An Analysis of the Autobiographies of the Massacre Victims' Bereaved Families in the Period of the Korean War: A Storytelling of Family as Accusation Politics

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Civilian Massacre and Autobiography Culture

Some bereaved family members of those victims killed in civilian massacres during the Korean War have published their autobiographies and life histories, where their own personal histories have been organized. These autobiographies and life histories are composed of oral testimonies or direct writings by themselves. They include the meaning that their own traumatic experiences or memories have become narrativization and textualization. It is not common that civilian massacre victims' bereaved families have their autobiography culture in Korea, because they were not easily allowed to write their autobiographies under the weak socio-economic conditions or their cultural tastes. Furthermore, their autobiographies are the result of painful work for they had to tell their pasts, which could not have been told under the condition that the culture of state violence had not been eradicated properly. Up to now, autobiographies that deal with their general life histories by their own writing are very rare, and most of them are composed by oral testimony.

Generally, the meaning of autobiography and life history in the research

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of state violence or civilian massacre is different from oral testimony. In Korea, the work of truth seeking about the civilian massacres has proceeded vigorously from the beginning of 2000. As a result, a lot of oral testimonies related to the various incidents and themes have been accumulated through this government's work. Especially, the Korean government has established various commissions for settlement of past wrongs, and investigated and revealed the truth of each case. Therefore, the oral testimonies of the victims could acquire institutional authority and legitimacy. These oral testimonies have contributed to the victims' personal experiences and pains, which were oppressed by state power or were not recognized socially to formulate as social truth in the public area of the state.

While oral testimonies of the victims' bereaved families contributed to the truth seeking work of the state, they also had a lot of limitations in the research of the victims' personal life histories or daily life histories. The testimonies of the bereaved are mainly concentrated on proof of damage to the victim related to the massacre. Naturally, their personal stories, like daily life and experiences, their loss and pain, and frustration and anger were reduced or cut out of the people's interest for larger discourses like truth seeking or the settlement of the past. The present interest about state violence or investigation into the facts of damage had more power than micro stories like personal lives or histories, so truth seeking or the revealing of state violence were considered more important. The victim's oral testimony here was not a story of a person who had suffered from the past, but strong evidence to prove state violence. Compared to this, the autobiography and biography of a victim's bereaved family has strong merits, which can make us understand the problems or relations among personal pains and family, society, and state violence through a victim's personal life, experience, and history. Therefore, it is helpful to understand how the massacre influenced personal live and the conscious world on the side of life history, and how the memory of massacres persists and continues to the present on the side of memory. However, there are only a few works about the autobiographies of the
victims' bereaved families till now. The oral testimonies of bereaved families related to civilian massacres were relatively well proceeded, but the autobiography or biography which dealt with their whole life history were not published until the past settlement movement publicly began in 2005. Since then, a few books have been published, but the study in this field has not been done properly.

This article will analyze the autobiographies of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn [Seo Youngsun], Yŏ Kiwon [Yeo Kiwon], and Pak Hŭich’un [Bak Huichun]. They all have common denominators in their biographies and life histories, which dealt with personal past experiences and histories; they did not only deal with a specific incident or facts related to the civilian massacre, but they also were personal biographies. Even though they all have common characteristics that dealt with personal whole life histories, they also have a clear distinction. That is, the book of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn is an autobiography, and Pak Hŭich’un and Yŏ Kiwon’s book are one of series of civilian oral biographies on the basis of oral testimonies.

The object of analysis of this article is mainly related to the civilian massacre among their whole life histories. They all have the same experiences that their parents were victims of a civilian massacre during the Korean War and that they grew with these memories in their childhood or youth. Furthermore, this article will analyze the process that a person who was a victim of a massacre realizes his/her identity through silence and adaption, and finally change to the main subjects of resistance who are indignant against state violence in these autobiographies.

**Family History as a Present Memory**

In the light of the structure of narration or storytelling, autobiographies and life histories of the bereaved families who are related to civilian massacres have a characteristic to tell and represent their traumatic memory of the past in their texts. The first characteristic of these autobiographies is related to the subject of narration. Even though the
superficial subject of remembering, storytelling, or narratives was the author himself/herself, the main stream was still his/her family or parents. The damages of the parents were transferred and handed down to their family and himself/herself, and the scope of the damages was not restricted to a personal one, but expanded to the whole family. The parents or family to the bereaved are the main core of the language world to express their past and trauma.

These structures of writing and story-telling in their autobiographies are related to the facts that the victimization of their parents was a big and deep scar to their lives. Sŏ Yongson wrote, “I don't know how many times I cried in my mind when I remembered my mother. . . If my mother were alive, my younger brother would not have died, and my 5 siblings also would not live separately from each other.” Pak Hŭich’un also wrote, “The victimization of my father influenced my family, but especially gave 'a crucial influence to my life.' . . I am still wandering and 'talking gibberish' when I have to say something about my father.” He added, “If my father wasn’t victimized then, I might have another life different from now. . . “

The second characteristic is the representation of their family's history in the present life. The family history in their autobiographies is a not past one, but is still a living and present history. Therefore, it represents their daily lives. Usually the bereaved families are not direct victims, but the survivors as children or youths. This means that they wrote their autobiographies based on their memories of their childhood or youth on the basis of an adult’s perspective. The autobiographies of the bereaved have shown that the past memories—childhood or youth—were dependent on their present standpoints. That is to say, their memories still have strong persistence to the present through a contemporization of their past memories. The bereaved families remembered their past experiences like present events, such as their parents being dragged by the police or authorities, they met their parents again or looked for them, and they wandered to find their parents' dead bodies. They still give meanings to these events in the present.

The selective character of memory constantly appeared right here. The
past memories are scars to the bereaved families. To write an autobiography is to discover, even to create, a meaningful pattern of one's own past. A memory needs to be selected according to this pattern. To the bereaved, the family is just a place of memory and a starting point of a story that can be said about his/her painful past and present life. Their families’ appearances or the places where they had to be separated from their families are still places imagined and represented in their memories. The family is a space of memory that reminds the bereaved of their past experience and pain continuously.

Sŏ Yŏngsŏn still recalls the scene when she was separated from her mother in her childhood. She wrote it in her book like this: “In the end of December, a three person masked rightist squad came to my house and took my mother to their place. I followed them some distance, but they shouted to me to go back. I was so scared, so I could not help but come back home. This was the last moment when my mother and we, five siblings, were separated forever.” After then, she went to the distillery place where her mother and other people were under detention, but she could not enter into the place because of fear. She wrote, “This act has still remained a big burden in my mind in spite of fifty years having passed since then.” Yŏ Kiwon also wrote, “When I was 18 or 19 years old, my father was victimized by them. I have not been able to find his dead body, and it's still my grudge.” In the case of Pak Hŭich’un, the police took his father to the police station, and he could meet him at the police station the next day. He said, “I didn't have a slightest idea that they would kill my father then, and it is truly my regret in my heart.” After then, Pak Hŭich’un went to Komt’ijæ [Gomtijæ], where the massacre had been executed, many times in order to find his father's dead body, but he could not find it because the dead bodies were already so decayed.

In traumatic memories, the past is not simply a history over and done with. It lives on experientially and haunts and possesses the self or the community. Like Sŏ Yŏngsŏn’s story, to the bereaved families, “Everything experienced in my [Sŏ Yŏngsŏn] childhood, even a short
scene has been unforgettable things in my vivid memories.”

The separation from her parents to her was ‘not only an ineffaceable scar but was also vividly an engraved and piled up sorrow’ in her childhood.

The bereaved families constantly took responsibilities for their remaining families' lives despite the separation from some family members or parents by the massacres. Nobody except their family members could share their pains together. The state watched and controlled them as perpetrators, but there was no object to which they could appeal for their difficulties. The bereaved were isolated from society like their neighbors or relatives as well as the state. In the case of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, she had many relatives, but all of them were in difficult situations and poor just after the war, so they could not help her. She wrote: “My first uncle's house was also deprived of all food by the right-wing public peace organization (Chiandae). So they suggested that we seek for any food by ourselves.”

Needless to say, there was no place where she could depend on under this situation.

Family was the only space where the bereaved could not only live their own daily lives, but also share and tell their resentment and pain. It could give them consolation and healing through the understanding and sharing of their scars and pain in the situation of the state and society's denial or avoidance of the civilian massacre. This became the background to make them establish a collective identity on the basis of their families and to let them form a victim's consciousness against the state. After all, the bereaved held their own lives by themselves and kept their families’ space in the absence of any family or parents, and this became the origin for sustenance of a strong bond and cohesion between the members of their own families. The meaning of family to the bereaved was a life community against state or society that led to the massacre or remained as spectators.

Silence & Adaption, and Internalization of Resistance

The autobiography and life history of the victim's bereaved has drawn
the personal resistance and silence against state violence and social adaptation. Most of them lost their parents in their youth, and state violence or the perpetrators were irresistible existences for them. Under these conditions, resistance against state violence or the perpetrators by the bereaved family were internalized and their resentments and furies were suppressed in their minds. The bereaved could not even conceive of resistance against state violence then. Let us look at the case of Sǒ Yǒngsŏn again. Her mother was taken by a rightist squad at the time. Then Sǒ Yǒngsŏn, at a young age, went to the distillery place where her mother and other people were detained in order to meet her mother. However, she was scared by an invisible pressure, so she went back home without seeing her mother. In her autobiography, she said, “This act has still remained a big burden in my mind in spite of fifty years having passed since then.”19

The bereaved who experienced a massacre or state violence suffered from the feeling of impotence at the time. Their fears of state violence continued to point of the silence. Even though Sǒ Yǒngsŏn got a job at a hospital after that and lived daily life normally, she did not tell anybody about her parents because of fear.20

Pak Hŭich’un also suffered from the feeling of helplessness and guilt since he experienced his father's death by a massacre and then wandered. Pak Hŭich’un said in his biography, “I was truly sorry for my father's death, because I was so impotent and helpless. That guilty feeling made me wander seriously after then.”21 At the beginning, this conflict and wandering did not express any resistance or defiance against the state or perpetrators and was internalized in his mind. According to Pak Hŭich’un, “There was also a regional character, but I didn't have any courage to talk with people about my father's death, especially his red story (commie story).” When he talked about his father's death, other people told him that, “You will be taken to them and die,” or “You cannot survive.”22

The fear, feeling of impotence, and silence of the bereaved continued for a long time. Of course, this did not mean that they accommodated or agreed with state violence. On one hand, the silence of the bereaved was
one type of social adaptation and survival. On the other hand, it meant the internalization of resistance or speechless defiance. On this point, the silence of the bereaved can be understood as ambivalent and possessing complex meanings. That is to say, it included the relation between superficial adaptation and internal resistance. The more the resistance was internalized, the more the adaptation was activated. Considering of the life history of the victims' bereaved by state violence, they showed paradoxically to be more adaptable and harmonized with the state and society. They even showed the tendency of over-adaptation rather than maladaptation.

In the case of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, she worked very hard in order to take responsibility for her family after her parents had been victimized. She did not work for herself, rather she worked for her younger siblings. Therefore, she lived very actively and socially in order to make money and help her siblings to study.23

In the case of Pak Hŭich’un, he applied to enter the army voluntarily, even though he didn't need to go to the army. At the time, many people did not want to go to the army and even tried to escape from military service during the war. When he applied for military service, many people called him a senseless person and even a 'crazy guy.'24 However, he worked very hard in the army and received 'the medal for his merit of catching the reds.' As the result, his name was largely engraved on a memorial tower for the merits of people of the Korean War in Chŏngdo [Cheongdo], North Kyŏngsang [Gyeongsang] Province. This means that he showed an over-adaptation as a victim bereaved in his personal life and a point of conflict between himself and a victim's bereaved identity. He himself expressed that, “My father was dead as a red, but I, the red's son, received a medal for the merit of catching reds.”25

This over-adaptation of the victim's bereaved was a general phenomenon with exceptional representation. That is to say, it was not common that the descendants of the victims related to a civilian massacre were more active and positive to anti-communism in Korean society; however, it was a general and representative phenomenon to the inner world of the
bereaved. They had to show a more cooperative attitude to the government policies in order to survive in the anti-communist society that had made them 'red' or 'left wing' in the past. Yŏ Kiwŏn also worked hard in order to be recognized in the community. He actively participated in social activities after the May 16th coup, in 1960, and became a leader in the countryside. He became the president of the Sŏngju [Seongju] County Association and also a member of the steering committee for the North Kyŏngsang Province Association several times. After all, other people said of him, “Currently, he [Yŏ Kiwŏn] is surly an anti-communist, even though he is not anti-communist fighter.”

In the light of the atmosphere of those days, their behavior looked like a very ordinary people's daily life. However, it also shows that the bereaved families eagerly tried to recognize their identity as a national (kukmin; gukmin) of South Korea. This is the second characteristic of an autobiography as a self-conscious form of narration, that is to say, a form of strong storytelling or a second reading of experiences. Moreover, they reinterpret and redefine their experiences or memories through storytelling or testimony in their books. After all, it can be understood that their storytelling or testimonies are rereadings and reinterpretations of their past histories. This bereaved family's story means that they perceive their own existences through their autobiographies. In addition, this is a method for self-representation in autobiographic form. The present point of view that the bereaved family write and tell their stories is an important method for a reviewing and re-reading of their past. It is the moment of redefinition about their behavior through the second reading of past experiences. The methods that they are telling and explaining in their autobiographies are exactly the same forms that they revealed themselves, which were contradicted, conflicted, split, and broken in their lives. They always have a self-consciousness that they are children of parents who were massacred as as a red in their internal world. Therefore, they could tell self-contradictions that make them adapt to their realities on one hand and resist against them on other hand.

The over-adaptation of the bereaved did not mean that they lost their
identities or consciousness as bereaved family members of victims and stopped their dissatisfaction or resistance against state violence. They were still shaking and conflicting between adaptation and resistance. In the case of Pak Hŭich’un, he used to save money to stow away to Japan in this period. To stow away was an escape from reality at large, but to him, it was another expression of dissatisfaction and resistance against society and the state. He told the motives of stowing away that were influenced by such factors as his father's death, resistance and retaliation, dissatisfaction with the police, and backlash against regional society.28

**Identity as a Bereaved Family and Consciousness as a Victim**

At the first time, the massacre victims' bereaved families were conflicted in their inner minds to accept their identities, and this developed to a type of succession to a victims' consciousness. Their identities were formed by the social stigma that they were children of the reds. They were applied to the involvement system (yŏnjwaje; yeonjwaje), and they were bothered by the inspection of the state because they were classified as requiring observation in their social lives. However, these were the origins of their identities and collective memories as the victims' bereaved families.

In fact, autobiography is a form of social memory. As individuals tell stories about their lives, some mobilize their personal memories to define socially relevant events, both ongoing and already passed, as they work to shape the collective mnemonic record of such events.29 The bereaved families are commonly telling about social discrimination and inspection to themselves. In the case of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, she worked at the same place as her sister in 1961, the beginning of Park Chunghee’s [Pak Chŏnghŭi] Government, but she felt it difficult to work continuously because the police inspected and bothered them by visiting so often.30

The bereaved families tried to cooperate with government policies very actively and adapt to society, but they were not considered as the people of South Korea; they were still treated as non-nation or non-citizens. Yŏ
Kiwôn’s case shows a good example. He experienced considerable difficulty with spending “a lot of money” to solve his younger brother's security screening for the military. However, his younger brother was still treated as a 'second class citizen' after finishing his military service, and even he himself was treated as a 'third class citizen.' It was very difficult for him to go to abroad, and even more difficult to become a public servant.\textsuperscript{31} They were still non-citizens, and were objects of surveillance and inspection. The bereaved families participated actively in social activities to remove the social stigma posted to them, but they could not set themselves free from the border of non-citizenship. Let's look at the case of Yô Kiwôn. He eagerly participated in government policy, and was included in a tour group for studying foreign agriculture, but excluded from that group because of his security screening. He explained his feeling at the time. “I had made big efforts for the state for many years, but I really felt frustrated when they treated me like this, and my patriotism completely disappeared.”\textsuperscript{32} In the case of Pak Hûich’un, he also adapted to society and cooperated with government policies actively, but always had a consciousness of the bereaved. In his inner mind, the self as a victim's bereaved and the self as a member of the real world continuously conflicted with each other. This type of conflict appeared from an early period, and it changed to a sort of revenge for the death of his father. When he was allowed to enter the military police school, he found, the agent of the troop of Horim, a Mr. Chông [Jeong], who was related to the death of his father. He grilled him on the motive of killing his father. When he listened Chông’s answer, “I did, because your father was a red,” he was so upset, and even swore and beat him.\textsuperscript{33} Pak began to form his identity as a bereaved with his retaliatory mentality to his father during his working life. After finishing his military service, he passed the civil service exam, but could not be assigned a position because his father was a missing person of the Korean War as a member of \textit{kukmin podo yônmaeng} \textit{[gukmin bodo yeonmaeng; national guidance alliance]}. At that time, missing persons of the Korean War were considered people who defected to North Korea. Pak felt it was unfair that his father was dead.
without any guilt, and he was at a loss for words when he knew that he could not become a civil servant because of the involvement system. He reflected that in his past he had received a medal for his merits during the Korean War, but he was changed to a 'so called anti-government person or dissident.' He said, “whenever I hear the government has some plan, I begin to think this is a lie again. They are always telling a lie.” Pak Hŭich’un was in conflict because of the fact that, “Publicly my father was dead as a red, but I, the son of a red, received a medal for the merit of catching reds in the army.” He said, “This does not have consistency to me.” The storytelling of Yŏ Kiwon and Pak Hŭich’un in their autobiographies is a process of finding the self as a victim's bereaved through doubting contradictions and splits in themselves. This also can be considered as an act that makes an important moment to re-establish their lives, histories, and meanings by telling their traumatic experiences as victims. This inner conflict and contradiction could be coordinated on the succession point of the victim's consciousness with the recognition of their existences as the victims' bereaved. Pak Hŭich’un tried to find the reason of his father's death, his real roots. He went to the police station and demonstrated to receive the documents related to his father's death, but was thrown out. Pak Hŭich’un changed his direction after then, and became a school teacher. However, he was still classified as an object for necessary observation under the Park Chunghee regime, and lived under the government's inspection. According to his expression, he could not move at all. He always lived carefully, because he knew that a mistake might give them a good excuse for punishing him. The state policy and social prejudice made the bereaved families continuously agonize about themselves and their identities as children of the victims. The identity of the bereaved was not simply a result of a person's inner reflection, but was formed in relation with the outer world, like state and society. The surveillance and the brand to the bereaved became the main soil where they could form their own identities and consciousness against the state as the other, and pursue their social solidarity. The formation of the identities of the bereaved was revealed with various shapes. That is to say,
on the personal level the bereaved tried to find the perpetrators or revenge. On the social level, they made groups of bereaved families for the investigation of the truth or were active in those groups. The case of Sŏ Yongson was the same. She was afraid of the police's inspections and bothering at first, but she always had the identity of a victim's bereaved. This appeared as the finding of perpetrators on a personal level. She said in her autobiography, “The name of the perpetrators which was kept in my deep mind was never removed.” She went to the house of Ch’oe Chungsuk [Choe Jungsuk], the chief of right-wing commandos one day in the spring of 1957, but returned with fear. However, her effort to find the perpetrators continued and finally she went to the chief's house with her sister and aunt on October 3, 1993. She asked where he killed her mother, but the chief denied his involvement with the answer, “I don't know.” Sŏ did not give up, and found another perpetrator, Kim Tonghwan [Donghwan]. She went to his house and heard his confession that he and his team shot and killed the people, including her mother, between January 6 and 8, in 1951. These contents of the bereaved families' autobiographies show the succession process of the victims' consciousness while they formed their identities as victims of state violence. This formation of self-recognition and identities as the children of the victims appeared as revenge or an effort to find the perpetrators. This was the re-establishment process of their existences and were positions through which to escape their distorted selves, which they showed as over-adaptation at an early stage.

**Storytelling about Family as Accusation Politics**

What do autobiography and life history mean to the bereaved families? To them, it has a strong character as accusation literature, which reveals themselves' and their families' pains and state violence against society, and records them. It is a form of writing or telling of the family as politics of accusation. Autobiography exposes a limit between the private and the
public; it is a representation of a personal experience meant to make a claim on public attention. Autobiographies related to civilian massacres are the same. Their personal experiences or pains can be easily converted to the public realm. Personal experiences and opinions appear in their books, and are connected to the social and public realms. In their books, the bereaved families are victims and opponents to state violence. They revealed their personal identities as children of victims who were massacred in the name of the state. Here, autobiography functions as a place and space for the comprehensive formation of identity. The testimony or storytelling in their books is a building process for producing their own narratives and subjects, and simultaneously, confirming process to their own worlds. Sŏ Yŏngsŏn cried out in her autobiography, “How did they take and kill unarmed civilians, even pure and innocent people, especially from not battlefield, but their own house? And how did they take one year old babies, seniors nearly 80 years old, and a woman who lived with 6 children as a wife without doing any bad things by way of an excuse to kill the reds?” She criticized the perpetrators, “They who have terrible human nature have lived confidently, treated as persons of national merits, and even received money from the state. Are they who killed the innocent and good civilians truly men of national merits?” Furthermore, she insisted that, “Justice will necessarily win. History has to be cleaned, and unright public power has to apologize. They will have to expiate their crime after the truth is revealed thoroughly.” As we can see above, the bereaved families were not simple and impotent victims who follow state violence without any complaints, but are active participants who build their own narratives and selves. This means that the autobiography converted personal story into a public narrative, and ultimately serve as one site of shaping their counter-narrative in public realm. Generally, the state had denied civilian massacres in the public history writings. The bereaved families made their own autobiographies and biographies in order to resist the government and society that had denied state violence and massacres. This shows how the personal stories of victims who had stayed on the margins of society were cracking the
state's official history. The bereaved autobiographies are accusation stories that confirmed their identities as families of the victims who were massacred in the name of the state, and revealed the damage to their families to society. It is important to understand the socio-political context of the accusation politics that they want to show through their autobiographies. These bereaved families started to complain about their injustice and criticize the state's violence in their books after 2005. This period was the same time for the beginning of the past settlement movement in Korea. They realized that their own identities as the children of the victims with direct or indirect experience of past settlement movement. After having their identities, they began to develop into subjects who tell their pain and experiences, thus escaping from a passive existence that hides or silences their past. In the study of the Holocaust, the various effects of writing or testimonies like resistance, survival, and remembrance have indicated their meanings. In this regard, their books can be seen as a family storytelling as accusation politics, and writing as a resistance. In the case of Pak Hŭich’un also, the writing or storytelling of autobiography is the resistance and accusation politics to state violence or perpetrators. Pak Hŭich’un wrote a book, *Podo yŏnmaeng* around 1986, before the movement for the past settlement publicly begin. Furthermore, he wrote hundreds of letters with the title, “Dear every victims of Poryŏn [Boryeon]” and spread them crying and held a memorial service for the dead at Komt’ijae where a civilian massacre was executed. The reason why Pak Hŭich’un wrote the book and articles was that, “Too many people were dead then. That made me write something for them. As far as their bereaved families who were alive, I wanted to write a book.” He was taken to the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) or police station and kicked and beaten because of writing the book, but did not stop writing. He was even more seriously beaten after resisting and swearing against their violent words during his investigation. Considering of the cases of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn or Pak Hŭich’un, it can be confirmed that the creation of their personal identities are easily connected to their writings like autobiographies, literary biographies, and biographies. It is also
shown they are growing as subjects of the writings, storytelling, and, even more, resistance against state violence. Generally, narratives, especially storytelling and personal stories, carried out certain roles to build their personal and collected identities. The storytelling and narratives in their autobiographies are not simple materials for the evidence of the past truth, but have an important meaning as language for subject formation. These writing are paths that make them perceive their identities at the personal level and realize accusation politics of state violence. These bereaved families' behaviors are connected to the participation in community activities, the formation of the meeting for civilian massacre victims' bereaved families (MVBF), and the movement for the settlement of past wrongs. Sŏ Yŏngsŏn is a representative case. She participated in the formation of MVBF in the Kanghwa [Ganghwa] region, and expanded her activities to the involvement in the movement for past settlement. Pak Hŭich’un is another case. He said, “I began to pay attention to the civilian massacre in Ch’ŏngdo [Cheongdo] (‘national guidance alliance' case) through these experiences, and have participated in the MVBF since then.” The family storytelling of Pak Hŭich’un expanded to social interest. He indicated his village people's response like this. “The bereaved families (‘national guidance alliance' case) of my hometown, county of Ch’ŏngdo, didn't know the truth. There are so many unjust cases to them, but they still think that the people who died at the time were all reds!” He criticized, “This is because every authority, during past 50 years, has taught and propagated the line that the people they had killed were reds.”

**Unending Past and Politics of Autobiography**

Autobiography and life histories are generally forms of literary expression in which an author tries to recreate his/her life. The autobiographies of the bereaved families are also a space of struggle for the confirmation and correction of their experienced world and histories
that were destroyed and distorted by state violence. The bereaved families have been testifying or telling us their pains and trauma about the loss of family members in their autobiographies. Their autobiographies are the bridges for the connection of their past and present, and nothing less than the redefining works of the meaning about their experiences and pains of their lives. Furthermore, they are the formation process of their identities.\textsuperscript{55} The writing of an autobiography is a kind of autobiography politics as the result of recognition about the meaning of their pasts or experiences. Their autobiographies are not only unending stories of their pasts, but also continuous present stories for them. The past in their stories is not simply past stories, but forever reminding memories of their daily lives. The family to them is a place for reproducing and sustaining present memories. Therefore, family as a site (place) of memory is the origin of endless arousing of past memories and the contemporization of them. In the case of Pak Hŭich’un, his mother told him, “Your father is still alive till I die, wherever he stays. Why do I have to think that he is dead?”\textsuperscript{56} Families always try to remember their parents or ancestors, and connect the past to the present with the memorial ceremony. Therefore, this memorial service is a ritual for the arousing and reproducing of their memory. In case of Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, her family, including her own siblings, has had regular memorial services for their parents since 1994, when they knew of their mother's death.\textsuperscript{57} The hometown to this bereaved family is a place they don't want to memorize, because it is associated with their parents' victimization. Furthermore, it always reminds them of the painful memory at that time with strong trauma. Such haunting memories arise, typically, from family experiences that are violent, shameful, or especially entangled and perplexing; or from the atrocities of war and persecution.\textsuperscript{58} In reality, their hometown, Kangwha to Sŏ Yŏngsŏn is a really terrible place in her memory, because it always reminds her of her mother's death. She wrote in her autobiography, “I really don't want to see or even enter one step in Kangwha, where my mother was victimized.”\textsuperscript{59} These memorizing activities in the autobiographies of the bereaved families have various meanings. These autobiographies contain the
meaning of trauma's representation about the past at the personal level. That is, they are the spaces for discontent and resistance against state violence, perpetrators, and at the same time for the bereaved families' movement. The object of remembering and storytelling, which is represented in the bereaved families' autobiographies, is not themselves but the outer world. Generally, autobiographical stories are communicative acts that are directed at a multifarious audience. The process of telling a story about one's life is a social action designed to win others over to a common understanding of some issue or situation.\textsuperscript{60} To the bereaved families, autobiography means a social activity through which they share their painful past with other people, and gain the sympathy about some specific issues. In the light of this point, the autobiographies of the bereaved families are no less than a place to represent their self and identity as children of victimized parents. Furthermore, these are spaces for accusation politics and even realization of resistance politics. This means that their autobiographies are not only personal reflecting actions, but also social works. From this point, we can think of the subversive meaning of writing politics or storytelling politics by the autobiographies.

Notes:

1 The following materials are not directly related to the study of civilian massacres or autobiographies but are helpful for this field. Kim Muyong, “Kwagŏ ch’ŏngsan chagŏp esŏ chinsil malhagi wa taehang naerŏt’ibŭ chuch’e ŭi hyŏngsŏng”, [Truth telling and the formation of counter-narrative subject in the work of the past settlement], Han’guk sa yŏn’gu 153 (2011); Kim Myŏnghŭi, “Han’guk ŭi kukmin hyŏngsŏng kwa “kajok chuŭi” ŭi chŏngch’ijŏk chaesaengsan: Han’guk chŏnjaeng chwaik kwallyŏn yu kajŏk tŭl ŭi saengae ch’eŭm mit chŏngch’i sahoe hwa kwajŏng ŭl chungsim ŭro” [Nation building of Korea and political reproduction of 'Familism': focus on Korean War leftists' bereaved families' life history and the process of political socialization], Kiŏk kwa chŏnmang 21 (2009); Kwŏn Kwisuk, Kiŏk ŭi chŏngch’i: Taeryang
haksal ūi sahoejŏk kiŏk kwa yŏksajŏk chinsil [Politics of memory: social memory of massacre and historical truth] (Seoul: Munhak kwa Chisŏngsa, 2006); Kim Kyŏnghak et al, Chŏnjaeng kwa kiŏk: maŭl kongdongch’e ūi saengae sa [War and memory: life history of village community] (Seoul: Hanul, 2005); Yun T’aengrim Ḭiyu hakcha ūi kwagŏ yŏhaeng—han ppalgaengi maŭl ū yŏksa rŭl ch’ajasŏ [The past traveling of an anthropologist—the journey to one village history of the reds] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip’yŏngsa, 2004); P’yŏ Inju et al, Chŏnjaeng kwa saram tŭl: arae ro put’ŏ ūi chŏnjaeng yŏn’gu [War and people: study on the war from the below] (Seoul: Hanul, 2003).


Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 34–35.
No Yongsŏk, 90–91.
Ibid., 94.
Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 26–27.
Ibid. 28.
Yi Yangho, 53–55.
No Yongsŏk, 85–86.
Ibid., 86, 89–90.
Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 35.
Ibid., 28.
Yi Yangho, 55; Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 36–37.
Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 34, 36–38.
This means the house of the eldest uncle of family. In Korea, the eldest son had a big responsibility for their whole family's lives, including nieces and nephews. Therefore, he was the most reliable person for all relatives.
Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 34.
19 Ibid., 28.
20 Ibid., 37.
21 No Yongsŏk, 93.
22 Ibid.
23 Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 37.
24 No Yongsŏk, 121, 123.
25 Ibid., 107.
26 Yi Yangho, 88-90.
28 No Yongsŏk, 117.
30 Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 38.
31 Yi Yangho, 88-90.
32 Yi Yangho, 88-90.
33 No Yongsŏk, 100.
34 Ibid., 175-176.
36 Ibid., 175.
37 Ibid., 243-244.
38 Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 46.
39 Ibid., 47.
40 Ibid., 48.
42 Sŏ Yŏngsŏn, 44.
43 Ibid.
45 This was an anti-communist organization established in 1949 under the pretext of “preservation and guidance for leftists.” Its original name was “national confederation for preservation and guidance” (NCPG). However, this organization was used for civilian massacres against leftists by anti-communists.
46 *Poryŏn* is NCPG’s acronym.
The connection between the creation of individual identities and writing has become increasingly important after structuralism. Some authors argue that the self is the result of writing rather than its cause and thus the self can be constantly recreated through the process of writing. In recent decades we have observed a proliferation of life-writing in its different manifestations: autobiography, literary biography, biography, auto-fiction, and memoir. Silvia Pellicer-Ortín, “Testimony and Representation of Trauma in Eva Figes' Journey to Nowhere,” *Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 33, no. 1 (June 2011), 70.


Autobiographical testimony proved to be a powerful tool in the process of reconstructing the beleaguered subject and remembering the self shattered by traumatic experiences. Suzette A. Henke, *Shattered Subjects, Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 144.

An Analysis of the Autobiographies of the Massacre Victims' Bereaved Families in the Period of the Korean War: A Storytelling of Family as Accusation Politics

Kim, Moo Yong

Some families among the civilian massacre victims' bereaved families have published their autobiographies and life histories where their own personal histories have been organized. The meaning of autobiography and life history in the research of state violence or civilian massacre is different from general oral testimony. The autobiographies and biographies of the victim's bereaved families have strong merits, which can make us understand the problems or relations among personal pains and family, society, and state violence through a victim's personal life, experience, and history. The important characteristics of the victim's bereaved autobiographies are related to the storytelling subject. The main focus of storytelling or narratives are still his/her family or parents. The family was the only space where the bereaved could not only live their own daily lives, but also share and tell their resentment and pain. It could give them consolation and healing through the understanding and sharing of their scars and pains in the context of the state's and society's denial or avoidance of civilian massacres. The meaning of family to the bereaved was a life community against the state or society, which led to the massacre or remained as spectators. The autobiographies and life histories of the victim's bereaved has drawn the personal resistance and silence against state violence and social adaptation. The bereaved who experienced the massacre or state violence suffered from feeling impotent at the time. Their fears of state violence continued to silence. The silence of the bereaved was one type of social adaptation and survival. On the other hand, it
meant the internalization of resistance or speechless defiance. Considering the life histories of the victims' bereaved by state violence, they showed over-adaptation to state and society. This was a general phenomenon with exceptional representation, but did not mean that they lost their identities and stopped their resistance against state violence. The massacre victims' bereaved families were conflicted in their inner mind to accept their identities, and this developed to a type of victims' consciousness. Their identities were formed by the social stigma that they were children of the reds. State policy and social prejudice made the bereaved families continuously agonize about themselves and their identities as the children of the victims. The identity of the bereaved was not a simple result of a person's inner reflection, but was formed in relation with the outer world, like state and society. The formation of the identities of the bereaved was revealed with various shapes in chasing the perpetrators and seeking truth, and participating in related group. In conclusion, the autobiographies of the bereaved families are forms of writing or telling of the family as politics of accusation. The testimony or storytelling in their books is a building process for producing their own narratives and subjects and confirming process to their own worlds. The bereaved's autobiography is an accusation story that they confirmed their identities as the family of the victims who was massacred by the state, and revealed the damage to family to society. In the light of this point, the autobiographies of the bereaved families are spaces for accusation politics and even realization of resistance politics. From this point, we can think of the subversive meaning of writing politics or storytelling politics through autobiographies.

**Keywords**: accusation politics, adaptation, autobiography politics, bereaved family, identity, life history, massacre, memory, oral testimony, state violence, storytelling, truth-seeking
한국전쟁 시기 민간인 학살 유족의 자서전 분석:
고발의 정치로서 가족이야기 하기

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한국 전쟁 전후 시기 민간인 학살 유족들 가운데 일부는 자신들의 개인역사를 정리한 자서전이나 전기를 발행했다. 국가폭력이나 민간인 학살 연구에서 자서전이나 전기가 갖는 의미는 일반적인 구술증언과는 차이가 있다. 민간인 학살 유족들의 구술증언은 국가의 진실규명 작업에는 기여하였지만, 한편으로 피해자 개인들의 생애사 또는 생활사 차원에서 접근할 때, 많은 한계를 안고 있다. 유족들의 구술증언은 피해자 개인의 삶이거나 역사보다는 진실규명이나 국가폭력을 폭로하는 피해사실이 중시되었다. 이에 비해 유족들의 자서전이나 전기는 피해자 개인들의 생활과 경험, 역사를 전체적으로 분석할 수 있는 장점이 있다. 이 글은 유족들의 자서전에 나타난 개인들의 생애사를 통해, 피해자 개인이 과거에 대한 침묵과 적응을 거쳐 정체성을 자각하고, 궁극적으로 국가폭력에 분노하는 저항의 주체로 형성되는 과정을 분석하였다.

민간인 학살관련 유족들의 자서전이나 전기는 내러티브나 이야기하기 구조에서 가족이 중심인 특성을 갖고 있다. 무엇보다 이야기하기 내러티브의 주체가 비록 자신이지만, 중심은 여전히 가족, 특히 부모이다. 국가나 사회가 학살을 부정하거나 외면하는 상황에서 가족은 유족들의 상처를 함께 이해하고 아파해 줄 수 있는 거의 유일한 장소였다. 결국 유족들은 가족이나 부모의 부재속에서 스스로 생활을 유지하고 가족의 공간을 지켜 나갔고, 이는 가족간의 유대감과 결속력을 유지하는 원천이 되었다. 유족들에게 가족은 학살을 주도하거나 방관했던 국가나 사회에 대항하는 생활공동체였다.

민간인 학살 유족들의 자서전에는 국가폭력에 대한 개인의 저항과 참목, 그리고 사회적 적응이 그러져 있다. 사건 당시 유족들은 부모의 학살, 죽음을 경험하면서 무력감과 자책감에 시달렸고 방황하기도 했으며, 이는 참목으로 이어졌다. 유족들의 국가폭력에 대한 참목은 사회적 적응과 생존을 위한 과정이었다. 국가로부터
폭력을 당한 민간인 학살 관련 유족들의 생애사를 보면, 역설적으로 오히려 국가에 더 순응하고 적응하는 모습, 일종의 과잉적응의 경향을 보여준다. 이러한 과잉적응이 유족으로서 정체성이나 의식의 포기, 국가폭력에 대한 불만이나 저항의 포기를 의미하는 것은 아니었다. 유족들의 이러한 내면세계는 자신들이 유족으로서 정체성을 형성하면서 표면화되었고, 이는 회생자 의식을 계승하는 형태로 발전하였다.

유족들의 정체성은 민간인 학살의 자식이라는 사회적 낙인 속에서 형성된다. 유족들에 대한 차별과 구별은 사회적으로 범주화되면서 사회 관행으로 굳어졌다. 유족들은 취업이나 직장생활, 군 복무, 해외여행 등 일상생활에서 국가의 끝임없는 감시를 받았다. 유족들은 연차제의 적응을 받았고, 사회생활에서도 요시찰 대상으로 분류되어 국가의 감시와 사찰에 시달렸다. 유족들에 대한 국가의 감시와 낙인 적기는 유족들이 타자인 국가에 대항하여 자신들의 정체성과 의식을 형성하고 사회적 연대를 추구하는 토양이 되었다. 유족들의 정체성 형성은 다양한 형태로 표출되었다. 곧 개인적 수준에서는 가해자 찾기나 가해자 복수하기, 그리고 사회적 수준에서는 진상규명을 위한 유족회 결성이나 관련 단체에서 활동하는 형태였다.

유족들의 자서전 쓰기, 또는 생애사 이야기하기는 국가폭력에 대한 저항이자 운동으로서 자신의 정체성을 형성하는 과정이었다. 자서전이나 전기 쓰기는 유족들이 자신들의 과거와 경험에 의미를 부여한 결과로서 일종의 자서전의 정치로 볼 수 있다. 자서전이나 전기는 바로 유족들이 자신의 과거를 현재와 연결시키고 나아가 자신의 경험과 고통, 삶의 의미를 재구성하는 작업이다. 유족들의 자서전은 바로 국가폭력에 순응하고 침묵하던 유족들이 자신의 정체성을 확인하고 가족의 피해를 사회에 고발하는 가족이야기이다. 민간인 학살 관련 유족들의 자서전이 갖는 중요한 의미는 고발의 정치로서 가족이야기 하기로 볼 수 있다.

주제어: 국가폭력, 고발, 고발의 정치, 구술증언, 기억, 생애사, 유족, 이야기하기, 자서전, 적응, 전기, 정체성, 진실규명, 학살, 자서전의 정치
The connection between the creation of individual identities and writing has become increasingly important after ... and memoir. Silvia Pellicer-Ortín, “Testimony and Representation of Trauma in Eva Figes’ Journey to Nowhere,”

Cecillia Castillo Ayometzi, “Storying as becoming: Identity through the telling of conversation,” in

Zoë Vania Waxman, “In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, “Distance”, and Public History,”

This means the house of the eldest uncle of family. In Korea, the eldest son had a big responsibility for their whole family’s lives, including nieces and nephews. Therefore, he was the most reliable person for all relatives.

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No Yongs

Yi Yangho, 88-90.

Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett,

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No Yongs

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