

Artist Statement

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The Text Book (Chulsoo & Younghee)

Korean textbooks are full of didactic images meant to educate children. But, in reality, for some reason our childhoods were filled with strange and shocking images. And those images somehow appear regularly in our everyday lives and affect us for the rest of our lives. People with strange memories from their childhood and I, a photographer, wore doll masks of the main characters, Chulsoo and Younghee, who appear in these elementary textbooks and we tried to recreate emotional moments from our past. And these emotional moments were in turn recreated into the textbook that remains in the memories of young Koreans who attended elementary school from the start of the 1970s to the mid-1990s.

The story of Chulsoo and Younghee that appeared in our elementary textbooks is about the memories from our youth and these memories have great influence over our lives even now. It is difficult to identify why we continue to be influenced by those memories, what their true nature is, and what their underlying causes are. There are still so many times when we still do not know how to dispel these memories, what the solution is, and what the answer is. As a result, we torture ourselves over them, try to conceal them from others and are tormented by them. What is more, there isn't an instruction manual that can be found from which we can refer to in order to overcome it, and therefore, we cannot even imagine that the reason and solutions to those incidents are close at hand. The sad reality is that from the memories that they hold within their hearts, many people suffer from humiliation, guilt, trauma, shock, and stress from which they cannot easily escape from. A possible solution for this lies within an education (not just education taught at schools but also overall social education and instruction) that is based on deep understanding and consideration for people. Also, going beyond the structural violence and typical way of narrow-minded thinking, there is need for wide range of alternative philosophy and attention. All the images in this text book (Chulsoo & Younghee) are the collection of ills that we as Koreans, and as humans, have suffered, are suffering and will suffer in the future. These images are also a personal analysis of the Korean society from

the past to the present that was done in order to overcome this collection of ills. Lastly, these images are a counterproposal that passionately calls out to counterattack society.

The hidden reality and the full of an ideal on the text book

What is the direction of the education?

'The Text book' shows lot's of aspect of the Korea and education system. At first, it tells about how many things we have been lost and forgot in Education. The Education without deep focusing on understanding of the human being and instinct, affects to the individuals in various ways and give hurts to them which can be their psychology injuries as trauma for their whole life. We haven't learned ways how to control our instinct such as violence, fear, solitude (closing), sex, distress, hallucination etc. These kinds of memories from our childhood remind me the novel 'Lord of the flies' (written by William Gerald Golding). We didn't know what was it and didn't know how to control it. Furthermore, though the enlightened images or propagandistic images which is in the text book, we disguised reality of the life and hid the dark side of the society beyond the images. We have boxed up ourselves into the ideal frame of the society and charge up that as a bible. Especially, the twisted cramming education in Korea for the university entrance examination treats children as a walking dictionary. I wonder what the main purpose of our Education is. Is this for the ideal of society or people? Without the flexibility and freedom of the thought and imagination, we just have given the shell of the human being as values of the Korean's ideal. It has caused the psychological fallout to the people.

The transition from the national trauma in the individual's trauma.

There is the problem of the environment of the Korea which is hidden in the text book. We have had painful historical experience as trauma or complex as below Japanese's colony period, the Korean war, the division of Korea into north and south, the military authorities dictatorship etc. These kinds of historical trauma caused the fast-growing economy, chaotic development of

the urban environment, adoration of western cultures and excessive competition for university entrance exams as group consciousness. These results made huge gap between wealth and poverty. Furthermore, it has twisted the environment of the Korea which is far from the Korean tradition. We have lived, played, affected and remembered these kinds of environment which can show the Korean's historical trauma's allegories and it revealed how the Korea's trauma affected to individual's trauma by the our childhood memories.

Invasion of the western culture and interruption or regards of the Korean tradition.

As we concentrated on the rapid-development as group consciousness, the Korean culture was invaded by huge cultural capitalism by U.S.A and Japan. From the Super heroes, Hollywood movies, Japanese adult manga, video games, massive sports brand (Nike, Reebok), NBA sports, WWF to Babi dolls, we had watched, was excited and being adapted these for a long time at 80's. The adoration of western cultures caused the way of the western thinking to the Korean and put great fantasy of western life into our Korean life. However, it has been run against to ours different environment and tradition (custom or values) of the Korea. There have been lot's of the side effects of the being the individual's cultural colony of other country especially to the children. Each impression in the childhood memories has various allegories which can be read as cultural aspect of Korea. As a example, the sex which we tried to hide became as seriously twisted eroticism to the children by the lower-class pornography from western and Japan.

These contents: I decoded from the memories of the young people in Korea. Including myself who have lived in Incheon (Industrial area. Second big harbor in South Korea)

Questions about the face and portraits.

I do believe that face is the diagram which planted on the body as I had shown in the 'Bare exposure'. To overcome each person's facial effects, we wear the mask of Chul-soo and Young-hee who are the main and stereotypical characters of the Korean text book. Furthermore, I made same expression on the mask which can be shown as the moment of the pain (death) or similar to the moment of the orgasm as seen 'Bare exposure' or Renaissance painting such as Caravaggio's painting. Even though the images were taken the same expression on the same mask, it has been changed, depending on different scene and camera positions. We can see the various feeling from that. I think it gives us lot's of questions about the face, facial expression, body and portraits.

Bared experience, then is this possible to heal their psychology injuries through making the images?

Confession of the individual's shameful experience can give some kinds of relief to the people. Through making some bizarre memories of our childhood which are visual and instinctive, can we heal these injuries of the individuals? Furthermore, can we give the relief to the audience who had similar experience? I wonder about the effectiveness of the shared experience or revealed experience to the audience as images.