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~~Forgetting~~ Stories from the Islands, Jeju and Calauit

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[*Abstract*]

The traumatic experiences of people from peripheral islands are susceptible to mnemocide. Such erasure of memory is facilitated by "defensive and complicit forgetting," which, according to Aleida Assmann, leads to "protection of perpetrators." My paper reflects on the vulnerability of traumas from the islands to mnemocide by looking into [1] the massacre of communists and civilians on Jeju Island, South Korea in 1948 as described in Hyun-Kil Un's short story "Dead Silence" (2017; English trans.) and [2] the eviction of residents and indigenous people from Calauit Island, Philippines for the creation of a safari in 1976 as imagined in Annette A. Ferrer's "Pablo and the Zebra" (2017). In "Dead Silence," I direct the attention to how to the execution of the villagers–witnesses to the death of the communist guerillas–is a three-pronged violence: it is a transgression committed against the innocent civilians; an act of "erasing traces to cover up" the military crackdown on the island; and, by leaving the corpses out in the open, a display of impunity. In "Pablo and the Zebra," I second that both residents (i.e., humans and animals) experience

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post-traumatic stress because of their respective displacements; thus, the tension between them has got to stop. Curiously, while it concludes with a reconciliatory gesture between an elder and a zebra, no character demanded a reparation for their traumatic past per se. Could the latter be symptomatic of a silence that lets such violence "remain concealed for a long time"?

Keywords: Jeju April 3 incident, Martial Law, Calauit Safari Park, defensive and complicit forgetting, mnemocide

Ⅰ. Introduction

In 2021, Routledge published *Memory, Trauma, Asia: Recall, Affect, and Orientalism in Contemporary Narratives*, which aspired "to re-think established insights of memory and trauma theory and to enrich trauma studies with diverse Asian texts for critically analyzing literary and cultural representations of Asia and its global diasporas" (Jayawickrama 2021). Indeed, there is a need to re-think memory and trauma theory, which became heavily associated with the Shoah, especially during the 1990s with the pioneering works of Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman that are fueled theoretically by psychoanalysis, by enriching this lens with contexts from Asia, the other region that was likewise traumatized by World War II on top of their experiences of colonizations and, eventually, compounded by their experiences of authoritarian regimes. Taking off from this movement, I turn my attention to South Korea and the Philippines, two of the many Asian countries that survived colonizations, wars, and dictatorships that still grapple with traumas suffered during those years, and the concept of forgetting, an integral part of discussions on memory and trauma, which is often eclipsed by the concept of remembering. In prevailing memory and trauma frameworks, for instance, the focus has always been on the acts of remembering for it could give insight into the events of the past that haunt and intrude in the present (see Freud, Caruth, and Felman), rather than the acts of forgetting. These could also give insight into the past—because forgetting and remembering are "twin sisters, twin powers" (Holmes qtd. in Ying 2021: 92)—but, at the same time,

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calls our attention to potential reasons why certain events of the past were kept, or had to be kept, from the present [thus the belated haunting and intrusion], which cultural anthropologist and literary studies scholar Aleida Assmann lays out in "Forms of Forgetting." Here, Assmann (2014) points out that "remembering is always framed by forgetting" but, the crux is, some forms of forgetting, like "defensive and complicit forgetting," leads to "protection of perpetrators," which do more harm than good. To illustrate this, I scrutinize two literary pieces, namely, "Dead Silence" by Hyun Kil-Un and "Pablo and the Zebra" by Annette A. Ferrer.

"Dead Silence" is among the short stories that compose Hyun's collection titled *Dead Silence and Other Stories of the Jeju Massacre* (1980s), which provides context to the struggle of the Jeju islanders, especially in light of the island's geographical location. The titular short story is selected for this textual analysis for its delineation of the massacre of communists and civilians on Jeju Island, which started in April 1948 and persisted until May 1949. Usually referred to as "4:3 incident," it is an event relatively unknown to many not only because it was obscured by the Korean War (1950-1953) that leveled the peninsula, whose own international traction was then overshadowed by the Vietnam War (1954-1975). Because of this, it is generally described as "forgotten war." The South Korean government itself at the time and "[f]or many years . . . suppressed and restricted information" about the incident and the "[p]eople who wrote about the killings were imprisoned" (Lee 2018) as the experience of Hyun Ki-Young who wrote the popular novel about the 4:3 incident titled *Suni Samchon* (1978).

"Pablo and the Zebra," on the other hand, is a story collected in *Panyaan: Three Tales of the Tagbanua*, which presents the beliefs and culture of the ancient ethnic group residing on the Calamian archipelago in Palawan, Philippines called *Tagbanua*. While the two stories by Rhandee Garlitos—"The Sacred Islets" and "Great Elder"—delve into the Tagbanua's islands, hero, deities, and epic, Ferrer's story explores the eviction of the tribe from Calauit Island when former president Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. declared it a wildlife preserve in 1976. The eviction is an atrocity committed during Marcos, Sr.'s Martial Law (1972-1986), whose insidious effects [e.g.,

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inbreeding among animals, land disputes] persist to this day. Like other atrocities committed in the provinces [e.g., the massacre of Moros in Sultan Kudarat in 1974, the famine in Negros in the mid-1980s], the eviction is inadvertently overshadowed by the atrocities carried out in the capital, Manila, which became the leitmotif of commercially successful works about Martial Law [see Rosca's *State of War*, Bautista's *Dekada '70* (*The 1970s*)], making Ferrer's work thematically like no other thus far and thus provides another perspective about the atrocities, corruption, and excessiveness of the Marcos, Sr. regime.

"Dead Silence" and "Pablo and the Zebra" are stories about traumatic events suffered and survived by people from the islands, which, regrettably, are overshadowed by stories about more recognizable traumatic events. Continuing the conversation, the remembrance, which the very writing of these stories started is necessary, even after many years have already passed since the massacre of the Jeju islanders and the eviction of the Tagbanua from Calauit, because the traumatic experiences of minorities, especially those from geographically peripheral islands, are always vulnerable to *mnemocide* or killing of memory.

In subjecting "Dead Silence" and "Pablo and the Zebra" to textual analysis after Assmann's memory framework laid out in "Forms of Forgetting," I inquire: How do these stories frame the traumatic experiences of people from the said peripheral islands? What makes their traumas vulnerable to mnemocide? How could we comprehend defensive and complicit forgetting through these stories?

In the following sections, I define mnemocide based on some examples from different situations where memories are [or in some cases frustratedly] erased and points out how it is facilitated by what Assmann calls defensive and complicit forgetting; and after this exposition, I proceed with my analyses of Hyun's "Dead Silence" and Ferrer's "Pablo and the Zebra." I conclude with a survey of ways through which South Korea and the Philippines respectively remember Jeju 4:3 and Calauit and a summary. To this end, this literary analysis is aimed at illustrating how defensive and complicit

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forgetting is at work, which facilitates mnemocide, rather than rendering a comparative look at forgetting per se and a study of the text's respective genres, which are routes for succeeding studies.

Ⅱ. Mnemocide, Forgetting

Mnemocide is an act of killing memory, and it is carried out in more ways than one. From the antiquities, the removal of figures from official accounts and the destruction of their images was not unheard of; this practice was later on described as "*damnatio memoriae*," condemnation of memory [see also Assmann 2014]. An early example of this is the condemnation of Geta's memory as attested to by the Severan Tondo, the family portrait of Roman emperor Septimius Severus housed at the Altes Museum in Berlin. When Septimius Severus who reigned from AD 193 died in February 211, his sons Caracalla and Geta assumed coregency of the empire; that same year, in December, however, Caracalla ordered the murder of Geta and the senate to "condemn Geta's memory" (von Zabern n.d.). Looking at the said portrait, one sees the face of a young Geta, "scratched out and smeared with grime" (von Zabern n.d.). He was killed twice over, yet his scratched and smeared countenance lives on to double haunt the image of their family. But mnemocide is exacted not only on individuals. Communities fall prey to it, too. For example, during the first world war, as if executing the Armenians in the then Ottoman empire from 1914 to 1918, which resulted in untold death toll and an exodus, was never enough, the Turks launched a mnemocide by "remov[ing], stone by stone, the evidence of millennia of Armenian architectural and art history" (Bevan n.d.); and they continued their attempt at removing Armenian traces by denying discussions about the atrocity, antagonizing those who recognize it as genocide, and reframing history (Bedrossian 2021). Yet as one may note, with almost three million Armenians alive today, a people cannot be completely annihilated. Survivors, and those who come after them, become traces of the traumatic past, which perpetrators have been attempting to remove and deny.

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Such is the case of the "comfort women" who were held in sexual slavery and forced into prostitution at comfort stations by and for the Japanese military during the Second World War. The Japanese government endeavored to delete the role of their military at the time in the "'comfort women' system" and so, beginning in 2021, their textbooks, used by their junior and senior high school students, "no longer specify that the comfort women served the Japanese military during World War II" (Kim and Lee 2021). Plainly, it was a deliberate move to obscure, if not to kill or erase bit by bit from Japanese school curricula, the crucial role of their military at the time in the "human trafficking of minor children and women for the purposes of sex from Japan and its overseas territories and war zones," like China, North Korea and South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines to name a few, between 1930s to 1940s (Dudden 2022). It is worth pointing out that, in 2015, Japan had requested the American publishing company McGraw-Hill to "delete a passage containing a reference to comfort women from a text on world history used by high schools in California. The passage says that Japan's imperial army 'forcibly recruited, conscripted and dragooned as many as 200,000 women aged 14 to 20' to serve in military brothels" (McCurry 2015). Revisionist motions like this must not be permitted for it could lead to mnemocide by misrepresenting historical facts and miseducating students of today who will be educators and policymakers in the years to come. We see a potential example of this in the present Philippine government's non-inclusion of the anniversary of the People Power Revolution in the roster of celebrations and holidays for 2024. The nonviolent revolution in February 1986 on EDSA brought the two-decade presidency of Marcos, Sr. (1965-1986) to a conclusion, resulting in his exile in Hawai'i until his death in 1989. In 1972, as mentioned earlier, Marcos, Sr. placed the country under Martial Law. It was a 14-year period of corruption, excessiveness and violence, which left a national debt that "ballooned to $26 billion" (Tadem 2018) and saw "un(ac)counted disappearances and 107,240 violated individuals" (Ritumban 2018: 2). While any form of commemoration of EDSA is not codified, whether as a special non-working holiday or a nationwide school holiday, it has been a tradition observed by presidents after Marcos, Sr.; in fact, it was consistently celebrated

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from 2002 to 2023, the first year of Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. as president [see Cupin and Cruz 2023]. To civic groups that counter historical distortion like Project Gunita ["gunita," from Tagalog is memory], the non-inclusion of EDSA is an "attempt to whitewash the history of the brutal dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. . . . [a] path [to] EDSA holiday's complete eradication" (Suyat 2023). It is because calendrical events, like commemorative ceremonies, feast days, anniversaries, and holidays, are rites inherently, which "have the capacity to give value and meaning to the life of those who perform them" (Connerton 2010: 45). Shall we not read the non-inclusion of EDSA in its core as a remembrance of, borrowing the term used by Project Gunita, "the ghost of the past?" (Suyat 2023) Indeed, as Assmann (2014) teaches us, "remembering is always framed by forgetting."

From these examples, mnemocide is carried out through acts of destroying traces that could preserve the memory [e.g., visual image, architectural and artistic heritage, textbooks, calendrical commemorations, etc.] of the other. Such acts I reckon are facilitated by what Assmann (2014) calls in "Forms of Forgetting" as defensive and complicit forgetting.

Assmann (2014) teaches that defensive forgetting transpires when "acts of destroying relics and erasing traces to cover up practices that will henceforth be classified as crimes" are committed, while complicit forgetting occurs when the respective silences of perpetrator(s), victim(s), and society "reinforce each other, [allowing the crimes to] remain concealed for a long time." Defensive and complicit forgetting then, says Assmann (2014), leads to "protection of perpetrators"; and victims and their traumatic experiences, dare I say, are always under the threat of mnemocide.

Ⅲ. Defensive Forgetting

"Dead Silence" describes a massacre of communists and civilians during the Jeju Uprising, which consisted of a series of battles between the communist guerillas on the island and the national armed forces from April 1948 to May 1949. The short story is set

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during an "early morning surprise attack" by the commandos in December (Hyun 2017: 173), which was prompted by the latter's "full-scale scorched-earth attacks" at the villages in Namwon district (Hyun 2017: 174). The narrative is rather straightforward whose plot may be sketched out as follows:

On the eve of their D-day, Lee Duk-Gu, the chief commander of the Jeju commando unit, and Oh Gyu-Min, a vice commander tasked to lead the surprise attack, delivered passionate speeches, rallying their comrades to persevere in the flight to liberate the island from the imperialist government of Syngman Rhee whose soldiers "committed acts of brutality, murdering innocent people, setting fire to people's homes and fields, and forcefully seizing their harvests, the products of their sacred labor" (Hyun 2017: 173). Such brutality was suffered by the villagers of Namwon now being held at Eugwi Elementary School. At three in the morning, the commandos attacked the soldiers guarding the school, but the former's outdated guns cannot put up with the latter's machine guns stationed on the roofs of the building; and in no time, the commandos, except for Gyu-Min, died of "shots [that] rained down on [them] with thunderous noise" (Hyun 2017: 182). The soldiers then called on the villagers, ordering them to "move the bodies of the dead commandos and place them, one by one, beside the drill platform" (Hyun 2017: 183) and to "take a good look at . . . the bastards who were going to make Jeju a communist island (Hyun 2017: 184). Afterwards, the soldiers commanded the villagers to transfer the bodies to the muddy "empty field west of the school grounds" (Hyun 2017: 185); and there, the chief of the soldiers signaled the firing of the villagers because, to him, "[t]hey are all communists [because they] all knew the dead guerillas":

> The sound of the gunshots shook the entire village. Not one bullet missed its target.
> The people who had gathered in the middle of the playground dropped to the ground, one by one.
> The muzzles of the guns emitted puffs of white smoke, and the smell of the gunpowder soon entered Gyu-Min's nostrils.
> When the soldiers finished firing, they lowered the guns from their soldiers and walked slowly toward the school.

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> After they were gone, dead silence and sunshine filled the empty field. The village, the thick forest, the field, and even the sky that was looking down on them all sank into desolation.
> Crows soon flocked to the field, stirring up a whistling wind. As they descended upon the dead bodies, they began to caw, Gyu-Min closed his eyes, The cawing of the crows, which ended the dead silence, reverberated throughout the village and beyond. (Hyun 2017: 187-188)

Gyu-Min witnessed all this while atop a camellia tree, about 80 meters away from the school where he had taught after their liberation from the Japanese, which used to be "full of joy" (Hyun 2017: 181), but now "sank into desolation" (Hyun 2017: 188).

I call this massacre of the villagers a three-pronged violence, which is symptomatic of defensive forgetting. The Namwon villagers were held in captivity at Eugwi Elementary School because the government soldiers caught them fleeing to the mountainside; but they were fleeing precisely because their houses and harvests were burned down by the soldiers under the pretext that their villages were communist hideouts (Hyun 2017: 175). This is why when the chief of the soldiers condemned the villagers as communists simply because they "knew the dead guerillas" (Hyun 2017: 187)—for how can they not remember "the youths of the nearby villages" (Hyun 2017: 188)—and ordered their execution, he together with the rest of the soldiers and Rhee's government, which they represented, were abusing their power and transgressing the people. But executing the innocent civilians—after having ensured the "death of the guerillas" (Hyun 2017: 182)—is also an act of "erasing traces to cover up" (Assmann 2014) their abuse of power. The villagers who suffered their "full-scale scorched-earth attacks" (Hyun 2017: 174)—whose "houses in which families had lived for generations were… reduced to ashes [and whose] crops that had just been reaped, the product of a summer of hard work in the fields" were burned (Hyun 2017: 175)—would have been the very traces of their crimes whose testimony could hold them responsible for their "acts of brutality [against] innocent people" and even against the guerillas (Hyun 2017: 173). *They* were erased. And the third violence is their display of impunity: the soldiers left the villagers who "dropped to the

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ground, one by one" (Hyun 2017: 187) out in the open where crows then flocked and cawed (Hyun 2017: 188). Who then would know? Jeju Island lies 237 nautical miles away from Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Indeed, as would be the fate of the communist guerillas, the innocent villagers "would be buried in the [muddy] ground and slowly they would decay" (Hyun 2017: 186).

This communist suppression on Jeju Island continued during the Korean War (1950-1953) and after, leaving somewhere between 25,000 to 30,000 deaths and an exodus. Key to understanding the context of the struggle of the Jeju islanders is history: The uprising occurred only about three years after the Koreans had been liberated from the Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) during the conclusion of World War II (1945), which precipitated the division of the peninsula along the 38th parallel by the US and the USSR and their respective occupations of what would become South Korea and North Korea. At the time, the Cold War (1947-1991) already started and so the corollary clash of ideologies. In 1948, Syngman Rhee was elected president of South Korea. He held a strong stance against communism, the ideology espoused by the North, and his US-backed government and military violently dealt with left-leaning movements as was the case on Jeju Island during the uprising and the massacre. Note that in "Dead Silence," the communist guerillas had been wanting for a unified Korea, whose division was brought about by "the imperialist US and its followers [that is the] puppet government" of Rhee (Hyun 2017: 173), and aligned themselves with the North; in fact, they believed that during the D-day, comrades from the North and the USSR would be in their aid (Hyun 2017: 172-173).

But while it is true that communism "has some influence on Jeju," as philosopher and translator John Michael McGuire (2017: x) points out in his introduction to Hyun's collection *Dead Silence and Other Stories of the Jeju Massacre*, the struggle also had, if not more, to do with the islanders' "basic and legitimate desire for freedom," most especially from the "mainland oppressors." Jeju Island, formerly Tamna Island, was an island country, a kingdom with a culture of its own, that had convoluted relationships with earlier mainland kingdoms until it was subjugated in 938 by the Goryeo

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dynasty (918-1392). Because of its distance from the capital [i.e., 237 nautical miles away southward] and the difficulty that came with reaching it, the old islandic kingdom became a place of exile where disgraced nobility, literati, and officers—as well as criminals—were banished. Such designation was made official during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897). This is an indication that the island has had a long history of being peripheral in terms of its position in Korean society, which was reinforced by its geographical location. The same can be said about Calauit, a 3,700-hectare island within the Calamian archipelago in Palawan, Philippines.

Ⅳ. Complicit Forgetting

In 1976, through Proclamation No. 1578, then Philippine president Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. declared Calauit Island “a game preserve and wildlife sanctuary” (Office of the President 1976). This resulted in the eviction of the residents of the island, which included 254 families whose members descended from the ancient ethnic group called Tagbanua. They were relocated to Halsey and Burabod in Cullion, which used to be a leprosarium, and were replaced with 104 exotic animals [e.g., bushbucks, elands, gazelles, giraffes, imapals, topis, waterbucks, zebras] that had been bought and imported from Kenya. At the time, the country was already under Martial Law. The documentary *The Kingmaker*, directed and written by Lauren Greenfield, presents some insight into the conception of what is now called Calauit Safari Park and the selection of the said island by intercutting the recollection of former first lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos (IRM) with that of Beth Day Romulo (BDR), a columnist and widow of Carlos P. Romulo, former foreign affairs minister (1968-1984):

> BDR: We were on safari in Kenya and Imelda was fascinated with the wild animals…
> IRM: I got so envious that we did not have those…
> BDR: So she ordered them. You know, you like buy a dress in Paris, you bring an animal from Africa…
> IRM: Then I said: I will complete paradise for the Philippines because we will also have the animals from Africa here.

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BDR: I have no idea what it costs but she got her own little private zoo shipped from Africa. When Imelda's animals arrived there was a problem—of course these new guests would go if they were to roam free, which she insisted—so they finally settled on this small island where they wouldn't run into people...

IRM: It was an island that was not inhabited by a group of people or did not have communities there except a few that I could tell them what to do... (Greenfield 2020)

This is indicative of how Mrs. Marcos [and so the government she led with her husband] perceived the island [and so the country] and the islanders: a personal possession and an easy mark because "few" or a minority. After Marcos, Sr.'s regime was overthrown in 1986, the original residents of Calauit returned—but this time as "illegal settlers," thrashing on the animals and the sanctuary, as described in a 1989 *Los Angeles Times* report, which also claimed that former presidential son—and now president himself—Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., during his father's incumbency, "[had flown] in twice by helicopter to hunt native wild boar" in the safari (Drogin 1989); indeed, the claim was affirmed in the 2010 *Philippine Daily Inquirer* report titled "Returning Calauit to tribe a waste, says Bongbong." The everyday life of the human residents and the animals then is not without tension, especially when the animals freely roaming around the island would eat, or destroy, the crops planted by the human residents for their sustenance and livelihood. This tension is described in Annette A. Ferrer's story, "Pablo and the Zebra," which is collected in *Panyaan: Three Tales of the Tagbanua* published by The Center for Art, New Ventures & Sustainable Development, a non-profit organization that promotes children's literacy.

The narrative has a simple plot. Pablo "could never understand his [grandfather's] rage at the animals" (Ferrer 2017: 16), so he asked his mother who then narrated a story: There was a "powerful king" who ruled the country and who, on the occasion of his son's twentieth birthday, chose Calauit to become his "playground filled with animals that he can play with, chase around, and even hunt" (Ferrer 2017: 17); in turn, the king's soldiers made

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the Tagbanua leave because it is “the king’s word, and no one can complain” (Ferrer 2017: 17). The following week, Pablo saw a zebra and threw a stone at it; when the animal spoke of its pain, the boy could only be remorseful and hid it behind thick bushes and cared for it, until “[t]heir friendship blossomed” (Ferrer 2017: 19). The zebra then asked his human friend why people hated them a lot. Pablo shared what his mother had narrated; in response, the zebra shared his grandfather’s story: Grandfather zebra was eating fresh grass with his parents when “he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his thigh and became sleepy” and the next thing he knew, together with other zebras, they were already in “a big crate”; and when the crate opened, they were already in Calauit, “a scary place because it was totally strange… not their home” (Ferrer 2017: 20). Pablo then brought his zebra friend and the story of the animals to the attention of his grandfather:

> That evening, Pablo, Lolo, Mama and the zebra exchanged stories for hours. Lolo looked at Pablo, and then gazed into the eyes of the zebra.
> “I am very happy that you and Pablo became friends. I hope you can forgive me,” said Lolo.
> I now understand, that we—the people and animals of Calauit—are all Tagbanua.”
> “And tomorrow,” Lolo continued, “the council of elders will know that as well.” (Ferrer 2017: 22).

The story concluded with this reconciliatory gesture between these two generations of Calauit residents, whose lives were tied by stories of violence.

I second that both residents [i.e., humans and animals] experienced post-traumatic stress because of their respective displacements when, on a whim, the king made Calauit “the prince’s royal playground” (Ferrer 2017: 17), driving the Tagbanua out of their ancestral land and deterring them from returning—“the soldiers would beat them or bore holes in their boats” (Ferrer 2017:17) when they tried—and deracinating the animals from their natural habitat only to be “hunted down for sport” (Ferrer 2017: 20). In fact, the violence of Pablo’s grandfather towards the animals can

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be read as a hint of post-traumatic stress disorder; the symptom physiological arousal in the form of "an exaggerated startle response" (American Psychological Association n.d.) is noticeable in this scene:

> There was a rustling of dry leaves and the snapping of twigs. "Who goes there?!" demanded the old man, his hand clenching a rock as he squinted in the darkness. "Lolo, it's me, Pablo!" The boy lifted his hands in the air and he stepped into the glow of the lamp. Lolo then saw the suspicious shadowy figure behind his grandson "Who's that with you?!" he shouted. (Ferrer 2017: 22).

Additionally, Pablo's grandfather always had "his pockets with rocks, ready for any zebra, giraffe, or any other animal that made the mistake of coming too close" (Ferrer 2017: 16) and, as his mother put it, was resentful, blaming the king and the animals, because he "did not see many of his friends and relatives again" (Ferrer 2017: 17), another PTSD symptom in the form of "guilt about surviving the trauma when others did not" (American Psychological Association n.d.). I am not going to say that the animals suffered post-traumatic stress on the level of a disorder as Pablo's grandfather might have had; but science writer Sharon Levy (2021), echoing scientists Liana Y. Zanette and Michael Clinchy in "Ecology and Neurobiology of Fear in Free-Living Wildlife," writes that an "[ecology of] fear can alter the long-term behavior and physiology of wild animals," an element inconspicuous in the animals in this story. What can be ascertained as far as this specific story is concerned is that, the zebra "[doesn't] understand" why the people "hate [them] so much" (Ferrer 2017: 20), which is indicative of post-traumatic stress, a shock that follows a traumatic experience like when Pablo hit it with a stone "straight in the eye" (Ferrer 2017: 19) when it was simply existing there. Such tension, especially the violence towards animals, indeed, has got to stop.

It is commendable that Calauit is given a literary platform not only because it remembers, if not immortalizes, this lesser known Martial Law atrocity but also because it presents the nuances that shape the issue: The island taken is ancestral domain of an indigenous ethnolinguistic group, the Tagbanua, who has its own

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culture and religious beliefs that were violated by their eviction from the land inherited from their ancestors and thus sacred to them. The victims were not only the human residents, but also the animals who were deracinated from Kenya and translocated to Calauit, that is, from one continent with distinct environs, climate, and vegetation to another, which brought in intergenerational problems among the human residents, the animals, and the environment. It is also worth noting that it is a child, a third-generation Calauit resident, the nine-year-old Pablo himself, who, although initially perpetuated his grandfather's "rage at the animals" when he threw a stone to a zebra, but feeling "sick to his stomach" for having done so (Ferrer 2017:19), demonstrated his agency or capacity, in terms of children's literature, to make "an independent statement in opposition to the established adult order" (Christensen 10) by apologizing to the zebra and befriending it and, equally important to it, upon learning the story of the animals, by facilitating a reconciliatory gesture between his grandfather and his friend zebra.

Curiously, however, none of the characters can be seen or heard demanding or advocating reparation for the displacement caused by the eviction ordered by the "powerful king," which is the root cause of their intergenerational suffering. This narrative thread is emblematic of what Assmann (2014) calls "symptomatic silence on the part of the victims," which, as far as the story is concerned, specifically the narration of Pablo's mother, is likely due to their experience of being intimidated and silenced. "It is the king's word, and no one can complain!" so they were told; and such threat, which when they tried to defy, would be coupled with physical violence (Ferrer 2017:17). Silence of this kind, especially when reinforced by the "defensive silence on the part of the perpetrators" and the "complicit silence on the part of society," could result in complicit forgetting, which would allow "crimes [to] remain concealed for a long time" (Assmann 2014). It conceals it precisely because the perpetrators are not being held responsible for the trauma they inflicted on the victims, which in the story were indigenous people, animals, and even the environment. When narratives like this, which deal with the plight of minority groups, and are intended for children especially, do not explicitly discuss the

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need for justice, is it not conveying a regrettable message? That the closure of one's traumatic past is solely in the hands of the victims. *It is not.* Thus, the symptomatic silence of the characters must be broken, even in the storyworld itself, because their struggle to return—which "took [them] a long time" (Ferrer 2017: 17)—must be laid bare, remembered, inscribed into immortality, too. Doing so would also call out how society was complicitly silent as well. To this end, defensive and complicit forgetting, says Assmann (2014), leads to a "protection of perpetrators"; and victims and their traumatic experiences, dare I say, are always under the threat of mnemocide. But the question today is no longer *who* will remember, but *how.*

Ⅴ. Remembering

The Jeju Massacre remained *defensively forgotten* until the establishment of the National Committee for Investigation of the Truth About the Jeju 4.3 Events in 2000, whose findings prompted then South Korean president Roh Moo-Hyun to issue a state apology to the people of Jeju Island in 2003:

> As president, I accept the committee's recommendation and hold the government responsible and truly extend my official apology for the wrongdoings of past national authorities. I also cherish the sacrificed spirits and pray for the repose of the innocent victims.
> The government will support the construction of the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park and the immediate restoration of honor to the victims. (Roh 2003)

In 2008, the Jeju 4.3 Peace Park, a memorial complex that honors the victims of the massacre was opened. In 2019, the court dismissed charges against the survivors and the Ministry of National Defense expressed their "deep dismay and condolences concerning the deaths of Jeju residents during the suppression process (qtd. in Huh and Noh 2019). In 2021, the National Assembly approved a special bill for the state compensation of the victims, which included "not only actual damage, such as medical expenses, but also lost profits and mental damage" (Yonhap 2021). These are some of the ways through which South Korea remembers its tragic past, a most

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traumatic one for the Jeju islanders. Indeed, the "cawing of the crows," the cry of the people and the cooperation of the government, "ended the dead silence," the defensive forgetting, and it "reverberated throughout the village and beyond" (Hyun 2017: 188).

At least as of this writing, the same cannot be said about the Philippines yet. Many of us have *complicitly forgotten* that Calauit is also a Martial Law atrocity. Aside from *The Kingmaker* and "Pablo and the Zebra," Calauit is but a note on the excessiveness of Marcos, Sr.'s regime [see "Keeping Up with the Marcoses: Money, Fame and Fortune"]. If the Tagbanua, who were evicted from their island during the creation of the safari, now hold land titles of their ancestral domain, it is only because, as the Supreme Court resolution dated July 6, 2015 shows, court case after court case, they were relentless in reclaiming what in the first place is rightfully theirs. This back and forth with the Philippine government began when Marcos, Sr. was ousted in 1986 and the formation of "Balik Calauit Movement" [Return to Calauit Movement] by the displaced residents. If the human residents were able to reclaim their land, the translocated animals and the park as a whole continue to face underlying issues like inbreeding among the animals, lack of funds to maintain the safari and its human resources, and the tension between the human residents and animals [see "Calauit Island: From Eden to paradise lost"]. I take it from Assmann (2014):

> Nothing will really change as long as the victims are the only ones ready to break their silence and to claim their rights. It is the collective will of society alone which can change the situation and turn the tables. Only then will the testimony of the witnesses be heard and supported…

And until then, the traumatic memories of those in the periphery can only be vulnerable to mnemocide.

Ⅵ. Conclusion

In the preceding sections I presented a textual analysis of Hyun Kil-Un's "Dead Silence" and Annette A. Ferrer's "Pablo and the

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Zebra," with Aleida Assmann's concept of defensive and complicit forgetting as a theoretical viewpoint.

In "Dead Silence," the execution of civilians, right after the execution of the communists during the uprising on Jeju Island, is a clear-cut indication of defensive forgetting where the government's soldiers "erased" the witnesses to the extreme violence leveled at the islanders that they had committed. In "Pablo and the Zebra," I argued that the absence of a character who would demand or advocate a reparation for their traumatic displacement per se is symptomatic of a silence that enables complicit forgetting. In one way or another, defensive and complicit forgetting, whether deliberate or not, leads to, as taught by Assmann, the "protection of perpetrators." It facilitates mnemocide through erasure and silence.

This led me to posit that the question today is no longer *who* will remember, but *how*; and to illustrate possible ways, I presented a brief survey of how both traumatic events, the massacre of islanders on Jeju Island and the eviction of the Tagbanua from Calauit Island, are respectively dealt with in South Korea and the Philippines. Clearly, the South Korean government leads the way towards remembrance that involves state apology and memorial—a veritable context from Asia that can definitely enrich existing memory and trauma movements.

I conclude with a point for reflection: How else do we kill memory?

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