it was thought, would develop a new kind of educated social awareness upon arriving in modern metropolitan centers, which would forego their previous superstitious mindset.

A version of the same cultural and religious tropes compose much of early shamanic exorcism cinema. The shamans and their followers are mostly women who reflect many stereotypes concerning the metropolitan social order. The rural women represented in the films are typically older, understood to be single or divorced, and reflect what would have been traditionally understood as the low end of the social order insofar as they negatively contrast the “positive gender roles in the structuring of a moral society.”(Hwang 2009, 130) However, rather than an urban infestation of superstitious country-folk, the locus of power is instead positioned in the rural. As the wheels of modernization leave the sanctuary of religious orthodoxy portrayed in Seoul, the skepticism of urban modernity toward shamanism all but disappears in the countryside. Rather than the superstitions of musok interrupting city life and unsettling urban modernity, the crisis of progress is expressed through a rural community uncomfortable and apprehensive about the commercialization and government regulation as a product of rapid industrialization in the wake of the post-rural exodus.

Two films that offer differing threats of masculine domination and subsumption of rural feminine power are the aforementioned *Iodo*, and the more subtle *The Hut* (1980; Dir. Lee Doo-Yong). Because *Iodo* represents the most extreme pairing of femininity with rurality in that the isolated island itself is a literal ‘no man’s land’ ruled by women, clearer connections can be made between the supernatural femininity as a protecting force inhibiting the commercialization of the island. Both *Iodo* and *The Hut* similarly hinge on the murder of a male authority figure, and the spiritual power of the shamans subvert or re-assert male authority and with it the linear, patriarchal, homogeneous temporality that marks modernization.⁴

In *The Hut*, the eldest son of village chief Kang, becomes sick and a shaman is called. The shaman, while attempting a cure, finds that the cause of the illness is the vengeful spirit of her father. The ghost reveals to the shaman that she must do his bidding and kill chief Kang and his family if she wants him to rest in peace. The mudang in

The Hut, Ok-Hwa (performed by Yu Ji-in), is a revolutionary character struggling against a suppressive patriarchal social system on all sides with her supernatural power. She is torn between her responsibilities to the spiritual and material worlds and her attachment to the natural and spiritual prevents her integration into the masculine social order. After exacting her fathers revenge on Kang, she becomes possessed by a spirit and the bitterness of generations of women. While the film takes a neutral, if not positive, perspective regarding shamanism, the film does critique rurality as both the conduit of female spiritual power and the location of national backwardness in female suffering. While critiquing some of the strict Confucian values shared with developmental authoritarianism, the inability of Ok-Hwa to practice outside of masculine authority problematizes a more feminist, discursive reading of film.

This pairing of female dominance with rurality is a defining trait of colonial creation that has carried over to the modern-day. As a point of analysis, gender in the contemporary exorcism film reveals several contradictory aspects of gender within Korean modernization. While the previous eras of shamanic exorcism films portray women imbued with spiritual power, contemporary examples portray a pervasive male authority. In the case of *Svaha: The Sixth Finger*, *The Priests*, *Metamorphosis*, *The 8th Night*, and *The Wailing*, the male authority figure is that of the religious authority. Priest, pastor, or monk, the various incarnations of male-dominated religious authority provide an androcentric hand to enforce the religious orthodoxy closely tied to the authoritarian developmental state.

We see other forms of male authority figures represented in *Possessed* (a detective), *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave* (a psychologist and an antagonistic priest), and *The Piper* (the village chief). These alternate versions of male authority assert masculine dominance and operate with the same kind of restorative qualities as religious authorities in other films, often as stand-in father figures for the predominantly female afflicted. That is to say, the contemporary inclusion of the masculine authority character, so closely aligned with modernized Korean religious practice, provides a skeptical counterpoint to the superstitious beliefs of shamanic exorcism practice. These characters are more than just a representative of the modern, but also a figure of western influence and the construction of conservative traditionalism associated with the restoration of the premodern gendered order and the control operated by men upon women in the traditional family organization. By suppressing problematic and retrogressive women, the male authority again consolidates the hegemony of masculine modernity under the ideals of nationalism.

The impulse of nationalism as a tool of authoritarianism to unify a people demands moral purity, which is often voiced through gendered rhetoric. According to Choi Chung-Moo, nationalism “represses ambivalence about and contradictions in women's subjectivity and therefore

leaves no room to negotiate. Women of a postcolonial nation are denied an opportunity to decolonize their split (or multiple or hybrid) subjectivities, which are shaped under colonial oppression.” As a product of this “specter of postcolonial schizophrenia and the nationalistic repression of feminine subjectivity,” the afflicted women of the contemporary exorcism film represent opposition to the very essence of gendered nationalism as a means to privilege the masculine subject of the nation, while postcolonial feminine subjectivity may be “reified in a wide range of cultural fields: rejection and longing, denial and conformity, resistance and complicity.”(Choi 1996, 28) The necessity to re-install patriarchy where it no longer exists is also symptomatic of the controlling hand of Confucian authoritarianism and the androcentrism of the developmental policies of the Park Chung-Hee regime.(Moon 1998, 35-36) *The 8th Night* features one such reification of the female spirit within the hegemonic masculine discourse of contemporary exorcism cinema. In fact, women are almost completely absent from the film and shamanism is nothing more than just a background piece of the larger spiritual milieu. Passive and inert, the shaman was prophesied as the 8th and final “stepping stone” of the spiritual sickness, meant to resurrect a Buddhist demon. While the virgin shaman is the object of pursuit for a demon hunting monk and a police detective, it is revealed that she has been skipped over. The demon possesses another ancillary character, the bumbling sidekick of the detective, who has the same star chart as the shaman. Almost completely absent from *The 8th Night*, the true female shaman is manipulated by the ghost. The demon does possess two women as “stepping stones,” a student and a sex-worker, while the female shaman plays no active role in the fulfillment of the prophecy. That role is instead passed along to masculine authority. The disgraced monk and police officer fulfill the trend of dual active male authority figures which battle the demon in a forest near a monastery outside of Daegu.

As a political tool, the historical anti-authoritarian affiliation of shamanism further speaks to why the male religious authority figure can easily stand in for dictatorship. Shamanism’s links to the *Minjung* (people’s) movement are well documented. Originally used as “a political term used by both nationalists and leftists during the colonial period and in the post-war years,”(Koo 2001, 143) *Minjung* is a term with an emphasis on national character. It was also a relatively vague term, similar to the proletariat or lumpenproletariat. From a historical standpoint, *minjung* approximately translates as the Korean petit bourgeoisie, mainly composed of university students and ‘intellectuals,’ in a coalition seeking to serve the Korean proletariat. Even the Marxist terminology denotes the opposition to authoritarianism posed by many *Minjung* organizations. *Minjung* activists were invested in the culture and traditions of the common people and identified with the local traditions of Korean culture like shamanism and broader folk traditions.

These aligned their revolutionary philosophy with the ‘communal’ spirit found in ancient shamanistic rituals.

Throughout contemporary and hyper-masculinized Korean exorcism cinema exists a broken matriarchy that subsumes the largely absent patriarchy. Where we once observed the power of the female shaman to exorcise and restore, and men as equally afflicted with spiritual illness and shinbyeong; the overwhelming majority of contemporary exorcism cinema is concerned with women who fail to fall in line with traditional gender roles and are restored only through patriarchal institutions of religion and the state. The afflicted women of contemporary exorcism cinema are often single mothers, as in the case of *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave*, and pubescent young women, as in *The Wailing*, *The Priests*, and *Possessed*. The transgressions of cultural boundaries play a role, as the women in the contemporary exorcism film are productions of the undesirable cultural transformations associated with the unintended consequences of modernization, that being the cultural impact of internationalization and westernization.

In *Possessed*, the afflicted family is entirely composed of women; a single mother, a university student daughter, and a pubescent sister. In fact, most of those under the influence of the possessed young woman are themselves, single older women, and the shaman herself. The women at the center of more contemporary exorcism narratives are also similarly emblematic of the oppositional nationalist stereotypes of femininity most prevalent from the years of the Japanese occupation through the immediate postwar era, which deny less simplistic and diametrical representations of femininity. This denial of divergent femininities falls in line with nationalistic writers of the same period who, in the creation of the binarily opposed images of Korean womanhood, do so through the oppositional spaces women occupy.

Svaha: The Sixth Finger features a group of older, divorced, or single women, who form the syncretically inspired Deer Mount Cult. Their status as superstitious and backward followers of a false prophet is spatially demarcated in the film as purely rural. On the fringes of modernization, it is left to Pastor Park (performed by Lee Jung-Jae) to investigate the heresies, reimpose patriarchy via male religious authority, rectify the spiritual illnesses, and ultimately to solve the mysteries surrounding the cult and its leader Kim Je-Seok (revealed at the end to be Kim Dong-Soo played by Yoo Ji-Tae). Kim Je-Seok’s followers, a group of mostly rural women, reflect one side of this gendered discourse. Their position on the fringes of society and the outskirts of modernization aligns with traditional, stereotypical depictions of women at the margins of society as the syncretic faithful.

A very different form of male authority is imposed in *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave*. In the film, a respected art dealer and single mother of a daughter who experiences possession as a part of the shinbyeong brought on by her hereditary line connected to a shaman murdered for

rebellion during the Jeju April 3 Incident. Her independence from the traditionally accepted Confucian order and her status as a single woman align with representations common to most contemporary depictions of the mother figure in the exorcism subgenre. Geum-Ju, the afflicted single mother of *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave*, is an educated, gainfully employed, independent of male guidance that embodies the traits of westernization and lifestyle created outside of traditional Korean, Confucian patriarchy.

The women in these films are, in some part, representations of the pushback against the revolution in modernizing colonial Korea. This revolution reached far beyond the political area into how contemporary Koreans understood and reflected upon their place in society and the sensations evoked by the new urban spaces created under the project of modernity. A growing middle class and the new economic freedoms of workers who migrated during the rural exodus of industrialization changed the nature of gender dynamics which we can observe in the contemporary exorcism film. Urban Seoul experienced a population explosion under the modernization project. Contemporary writers wrote of a modernizing Seoul under foreign influence as evoking a kind of sophistication and “cosmopolitan ennui that registers only after people grow tired of modernity’s breath-taking novelty.”(Jeong 2011, 29-30) In the contemporary shamanic exorcism film, such observations bring to mind a kind of horrific rhetoric assigned to a specific subset of colonial femininity, which we find echoed in the duality of possession itself which dismantles the complexities of the modern condition in favor of nationalistic models of womanhood.

Those afflicted by spiritual sickness in the shamanic exorcism film are contradictory female figures. Whereas shamanism is historically a female practiced folk religion, women suffer in contemporary cinematic representations. Where women once held spiritual authority, they now require a masculine religious authority to rectify their illness. Whereas the influx of rural women once marked the country’s urbanization, their contemporary urban counterparts must return to the countryside to cure the illness. These women represent a specific Korean manifestation of femininity, that of the woman who has sold her soul to the lifestyle and morals of progress. In many respects, the afflicted women of contemporary exorcism are extensions of the ‘New Women’ and the ‘Modern Girl’ who emerged during different periods of political and social upheaval to embody the adverse effects of modernity and the impact of shifting gender roles that resulted from access to modernization. In the afflicted women of exorcism cinema, we can see the relationship between clandestine Korean femininity as polluted by multi-national, post-colonial capitalism play out through the tropes regarding the pervasive material fetishism spurred by economic transformation. Because they do not ascribe to traditional gender roles espoused by nationalism, the afflicted women become possessed by the past their lifestyle rejects.

In order to resolve their spiritual sickness, they must return to the genesis of their transgression and the spaces of traditionalism.

Whether it be Geum-Ju in *The Chosen: Forbidden Cave*, So-Jin and her mother and sister in *Possessed*, or Mi-Sook in *The Piper*, women are pushed to the spatial margins of modernization in a forced return to rural traditionalism. Whether an art dealer, single mother, student, or representative of female authority, the women of Korean exorcism cinema participate in and benefit from urbanization, industrialization, and westernization. These stigmatized identities of single, educated, young women working independently of male oversight have historically been stigmatized and vilified under the flag of nationalist masculinity. (Suh 2013, 11-43) The conservative nature of horror cinema makes this unsurprising considering the historical precedent of the demonization of feminine subjectivities, which partake in the consumer and cultural miscegenation which characterized early modernization on the peninsula.

While from very different periods and historical contexts, both the 'Modern Girls' and 'New Women' similarly expose the gendered discourse at the heart of gendering development and the spaces transformed by modernization. Like the women of exorcism cinema, the 'Modern Girls' and 'New Women' rejected their traditional role within the Confucian hierarchy. They inspired contradictory reactions from the establishment. As objects of fascination and repulsion within polite society, they were often represented as "corrupt, soulless dolls." (Cho 1997, 88) They shunned traditional gender roles, and as a result, much of what was written about them had to do with their soul in danger. More than just an interesting parallel to the very concept of exorcism cinema, the souls and bodies of women who reject traditional circumstances historically signify the "Other", which threatens the dominant ideology. The antipathy against the visualization of female sexuality or femininity outside of patriarchy is alive and well in Korean shamanic exorcism cinema. The libidinal, fetishized, and commodified female body of independent women portrayed in Korean shamanic exorcism cinema is similarly spatially manifested as the repressed other, cursed to return to the rural past to atone for their contemporary transgressions.

Conclusion

To bring the discussion back to what Stephen King has termed "national phobic pressure points," (Petridis 2014, 74) exorcism cinema is an outlet for producers and audiences to create allegories for contemporary anxieties. The shift of shamanic power and the decline of the female spiritual figure reveals a reborn conservative cultural position regarding gendered authority and reinvestment in the machinations of developmental authoritarianism. In recent history, shamanism has em-

bodied the decentralization of authority; political, religious, and otherwise. Historically identified during the authoritarian developmental state as cooperating with anti-dictatorial factions of Korean resistance, shamanism was an illegal practice with highly substantive roots as a distinctly Korean cultural artifact. Aligned with various incarnations of the Minjung movement, shamanism embodies the spirit of resistance both politically and religiously. The rural spaces of the shamanic exorcism film articulate a specific set of cultural characteristics and contradictions related to modernization and female subjectivity.

Evident in the contemporary exorcism films representations of femininity divergent to nationalistic representation, the possessed woman in exorcism cinema denotes the desire for modernization outside of authoritarianism while the priests who exorcise the possessed women seek to reinforce authoritarian patriarchy. This contradiction challenges concepts of nation, class, and gender and is observable in how contemporary shamanic exorcism uses space to orient constructions of identity. Critics have pointed to the horror genre as being a vehicle of predominantly conservative ideology. The same can be said for contemporary shamanic exorcism films. The women of shamanic exorcism cinema are often in positions unfettered or unregulated by a consistent male presence. Single mothers, educated and independent women, and disobedient daughters are portrayed as spiritually compromised, and sick, embodying the consequences of a dissolved Confucian patriarchy. The contemporary trope of the priest, pastor, monk, psychologist, or police detective, by any other name, while in line with the international conventions of exorcism cinema, signal a final nail in the coffin of effective female shamanic representation in the Korean exorcism film.

Notes

1. As pointed out by Douglas Cowan. *Sacred Terror: Religion and Horror on the Silver Screen* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2008); Christopher J. Olson and CarrieLynn. D. Reinhard, *Possessed Women, Haunted States: Cultural Tensions in exorcism Cinema* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017)

2. As one of many examples see “32 People Found Dead in South Korean Plant,” *The New York Times*, August 30, 1987, Section 1, Page 14.

3. The most recent examples of cultural historians include Shalon Park, “The Politics of Impeaching Shamanism: Regulating Religions in the Korean Public Sphere.” *Journal of Church and State*, Volume 60, Issue 4 (Autumn 2018): 636–660; Brandon L. Santos, “South Korean Nationalism and the Legacy of Park Chung-Hee: How Nationalism Shaped Park’s Agendas and the Future Korean Sociopolitical Landscape” (PhD diss., Chadron State University, 2018); and Sam Han, “Han and/as Ressentiment: Lessons from Minjung Theology,” *Religions* 12, no. 2: 72. (2021).

4. Bliss Cua Lim cites historian Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum’s idea that the clock is an “index of urban modernization” or a tool that naturalizes historical modern time as universal. This is oppositional to the world of spirits and ghosts that compose the shamanic milieu. (Lim 2011, 20-22)

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