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This study examined discursively produced transnational masculinities through mediated Korean-born sport celebrities playing in the major league baseball. Considering that studies of men and masculinity are more likely to offer richer, more in-depth analyses when they recognize the intersections of class, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, this research explored diverse and plural connotations of contemporary masculinities in transnational contexts. In the process, I took into account a variety of theoretical approaches including post-colonial feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, new manism theory, and hegemonic theory in order to find a more appropriate theoretical framework for the analysis of transnational subjectivities. Linking theoretical frames with feminist critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's three dimensions of critical discourse analysis, I investigated multiple media sport texts including online newspapers and reader comments in US and South Korean contexts.

Based on a total number of 108 media texts in online newspapers, six distinguishing thematic discourses were analyzed: athletic masculinities, heterosexual patriarchal masculinities, militarized masculinities, trans/nationalist masculinities, Korean Confucian masculinities, and color solidarity. Through analyzing a total number of 83 media texts in reader comments, also, four dominant discourse categories were identified: othering masculinities, regulating bodies, commodified transnational masculinities, and multifaceted androcentric nationalism. The results illustrated that diversely conflated transnational relationships and the intersectional factors including

race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality have an influence on shaping the hybridity of Korean sporting masculinities. Resisting a dominant dichotomous perception that western males and the masculinities are standardized as a norm while Asian/Korean males and their masculinities are merely defined as effeminate, the results of this study shed light on newly racialized transnational subjectivities under the power of new imperialism.

MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF KOREAN TRANSNATIONAL
SPORTING MASCULINITIES

by

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To my family

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Yeomi Choi has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We now have studies of masculinities from many regions and countries; but we cannot simply add these together to arrive at a global understanding of masculinities. To understand masculinities on a world scale we must also grasp the global relationships involved. (Connell, 2005b, p.xx)

Significance of Study: Why Korean Sporting Masculinity¹

Research about men and masculinities has rapidly expanded over the past three decades. Informed by a variety of disciplines and theories including anthropology, psychology, feminist studies, race studies, queer theory, and multiple poststructuralist thoughts, academic studies of men and masculinity have developed as an independent field (Gardiner, 2002; Kimmel & Messner, 2004). Along the same line, at the intersection of masculinity studies and sport, the awareness of gender/sexuality as an important category for analysis has increased and helped to illuminate the complicated, gendered basis of sport (Messner, 1990). In spite of increasing scholarly interest in men and masculinity in sport studies, most of the research published in the English-speaking world centered on the Western culture and Western subjects. In particular, the scholarly interest

¹ In English language, the official name of South Korea is the Republic of Korea but for this study I rely on the term South Korea which is more generally used for the purpose of distinguishing from the northern part of the Korean Peninsula. Since the official name of North Korea is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is frequently deluded as South Korea to many non-Korean people with the "democratic" in the name. It is another reason why I adopt South Korea for this research.

in East/Asian² masculinities has been nominal so that it is relatively more unknown or falsely simplified in the US-centered Western societies (Taga, 2005; Hirose & Kei-ho Pih, 2010). Given that new theoretical frameworks or methodological approach is typically formulated based on the research object, the academic tendency of continuously excluding Asian men and masculinities also hinders producing and securing a place to discuss new inquiry for Asian bodies. Finally, it may give rise to a permanent isolation of the Asian male subjects in the US-centered academy not only thematically but also theoretically and methodologically, in turn, supporting the Western research hegemony as a consequence.

In order to investigate transnational Korea/Asian masculinities, I choose media sport³ as a productive space that shapes and displays trans/national dimensions, subjectivities, and related ideologies (Joo, 2012). Through paying attention to the significant cross-cultural terrain, in this study, I examine discursively produced transnational masculinities through mediated Korean sport celebrities playing in Major

² Mangan and Fan (2003) pointed out the oversimplified term *Asia* reflecting the privileged West European's perception. The authors noted that "In the course of Christian millennia, the Europeans used the term [*Asia*] to include all the countries to their east. They also coined other designations for Asian subregions, such as the Near East, the Middle East, and the Far East, depending on their distance from Europe" (p.1). At the present point, he prescribed the range of Asia as Middle East, South and South-East Asia, East and Central Asia and North-East Asia. Although South Korea is generally considered as one of the regions in North East Asia with North Korea, China, and Japan, North East Asia is frequently abbreviated as East Asia (Taga, 2005). Considering the myriad of cultural complexities and diversities in Asia as Mangan noted, I specifically used East Asia or East/Asia, a more narrowed-down term, to designate the cultural band where South Korea is situated, rather than using the too extensive term—*Asia*. Throughout this dissertation, Korean and East/Asian are used somewhat interchangeably. Although I am vigilant not to overgeneralize what I observe from Korean bodies as Pan-Asian experiences, it should be recognized that Koreanness (or any ethnic group in Asia) is frequently generalized as a simple Asianness by US-centered Western framings. Considering the blurred and often invisible ethnicity, my attempt to look at Koreanness along with East/Asianness would be considered a valid and meaningful approach.

³ Joo (2012) conceptualized media sport as "competitive sports that are structured by commercial mass media and manufactured for mass consumption" (p.3).

League Baseball (MLB). By adopting the term *transnational* rather than global or international, in particular, I focus on diverse but specific cultural connectivities across national borders and the constructed subjectivities through the links (Grewal, 2005; Vasquez del Aguila, 2014). As Whannel (2002) noted, in addition, “it is clear that the image of celebrity... is a rich and resonant cut into the structure of popular common sense as re-trod on the ground of popular journalism” (p.43). Thus, I employ the celebrity subjects in media sport as a productive text to interrogate power relations (McDonald & Birrell, 1999). Given that the world is still under the influence of colonialism and the legacies (Morrell & Swart, 2005), I believe that the approach connecting transnational media sport and the celebrities offers a constructive space to discuss transnational subjectivities being affected by the new colonial power.

Considering that studies of men and masculinity are more likely to offer richer, more in-depth analyses when they recognize the intersections of class, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, in addition, this research explores diverse and plural confluences of contemporary masculinities and the relationship with other social categories. In the process, I take into account a variety of theoretical approaches (i.e., feminist theory, postcolonial theory, hegemonic masculinity theory, critical race theory, and/or queer theory) to find a more appropriate theoretical framework from which to study transnational sporting masculinity that goes beyond a simple reliance on hegemonic masculinity theory as a number of previous studies of men and masculinity have done. Linking theoretical frames with feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) as analytic tool, I investigate multiple media sport texts including online newspapers and reader

comments in order to study the hybrid formation of gender and the complicated dominance hierarchy through looking at re/produced sporting masculinities in both US and South Korean contexts. Ultimately and ideally, my work aims to deconstruct the Western academic hegemony on gender and sport studies and falsely simplified East/Asian masculinities through illuminating marginalized subjects and the experiences in transnational contexts of sport.

In order to achieve the above research objective, I formulate the following research questions for this study: (a) how are transnational men and masculinities discursively constructed in both US and Korean media? (b) what are the emphasized cultural ideologies in the media discourse? (c) and, how do sporting masculinities articulate intersectional gender relations?

Introducing Korean MLB Players

Since 1993 there has been a steady migration of native Korean players to MLB, a major US sport. In particular, Park Chanho, the first Korean MLB player, has played a pioneering role in generating a national interest in MLB in South Korea. After signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers as an amateur free agent in 1994 and spending two years in the minor leagues, he became a regular MLB pitcher in 1996 (Lee, 2006; Cho, 2008). In MLB, Park Chanho's success as a great pitcher sparked an explosion of fandom for him and the MLB in South Korea. Korean national broadcasts began to air all of the games that Park played as starting pitcher. Every time he was in the lineup, his performance and the result of the game were one of the top stories covered by Korean media and diverse merchandise featuring his name and his number, 61, were the new

best-selling products. Korean news media also started to analyze the emergent *Park Chanho syndrome* (Lee, 1997).

The Asian financial crisis was a major international concern in late 1996, and around the same period, South Korea was experiencing a national economic crisis. Meshing with the national emergency by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) intervention, as Joo (2000) noted, Park Chanho functioned as a strong metaphor of sporting nationalism in an era of transnational media, markets, and migration. The local situation contributed to the mass mediated manufacture of a Korean hero who can operate as a powerful symbol of breaking through the gloomy national crisis. As a strong national icon, Park Chanho represented South Korea and its global status to the world (Cho, 2008; Joo, 2012). Accordingly the Korean male body existed as a source of national pride and his disciplined hard body implied a new kind of Korean masculinity (Joo, 2000). His thigh, measured at 28 inches was frequently compared to Korean women's waist size, and Joo (2012) interpreted the gendered symbol distinguishing men's body and women's body as a transnational mechanism that reflects US-centered masculinity "emphasizing size, strength, athletic talent, and individualism" (ibid., p.105). In 2010 he became recognized as the Asian-born pitcher with most career wins, 124, but the winningest Asian pitcher finished his baseball player career in the Korean Professional Baseball League (KBL) in November 2012 after the migrating years in the Dodgers, Rangers, Padres, Mets, Phillies, Yankees, Pirates and one season with Buffaloes in Japan.

The success of Park Chanho generated a more frequent transnational flow of Korean players to MLB and the migration is still in the process (Lee, 2006). Among

them, Choo Shinsoo and Ryu Hyunjin have more influence compared to the other succeeding players. Currently considered the top two successful Korean MLB players, they have shown great performance as a hitter and a pitcher.

Playing two seasons in the Seattle Mariners, Choo Shinsoo started to show his talent after being traded to the Cleveland Indians in 2006. With several “the first Asian-” titles in MLB, at the end of 2013, it was reported that Choo had agreed to a seven-year \$130 million contract with the Texas Rangers, the highest amount ever offered to Asian MLB players at that time.⁴ With Choo’s “jackpot” contract, his wife is a frequent narrative surrounding his career. Using a *Google* search for Choo Shinsoo, one would find his wife’s name, Ha Wonmi, as a related search. Her “gorgeous” looks have attracted media attention as much as Choo has. Positioning Choo Shinsoo as a husband, father, and/or breadwinner, the media narratives that centered on Ha often contributed to reproducing traditional hegemonic masculinity with sporting bodies.

While most of the foreign players started in the minor league market in US, Ryu Hyunjin skipped the minor leagues and became the first Korean player to join a MLB team, the Los Angeles Dodgers, via the posting system⁵. This relatively new major leaguer, starting his career in US in 2013, emerged as a rising Korean global sporting star with big success for two seasons. Compared to the previous Korean MLB players, his character and identity are frequently associated with jocularity.

⁴ About a month later, it was reported that Tanaka, Masahiro, Japanese pitcher, signed the seven year \$155 million contract with New York Yankees.

⁵ Posting system is a baseball player transfer system based on the posting fee by a MLB team.

Off the mound, teammates describe Ryu—nicknamed “Korean Monster”—as laid-back, well-liked and funny, adjectives not typically associated with previous ballplayers from Asia, who were more often deemed diligent and hardworking. Footage of him doing Psy’s “Gangnam Style” dance or bearhugging teammates in the dugout now crowd out the earlier jeering at Dodger Stadium. (Han, 2013)

Along with the “relaxed” character, his corporeality is always an active source of media discourse around him. His other nickname, “Ryu-Ddoong”, the Korean compound word, indicates his visible corpulence. The oversized and overweight body that is linked with friendly public image is often accepted as a “problematic” quality obscuring both sporting professionalism and the masculinity.



Figure 1. Park Chanho (Blumenfeld, 2008), Choo Shinsoo (Tringali, 2011), and Ryu Hyunjin (Petersen, 2013) [From left to right]

In order to examine the ways in which these three MLB players and the subjectivities are constructed, along with feminist critical discourse analysis, I employ McDonald and Birrell’s (1999) approach to critical sport analysis, especially as they foreground the importance of conceptualizing particular sporting events or celebrities as “texts”.

According to McDonald and Birrell (1999), each cultural incident or celebrity offers “a

unique site for understanding specific articulations of power relations” (p.284). Given that “power operates differently in different places and times” (p.284), each particular place and moment will provide a unique space to produce a new knowledge and a new political practice (ibid.). I regard these transnational sport celebrities as a cultural text to examine contemporary masculinity production, expecting that each player’s subjectivity and social life will illuminate diversified dimensions of mediated masculinity along with the interacting forces of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality.

Operational Definitions

Considering the nature of poststructural feminism resisting monolithic perception, some feminist scholars may argue that defining a concept in a certain way is inherently problematic and regarded as an attempt to fix it, and would further reject any questions through the unshakable status (Elam, 1994). Nevertheless, others who are specifically informed by transnational and/or postcolonial theories foreground “the politics of naming”—a feminist way of conceptualizing transnationalism and globalization (Naples, 2002). Working from this mindset, rather than claiming a universal lexicographic understanding of each concept, I identify several key terms and briefly discuss how each concept is framed for this study.

Masculinity.

When it comes to conceptual understanding of masculinity, it is currently and generally unsustained and resisted to perceive masculinity with psychological or biological essentialism and a belief in fixed or natural attributes “within” a body. Instead, a number of gender scholars agree that masculinity is not fixed, stable, and/or

standardized but sociohistorically constructed (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; Clatterbaugh, 1998; Beynon, 2002; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Connell, 2005b; Reeser, 2010). As MacInnes (1998) pointed out, masculinity and femininity are manufactured ideologies that imagine existing differences between men and women based on biological sex where there are none. Hence it is possible to claim that “we are *doing gender* [emphasis added] in a culturally specific way” (ibid., p.68). Masculinity is also relational. It does not exist without femininity. In an attempt to define masculinity, it is important is to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives rather than establishing masculinity as a natural character or a norm (Connell, 2005b). Adopting a postcolonial approach, in addition, masculinity as a singular term is replaced by masculinities. Although the unitary concept of masculinity illuminated men’s dominance over women, it commonly masks the point that there are numerous forms and expressions of gender across cultures and throughout time (Nixon, 1997). Kimmel and Messner (2004) defined the plural concept as “the ways in which different men construct different versions of masculinity” (p. xiv), challenging the hegemonic definition of masculinity for middle-class, middle-aged, and/or heterosexual whites.

Discourse.

As Reeser (2010) argued, masculinity is created linguistically. By foregrounding the importance of language that defines the experience of people, he noted that the construction of masculinity is strongly influenced “by the way we talk about it, including the actual contents of what we say, what we do not say about it, and the choice of words

in what we say” (p.29). Through this practice, knowledge is produced and the representation, conventions, and habits of language are called discourse. According to Rose (2007) who adopted Foucault’s notion of discourse, it refers to “groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking” (p.142). Foucault particularly paid attention to who has power and how it functions in discursive construction, illuminating the relationship between discourse, knowledge production, and power (Hall, 1996; Beynon, 2002). Although discourse has a power to discipline our sense of the world, the practice is productive rather than repressive, and discursive knowledge is created and disseminated in the process (Foucault, 1990). When it is interpreted with the productive power and knowledge, the ultimate purpose or political underlying assumption of this study becomes visible. Discourse consists of discontinuous polyvalent segments, whereby the discursive world should be understood as multiple relations rather than a divided assembly between accepted discourse and excluded discourse (ibid.). As Foucault (ibid.) pointed out, “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (p.101). What is important then is to investigate “what reciprocal effects of power and knowledge they ensure and what conjunction and what force relationship make their utilization necessary” (p.102), considering the point of resistance.

Representation.

According to the manners that various social and cultural subjectivities are depicted in mass media, people produce meanings in their minds and also embody the

values (Ott & Mack, 2014). Here popular representations from television, advertising, print media, function as powerful forums to display cultural ideals about masculinity and simultaneously marginalizing particular types of masculinity (Whannel, 2002). Stuart Hall (1997) noted the importance of representational systems in the study of culture. According to his understanding, “representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (p.15). Involving the use of language, signs, and images, it plays a crucial role in producing and exchanging meanings between members of the culture (ibid.). That is, languages can use signs to symbolize and the signs convey meanings in the cultural negotiation of codes and concepts. As Hall (ibid.) argued, “signs do not exist in nature but are the result of social conventions” (p.29). Representation, a crucial part of culture, offers a space where meanings are learned and unconsciously internalized by the social members. Therefore, by investigating masculine representations in multimedia, it is possible to expose what is disavowed and what is permitted in the contradictory patriarchal contexts.

Transnationality.

According to Giulianotti and Robertson (2007), the processual sociological term, transnational, highlights interconnected individuals and social groups across multiple national contexts. Along the same line, many scholars agree that the concept emphasizes sociocultural dimensions of global structure. In particular, feminist scholars who are interested in studying postcolonial feminist practices prefer to use transnational rather than global or international (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Ong, 1999; Naples, 2002). According to Alexander and Mohanty (1997), international or

global assumed a center/periphery model positioning women of color or Third World women at the periphery in spite of the intention to embrace many voices. That is, with the terminologies, diversity is minimized while Western centered notion of feminism is legitimized. Instead, “transnational” not only illuminates moving through space or across lines but also suggests new relations between nation-states. Ong (1999) noted, “transnationality alludes to the transversal, the transactional, the translational, and the transgressive aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination that are incited, enabled, and regulated by the changing logics of states and capitalism” (p.4). In this sense, by using the term of transnational instead of global or international, it is possible to look at more complex and myriad linkages and differently configured power structure in the shifting relations between the nation-states. Also, the importance of cultural interconnectedness and the specificities are more accentuated while the universalized Western centered notion of global relationship is questioned (Grewal, 2005; Vasquez del Aguila, 2014).⁶ Highlighting the inherent connectivities of transnational, this study uses the term in a diverse way to indicate subjects, space, and cultural domains in transnational contexts. Adopting the feminist understanding of transnational, therefore, Asian/Korean sporting male subjects who live multiple interconnections across national borders of South Korea and US can be better illuminated.

Sport celebrity.

According to Andrews and Jackson (2001), celebrity has become a primary product and process in this commercial media age. The “virtual intimacy” of celebrity has

⁶ Although some scholars suggest a more nuanced “transcultural” (Jung, 2011), I adopt transnational valuing the comprehensive application.

a substantial influence on the everyday lives of individuals. Thus, celebrities can be understood as “significant public entities responsible for structuring meaning, crystallizing ideologies, and offering contextually grounded maps for private individuals as they navigate contemporary conditions of existence” (ibid., p.2). As they identified, celebrity is a descriptor embracing diverse public individuality within popular culture. Whannel (2002) also paid attention to the cultural importance of celebrity, refuting some writers’ argument that celebrity is intrinsically “vacuous and banal” (p.43). Through foregrounding the particular subjectivity, that is, it is possible to understand who can obtain the celebrity status, how they are celebrated, and what values and discourses are in play. Given that sport is a uniquely valued cultural practice, it has a significant impact upon the process of manufacturing celebrity. Within the milieu, sport celebrities occupy complex and varied roles. As Andrews and Jackson (2001) identified, contemporary sport celebrities, manufactured elements of public culture, “consciously make visible individual personalities and practices in ways that seek to engage and inform private experience” (p.10). Therefore, studying sport celebrity as an important cultural sphere will add additional insight to the understanding of power relations at the conjuncture of sport, media, and representation.

Outline of Chapters

This dissertation has six chapters. Chapter One, Introduction, illustrates significance of this study through focusing on discussing why I attempt to examine Korean sporting masculinities. I first point out the unknown or falsely simplified East/Asian masculinities in the US-centered Western scholarship, and then illustrate how

I contour this research adopting diverse scholarly theories and methodologies. Second, I introduce the three research subjects, Park Chanho, Choo Shinsoo and Ryu Hyunjin, illuminating their status as a sport star in trans/national contexts. Third, relying on transnational and postcolonial theories that foregrounds the politics of naming, I identify several key terms and then briefly discuss how each concept is framed for this masculinity study, including masculinity, discourse, representation, transnationality, and sport celebrity.

In Chapter Two, Literature Review, I first investigate how MLB can be contextualized as a transnational space. Specifically, I provide a rationale that explains why I chose to focus on MLB for this Korean masculinity study. Considering the transnational natures of the commercial sport organization, I particularly discuss how the sport industry has generated ethnoscaapes using the global power. Next, defining three Korean MLB generations, I situate the three Korean baseball players in the Korean history regarding each athlete as a key juncture for each generation. And then, I also investigate how MLB functions as a site to manufacture transnational masculinities. In the second section of Chapter Two, I review theoretical tools to understanding sporting masculinities including cultural, hegemony, new manism, queer, feminist, postcolonial, and critical race theory. Finally, focusing on Asian/Korean subjectivities, I explore how these subjects and the masculinities are theorized crossing sport and transnationalism.

In Chapter Three, How To Study Mediated Cross-cultural Sporting Masculinity, methodological approaches are illustrated. I first address my epistemological choice including the selected research paradigm, positionality, and trustworthiness. And then, in

the remainder of the chapter, I explain the data generation and analytic techniques. Specifically, distinctive natures of online newspapers and reader comments as public discourse space are discussed, and then the data analysis framework is addressed for this masculinity study. Given this study as a bilingual research, I also introduce my translation practice based on postcolonial perspectives.

Chapter Four, Analysis I: Online Newspapers, analyzes the media texts of online newspapers. First, this chapter examines discourse production practice in the selected online newspapers. And then this chapter also provides a brief picture of chronological frame for the three players in that the analyses are thematically reformulated. Next, in-depth discourse analyses are unpacked using Fairclough's CDA analysis framework. Based on the analysis, dominant masculinity discourses are categorized as follows: athletic masculinities, heterosexual patriarchal masculinities, militarized masculinities, trans/nationalist masculinities, Korean Confucian masculinities, and color solidarity.

In Chapter Five, Analysis II: Reader Comments, I analyze the media texts of reader comments. First, this chapter examines discourse production practice in the reader comments' section. Then I provide in-depth discourse analyses using Fairclough's CDA analysis framework. Based on the analysis, dominant masculinity discourses are categorized as follows: othering masculinities, regulating bodies and masculinities, commodified transnational masculinities, and multifaceted androcentric nationalism.

Chapter Six, Discussion: New Frames for Sporting Masculinities, envisions new frames to investigate transnational sporting masculinities, considering the applied theories, the key themes from the analyses, and also the characteristics by media genre.

In this chapter, I first provide of a synthesized picture of transnational Korean sporting masculinities combining theories and thematic media discourses. Focusing on the links between distinctive thematic discourses with theories, I reformulate discourse sceneries as follows: masculinity vs. femininity, oversimplified Koreanness and over-accentuated Koreanness, the transnational racial structure, and multifaceted androcentric nationalism. Next I offer my understanding of sporting masculinities that emerged from the main research findings. Following the identified lessons, several limitations that became visible throughout this research experience are described with recommendations for a future study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

MLB and the Transnational Space

In this chapter, I provide a rationale to explain why I chose to focus on MLB to examine mediated construction of Korean masculinity. Considering the transnational nature of the commercial sport organizations, I particularly focus on how the sport industry has generated transnational migration of athletes. Based on postcolonial perspectives, the global expansion of commercial sport is discussed in the same line with (new) cultural imperialism. And also, as a “(white-masculine) national pastime” in US, I review the intertwined cultural ideologies around the masculine nature of baseball and MLB. This study focus on mediated construction of masculinity rather than the empirically constituted masculinity within the inherent masculine nature of American baseball. However, given that sport, media, and masculinity are formed as interdependent relations, I believe this brief review of global MLB will be helpful in understanding discursively constructed transnational masculinity in mediated MLB.⁷

MLB and the global expansion.

The bond between sport and media has become more galvanized by the contemporary consumer culture (Rowe & Gilmour, 2010). In this global age dominated by media technology, in particular, the combination has easily obtained the power of

⁷ Although I adopt *transnational* as a major terminology to contextualize mediated Korean sporting masculinities, *global* is often used to indicate the Western centered forces of homogenization (Appadurai, 1990).

crossing national borders. For this reason, some recognize the global paradigm as a homogenizing process but it is significant to look at the asymmetrical power relations. Rowe and Gilmour (ibid.) interrogated the Western-centered transnational expansion to Asia. According to the authors, during the early 1990s, Western media sport corporations began to establish a new market in Asia, the largest continent in the world. Despite considerable cultural diversities among Asian regions and people, the ambitious project was well settled down. More importantly, with the migration of Asian players to major North American sports, national sport fandom was constructed and the players were frequently represented in nationalist discourse of each Asian country. In turn, the strategic global project by the Western sport media became a significant site to uphold Western privileged East-West power relations. Some may argue that the migration was simply generated by the “autonomous decision” of the Asian players seeking bigger financial gains; and considering players who move to Asia from other regions, the multidirectional migration provides an equal site for travel. Following the notion of Rowe and Gilmour (2010), however, I argue that it should be explicated as a consequence of the intended project which aimed to promote a commercial market outside of North America by using talented but cheap sports workers. According to George Sage (2010), the global practice can be interpreted as “globalization-from-above” (p.9). The perspective explains globalization as a one-way homogenizing process. He noted,

No single dominant group comprises globalization from above; instead, there is an alliance of factions of the most powerful, wealthy, and influential persons and groups in business, commerce, government, and mass media. Leading that alliance are transnational corporations (TNCs) that manage and control, by

political-economic domination and intellectual leadership, and employ most of the world's labor force. (ibid., p.9)

Likewise, the global order features an asymmetrical relationship and there is a powerful alliance dominating the flow. Along the same line, Andrews and Ritzer (2007) applied *globalization* to understanding unequal structures. They argued that globalization is bounded by globalization, “the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas” (p.137). The available multi-language service of MLB.com—Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Chinese—can be considered as one of the examples of the global practices. In this sense, globalizing patterns of sports-worker migration is a specific practice of “buying Asia” (Rowe & Gilmour, 2010, p.1534) reflecting the US-dominated cultural imperialism.

MLB is one of the major North American sports organizations supporting and sustaining international sport-labor migration in baseball since 1956 (Crawford, 2004; Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Sage, 2010). The number of foreign-born players has been steadily increasing including players from Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, etc. As I described in the introduction chapter, MLB has had huge popularity in South Korea since Park Chanho's entrance. More than any other television program, it has attracted Koreans to the televised sport. The Korean language service of MLB.com has reflected both the transnational popularity and the organization's interest in South Korea as a significant Asian market. The technical strategy is understood in the context of MLB's global marketing process that

globalizes its popularity and maintains the cheap labor market, being supported by the transnationally loyal fandom.

Historicizing the sport migration.

In this section, I historicize three Korean baseball players considering the trans/national cultural landscapes of South Korea and US. Positioning Park Chanho as the pioneer who opened the door of MLB for Korean players⁸, I classify the years from 1994 to 2015 as three: the first generation of Park Chanho (1994-1999), the second generation of Choo Shinsoo (2000-2012), and the third generation of Ryu Hyunjin (2013-present).

The feature of the first generation is the increased influx of South Korean players to MLB following Park Chanho. During the IMF crisis of South Korea, Park Chanho's wins in US were frequently identified with national power and pride of South Korea.⁹ Reflecting Park's high national popularity, the broadcasting fee for his game rose more than three times between 1997 and 1998. Around that time, additionally, the new media era with World Wide Web has been popularized so that Park's game was delivered through not only radio or television but also live video streaming of the Internet. Since Park Chanho became a wealthy Korean national icon with an outstanding performance in MLB, as many as twelve players joined the American professional baseball league. The "indiscreet outflow to overseas (US)" (Ryu, 2001), however, initiated strong opposition from Korea Baseball Organization (KBO). In February 2001, officials in KBO visited MLB headquarters in New York and requested to revise the Korea-US Player Contract Agreement. In the agreement which was initially signed in 1983, there was no mention

⁸ Park Chanho and Nomo Hideo recently received a Pioneer Award from MLB (Yoo, 2015).

⁹ See also the article of Joo (2000).

about a rule for scouting Korean amateur players. Despite the KBO's request to refrain from scouting Korean amateur players, a number of rookies were easily scouted by MLB so that Korean professional baseball league suffered from a shortage of players. Since 1999, KBO sent a letter of complaint about this several times to MLB but they did not cooperate with it. In July 2001, after constant attempts by KBO, two countries finally agreed to revise the contract. According to the revised one, posting system is introduced and importantly, a MLB team which is interested in a prospect player in South Korea must conduct a "status check" on the player's signing eligibility through the commissioner's office (Encina, 2012). With this, KBO somewhat secured measures to protect Korean professional baseball league.

During the second generation, most of the Korean players in US stayed in the minor league. The players who contracted with a major league baseball club between 2002 and 2012 never made debut for the Big League. Under the circumstance, Choo Shinsoo, who contracted with the Seattle Mariners in 2001, has stood out as an outstanding hitter since he was traded to the Cleveland Indians in 2006. Although visibility of Korean players in the Big League was not conspicuous, the broadcasting fee was increased steadily and for the 2005 contract, the fee was reached to 48 million dollars (US). The lethargic power of negotiation by Korean broadcasting company was critiqued. Given the national economic crisis in South Korea, especially, the excessively overpaid fee was often blamed as a source of draining national wealth (Lee, 2004). With the gradual poor performance of Park Chanho and the majority of Korean players, however, ratings for MLB games and the following advertising revenue had decreased in South

Korea so that the broadcasting fee was drastically dropped between 2008 and 2009 (Park, 2006). Korean national baseball team, meanwhile, accomplished remarkable grade in several international competitions during the period of 2000 and 2012. Following the South Korean law, players who showed good performance in the games obtained an exemption from compulsory military service (see also “Militarized Masculinity” in Chapter IV).

The third generation is featured as the new neo-liberal relationship between KBL and MLB. In 2012, Ryu Hyunjin, a seven-time All-Star for the Hanwha Eagles of the KBL, became the first player to join a MLB team via the posting system. The Dodgers bid \$25.7 million and Ryu agreed with the contract. About a year later, in December 2013, Choo Shinsoo signed \$130 million contract to the Texas Rangers, all-time highest for an Asian in MLB. Although the conspicuous Korean Big Leaguers are only Choo Shinsoo and Ryu Hyunjin for the two seasons of 2013 and 2014, the capital value of Korean players was higher than ever; and Koreanness was accentuated in MLB with increased global popularity of Korean pop culture. Recently, also, US baseball’s governing body and the clubs implemented several foreign player-friendly rules. Following the several changed rules that were approved at MLB owners meetings in January 2013, MLB now allow coaches and managers to bring interpreters to the mound for conversations with foreign-born pitchers who do not speak fluent English (Stark, 2013). In April 2014, additionally, *SportsNet LA*, the exclusive new 24/7 TV network of the Los Angeles Dodgers, announced that they launch first-ever Korean-language Secondary Audio Programming (SAP) for all live Dodger games on its air this season. Reflecting changing

global status of Korean/Asian players, these examples showed the new transnational relationship between KBO and MLB, and further South Korea and US.

Table 1. Generations of Korean MLB Players and the Trans/national Cultural Landscapes

Year	Korean MLB Generation	Year/Player	Sporting Sociohistoricity	Korean Sociohistoricity
1994-1999	The 1st Generation: increased influx	1994 Park Chanho 1998 Bong Jungkeun 1998 Kim Sunwoo 1998 Cho Jinho 1998 Jeong Seok 1998 Seo Jaewoeng 1998 Seo Jaewan 1998 Kim Jaeyoung 1999 Kim Byunghyun 1999 Baek ChaSeung 1999 Choi Heeseop 1999 Song Seungjun 1999 Kim Byungil	The increased influx of Korean players to MLB → Devastated Korean professional baseball → Conflict between KBO and MLB 1998 AG: Korean team – the 1 st place	IMF crisis (Dec. 1997-Aug. 2001) New media era: live streaming for Park Chanho's game (1998-) The first TV broadcasting fee (US\$) 1997: 0.3 billion 1998: 1million 1999: 1.5 million
2000-2012	The 2 nd generation: rare big leaguers, more minor leaguers	2000 Lee Sanghoon 2000 Oh Cheolhee 2000 Kwon Yunmin 2000 Jeong Youngjin 2001 Choo Shinsoo 2001 Ryu Jaekuk 2001 An Byeonghak 2001 Kim Ilyeob 2001 Lee Seunghak 2005 Koo Daesung 2006 Nam Yunseong 2006 Jeong Youngil 2007 Kang Kyeongdeok 2008 Lee Hakju 2009 Choi Hyangnam 2009 Kim Dongyup 2009 Shin Jinho 2009 Choi Jiman	2001 Revised Korea-US Player Contract Agreement 2000 OG: Korean team – the 3 rd place 2000 AG: Korean team – the 1 st place 2006 WBC: Korean team – semi-final 2008 OG: Korean team – the 1 st place	2000: 3 million 2001: 8 million 2002: 8 million 2003: 8 million 2004: 8 million 2005: 48 million 2006: 48 million 2007: 48 million 2008: 48 million 2012: 1.3 million

Year	Korean MLB Generation	Year/Player	Sporting Sociohistoricity	Korean Sociohistoricity
		2009 Kim Seonki 2009 Nam Taehyuk 2009 Na Kyoungmin	2009 WBC: Korean team – the 2 nd place	
2013-	The 3 rd generation: new neo- liberal relation	2013 Ryu Hyunjin 2014 Yoon Sukmin 2014 Park Hyojun 2015 Kang Junggho	Ryu: The highest Korean player bid price contract with \$25.7million Choo: The highest Asian player contract with \$130 million Permitting an interpreter to join mound conferences LAD: the 1 st MLB team to have Korean-language Secondary Audio Programming (SAP) available for every game	2013: 1.3 million 2014: 1.3 billion 2015 – 2017: (unknown) Korean wave: the global popularity of South Korean culture (i.e., Gangnam Style)

* This table is created based on various sources in US/Korean news articles.

MLB and manufactured masculinity.

Sport is an enactment of American mythology (Butterworth, 2007). Particularly, baseball is considered an organic symbol of American culture. As both a national and masculine metaphor, Kimmel (1990) noted that “baseball is about remaining a boy and becoming a man” (p.56) in the US. Despite the existence of several sporting spaces disrupting and challenging the old belief that sport is men’s area, as a male privileged

cultural site, baseball in US serves to reconstitute masculinities. More importantly, it should be noted that baseball reproduces a particular kind of masculinity which is white middle-class masculinity. Hence, the “American national pastime” is closely involved in privileged social hierarchies based on gender, race, and class (ibid.). Given that the male sport plays a crucial role in the construction and representation of national identity, non-white bodies in the sport are frequently displayed as a contestable being (Rudolph, 2010; Butterworth, 2007). Butterworth (2007) argued that the problematic media representation of racialized MLB players culturally normalizes whiteness. Focusing on the 1988 home run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, the author pointed out the white male privileged US heroism. In analyzing another Dominican-born MLB player, Manny Ramirez, who is also a new US citizen, Rudolph (2010) focused on the transnational status of MLB athletes. In particular, she identified MLB’s global marketing strategy negotiating US patriotism and international appeal. According to her, “major league baseball (MLB) continues to play in perpetuating the immigrant success narrative of the American Dream, as it attempts to globalize its popularity and labor pool while maintaining baseball’s tentative status as the American pastime” (p.63). Here Ramirez’s immigrant black masculinity was scrutinized by US media following White American male mainstream values, being distant from the local superstar image. As for Asian MLB athletes, the research tends to illustrate that the figures are generally depicted as exotic “others” by US media discourse, while the Asian local media largely contextualize the males as national heroes based upon the wealthy transnational global body (Mayeda, 1999; Nakamura, 2005; Sun, 2011). Also, Joo (2012) added that economically and

athletically powerful Asian males are often represented as hypermasculine figures to the locals.

Likewise, MLB is a scholastically interesting place to explore manufactured masculinity. On one hand, it is still a US-centered white male site, but on the other, the economic-based transnational expansion attracts more and more diverse bodies. Thereby, the space properly reveals cultural hierarchies and also fosters scholarly consideration of multidimensional factors that reproduce masculinities in transnational contexts.

Theoretical Tools for Sporting Masculinities

As a multi-interdisciplinary area, more importantly, cultural approach to research allows a constitution of new theoretical models calling together diverse conceptual and methodological tools, through refusing a singular method and moving across the boundary between disciplines (King, 2005; Plymire, 2005). Seeking to find a more suitable theoretical framework, I examine specific theoretical tools to understand the production and enactment of Asian/Korean sporting masculinity, through reviewing literatures which are positioned at the nexus of sport, media, and masculinity. Considering the complicated identity formation and the representation in the contemporary society, the studies are inevitably overlapped each other adopting multiple theoretical approaches (i.e., postcolonial feminism, black feminism, or the confluence of queering and hegemony theory). Yet I categorize each domain based on significantly distinguished features including hegemonic masculinity, new manism, queer, feminist, postcolonial, and critical racial theory. I lay out this discussion from hegemonic masculinity theory. Considering that the hegemonic masculinity theory is frequently

combined with a discussion of contemporary form of “new” hegemonic masculinity, sporting studies of new manism are discussed in the next section. Given that there is a kind of intimacy between new masculine subjectivities and the represented queer elements, masculinity studies adopting queer theory is followed. Next, I explore the connection between feminist theory and sporting masculinity studies and lastly postcolonial theory and critical race theory reflecting transnational critical perspectives are discussed.

Hegemonic masculinity theory.

Relying on the concept of hegemony by Gramsci, Connell (2005b) introduced “hegemonic masculinity”, which has been a widely used theoretical framework by masculinity scholars since its inception. Following Gramsci’s definition of hegemony as “the social, cultural, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group over other groups” (Gross, 2011, p.52), hegemonic masculinity is conceptualized as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 2005b, p.77). With the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell also significantly recognized “multiple masculinities”, underlying the importance of scrutinizing the relations between diverse men and masculinities. Also, she noted that the hegemonic masculinity should be understood as a currently accepted strategy. That is, it is historically mobile and changeable so that the position is always contestable. Related to hegemonic masculinity, more importantly, there are specific gender relations between groups of men – subordination, complicity, and

marginalization. Given the influences of hegemony stem from the tacit support by subordinate groups, the “spontaneous consent” (Gross, 2011, p.53), it is crucial to understand the interplay of relational forms of masculinity in the gender order. The multiple masculinities highlight not only the point that men control other men (not simply women) but also the importance of considering other unequal social structures such as racism and classism (Grindstaff & West, 2006).

As I mentioned, a number of scholars have produced research on sporting masculinities relying on the hegemonic masculinity approach. Among them, hegemonic status of sport celebrities has been paid considerable attention, more than other topics (Trujillo, 1995; Cashmore & Parker, 2003; Harris & Clayton, 2007; Hardin, Kuehn, Jones, Genovese, & Balaji, 2009; Douglas, 2014). As Harris and Clayton (2007) noted, sport is a bastion of masculinities which are embodied and represented by the players and media that play a crucial role in promoting and solidifying the relationship. Focusing on US professional sport and bodies, Trujillo examined how mass media reproduce and reinforce hegemonic masculinity through athletic bodies (1991; 1995). In research analyzing Nolan Ryan, a major league baseball pitcher, Trujillo (1991) suggested five distinguishing features of hegemonic masculinity in American culture: 1) physical force and control, 2) occupational achievement, 3) familial patriarchy, 4) frontiersmanship, and 5) heterosexuality.

Considering the global popularity of David Beckham, as well, several researchers have focused scholarly interest on the soccer star and his hegemonic cultural identity, assuming that sexuality is tied to gender identities and performance (Hardin & et al.,

2009). Whannel (2002) took a close look at the contradictory masculinity of Beckham, pointing out that his deviant sexual crossover image challenged the rigid conventions of working-class masculinity in soccer. Cashmore and Parker (2003) also concentrated on his complex and contradictory identity. Regarding him as a conflating figure displaying multiple masculinities. They illuminated his inclusive popularity as a positive perspective in that it stimulates change in English soccer, the traditionally masculine arena, and further transcends the masculine norms.

Based on its origins and essential characteristics, sport is often considered as man's area, therefore legitimizing male power (Kidd, 1990). Similar to soccer, aggressive team sports, such as rugby, are more accepted as one of the spheres serving to preserve and (re)produce a particular hegemonic form of masculinity (Harris & Clayton, 2007). In a study of media representations of Gavin Henson, a Welsh rugby player, Harris and Clayton paid particular attention to his masculine status as a metrosexual sport star. Although they scrutinized the concept of metrosexuality referring to a postmodern masculine identity of him, hegemonic masculinity was assumed as an underlying theoretical framework to understand where Henson fits within contemporary masculinity discourse in Western culture. According to the authors, metrosexuals are a transformational hegemonic masculinity, noting that "metrosexuals are in no way a "new" challenge to male hegemony—men have always embodied traits and behaviors that appear to contradict the dominant male archetype, and these challenges are all part of what is meant by cultural hegemony" (p.152). More importantly, they acknowledged the limits of metrosexuality in that it has become associated with White, middle-class men.

Adopting the view of Berila and Choudhuri (2005), they noted, “the embodiment of gay masculinities by heterosexual, middle-class men may suggest an increased tolerance of White gay masculinity, while simultaneously subordinating working-class and Black and Asian gay masculinities” (p.153).

In addition, race relations function as “an integral part of the dynamics between masculinities” (Connell, 2005b, p.80). Hardin, Kuehn, Jones, Genovese, & Balaji (2009) considered John Amaechi, retired NBA player who came out as a gay, as a challenge to the gender order in sports and explored how it operates in and out of the ideology of (homophobic) hegemonic masculinity. Adopting the framework of color-blind ideology to explain the racist media coverage, the authors scrutinized the institutional power of sport/media complex reinforcing sexism, racism, and neo-homophobia. A study by Douglas (2014) on Private Mark Graham, a black Canadian citizen who was killed in Afghanistan, also took a close look at the intersection of race and hegemonic masculinity. Through applying discourses of national identity, she critically analyzed the media narratives of his death linking to white nationalism. Considering the old history of anti-black racism in the national context, Douglas interrogated post-9/11 narratives of citizenship emphasizing white men as a true citizen and heroic subject, while reducing Graham’s identity as a racial being only.

Outside of the particular bodies of sporting celebrities, hegemonic masculinity still maintains the productive power for many media scholars as a useful theoretical framework. In advertising, particularly, both linguistic and visual modalities frequently emphasize particular aspects of gender displays, de-emphasizing other features and

identities (Feasey, 2008). Through presenting the prevailing cultural values about masculinity and femininity, advertising contributes to produce fantasies and myths of specific gender (ibid.). Relating to hegemonic masculinity, in the study of *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issues, Davis (1997) suggested a new concept in the hegemonic gender order, hegemonic femininity. Adopting a feminist critical lens concerning racial hierarchy, she argued that models with white skin, blonde, straight hair, and so forth serve as societal exemplars of hegemonic femininity. According to Davis, unlike the privileged status in the gender order that hegemonic masculinity has, hegemonic femininity, in the subordinate position, serves as a “supporting actor” that strengthens and intensifies the hegemonic masculine ideal. Through paying attention to the relationship between hegemonic masculinity/femininity by a (post)colonial theory, she also unveiled the cultural meanings of the swimsuit issue that reinforce the practices of symbolic colonialism. Wörsching (2000), in the German newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, explored masculinist aesthetics focusing on the juncture of sport and advertising, highlighting symbolic meanings of sport that reproduce and legitimize patriarchal hierarchy. She argued, “the masculinist culture of sport is used to create an elaborate system of metaphors in advertisements that reflect the myth of hegemonic man. Such imagery emphasizes relationships of domination and subordination and celebrates competition as the law of patriarchy” (p.80).

Through focusing on one particular advertisement field, beer and liquor, in mega sport events, Messner and Montez De Oca (2005) illuminated a consumption-based masculine identity, arguing that those play a crucial role in constructing (sporting)

hegemonic masculinity. Given that the ads target young males who consume sport media, they operate as “establishing a pedagogy of youthful masculinity” (p.1879). Through a close textual analysis of the ads, the authors debunked the cultural construction of contemporary white males and objectified women at the nexus of sport, advertisements, and hegemonic masculinity.

Through reviewing several studies of sporting masculinity in media relying on the theory of hegemonic masculinity, it is perceived that there was a growing interest in the complicated gender dynamics with race, class, sexuality, and nationality. Hegemonic masculinity and the construction are more fully analyzed when the intersections are considered together. In order to understand the multiple and hybrid attributes, scholars attempted a variety of theoretical approaches. Given this point, it is not easy to identify and distinguish studies that rely solely on hegemonic theory, but the sporting masculinity studies above largely adopt hegemonic concepts as a major analytic lens. In this neoliberal global paradigm, especially, several of the studies examined the changing appearance of masculinity. Concentrating on a non-traditional or “new” patterns of masculinity, they investigated the process of de/constructing contemporary hegemonic forms of masculinity.

New manism.

Considering hegemonic masculinity is historically and culturally specific (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), it is no surprise that depictions of masculinities in the media have changed in recent years. Most scholars who examined the newly constructed masculinity and its enactment assumed that traditional forms of masculinity and the

relationship between men and women were deconstructed. On the one hand, the new masculinity has the potential to resist the rigid gender hierarchy, but on the other, it still maintains socially dominant status and power as a transformation or a mutant of traditional hegemonic masculinity.

According to Beynon (2002), in Western cultural contexts, new man refers to two separate senses, a pro-feminist nurturer and a narcissist “seeking out the latest fashions and taking a great interest in grooming and appearance” (p.164). Although the two strands feature a different age, 1970s and 1980s respectively, he argued that these two have been woven together in the public mind as a hybridized new man-ism. With neo-liberal thought, a variety of media sources today play a crucial role in conveying the new masculine ideas and images to public (Beynon, 2002; Harris & Clayton, 2007).

Given that the new man-as-narcissist is substantially influenced by the market-led policies and the cultures of consumption, the notion can be superseded by the concept of metrosexuality which was created by Mark Simpson in 1994 (Salzman, Matathia, & O’Reilly, 2005). While Simpson considered the metrosexual as an attitude full of vanity and pretense, Salzman, Matathia, & O’Reilly (2005) focused on positive connotations within metrosexuality. That is, metrosexuality is “a welcome evolution in man’s adaptation to the modern world”. They said, “Rather than adhere to the strictures of their fathers’ generation, they are willing to move beyond rigid gender roles and pursue their interests and fancies regardless of societal pressures against them” (p.56).

The trendy new masculinity was investigated within the sport terrain also. As I mentioned in the previous section, soccer star David Beckham and his portrayed

masculinity are often interpreted within a hegemonic metrosexuality discourse. In an attempt to understand metrosexuality in Connell's gender order, Harris and Clayton (2007) underscored that it is related to "White, middle-class men, establishing "new" masculinities by way of the exploitation of working-class men and men of color" (p.151). That is, as a transformation of hegemonic masculinity, metrosexuality should not be considered as a subordinated practice. Although it adopts many traditionally feminine characteristics and traits so that the demarcation is blurred between "gayness" and metrosexuality, the embodiment of gay masculinities by heterosexual, middle-class men and the conflation of gayness with femininity mostly re-secure a space for heterosexual white male privilege (Harris & Clayton, 2007; Grindstaff & West, 2011). As the authors noted the "metrosexuality of sport heroes may be more culturally acceptable than homosexuality in that the heterosexual feature is known and often proven, so metrosexuality cannot easily be expelled from the circle of legitimacy of patriarchy" (p.158). As a patriarchal mutation, metrosexual men hold onto power over women and deviant men (Beynon, 2002). In addition, new masculine practices informed by the massive power of consumerism have been suggested, such as "new lads" and "übersexual men". As another "phony marketing phenomenon" (Edwards, 1997, p.249) and/or "a reaction to the rise of feminism" (Whannel, 2002, p.257), new lads continued the sexism and misogyny including elements of traditional young male working class culture (Whannel, 2002). The concept, übersexual, which is suggested by Salzman & et al. (2005), indicates a man whose defining qualities are passion and style. Übersexual is less concerned with fashion and more inclined to develop his own sense of style. Compared to

the metrosexual, the übersexual is more into relationships than self and more concerned with principles and values. The continuous reconstruction of new masculinity effectively illuminates the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is cooperated with dominant cultural values. As Beynon (2002) noted, “most men are still culturally propelled to incorporate dominance, whether in terms of crude physical strength or displays of ‘masculine’ rationality and competence, into their presentation of self” (p.11). The inclusive masculinity as new man, metrosexual, new lad, or übersexual also strategically functions as an element of the dominance. Again, it is crucial to note that gender is relational and masculinity is constructed and performed in the mutual association. Considering the inherent desire of dominance, in my study, the connection between the Euro-American centered new masculinity and transnational Korean sporting bodies, and the process of negotiation will be illuminated through media discourses.

Queer theory.

As Whannel (2002) noted, recent figures of new masculinity can be also understood in a pattern of gender and sexual relations. Understandably, queer theory offers an important lens to study socially constructed masculinity and the gender dynamics. As an interdisciplinary perspective, queer theory “seeks to disrupt socially constructed systems of meaning surrounding human sexuality” (Ott & Mack, 2014, p.216). With media studies, queer theorists generally critique the ways in which media texts reflect or construct the binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality (ibid.).

Relating to masculinity studies, in particular, queer theorizing offers one of the useful conceptual tools, “gender performativity” (Butler, 1990). According to Butler

(1990), gender is always doing. Gender identity is “performatively constituted by the expressions that are said to be its results” (p.25). People act in accordance with the gender conventions of a given society and the accumulated and/or the repeated acts over a period of time are believed to be a sense of gender identity as an internal quality. When masculinity is discussed, thus, a series of expected actions and the social system in which a boy (man) lives produce an internal sense of masculinity (Ott & Mack, 2014). Here the discursively powerful media is presented as an influential site that upholds a culturally accepted masculinity and simultaneously contests the ideal gender images. Informed by the queer approach, Samantha King (2009) studied media narratives about Mark Bingham, the white, gay, and rugby player in the US. In the post-9/11 discourse, the research debunked discursive formations of his story as an exceptionally masculine gay-citizen, the nationalist media concentration, and the athletic prowess. Through the case study, King offered significant insight in understanding queer theory and applying it to sport studies. As she pointed out,

The rightful domain of sexuality critique should not begin and end with homophobia. That is to say, if we focus our energies too singularly on homophobia, or heteronormativity for that matter, we are likely to overlook other significant forces in the regulation of sexuality, including those enabled by lesbian and gay political formations. (ibid., p.6)

Challenging sport scholars to go beyond the exclusive concentration on homosexuality, likewise, she critiqued the antihomophobic representation of Bingham and the sport nexus reinforcing regressive political agendas relating to militarist imperialism. Queer theory, also, scrutinizes the essentialist notion of sexuality and gender as stable and fixed

category (Birrell & McDonald, 2000). Considering the disruptive power, Birrell and Cole (2000) analyzed media representation about Renee Richards, a transsexual US tennis player. Through the focus on Richards's entrance into women's tennis which caused controversy, the authors illuminated how the male-dominated US culture including sport and media re/produces woman and man based on two binary opposite sexes. Despite the deconstructive potential that Richards shows, the dominant ideology is that "there are no alternative categories for Richards" (p.305) rather stabilizes the mutually exclusive sex and gender categories. Working from a similar recognition, in *Artistic Impressions* (2011)—the study discussed discursive formations of masculinity in figure skating, Mary Louise Adams also focused on the notion that "sexuality is fluid, and identities which attempt to fix it are the result of social and political processes" (p.8). Methodologically, she particularly valued an historical approach to queer sport studies, underlying the potential of historical perspective revealing today's fixed bipolar gender and sex categories. The collaborative lens effectively contributes to illustrate that the masculinities in figure skating, which are now typically perceived as gayness, were once closed to dominant masculine identity as a gentleman's physical activity in the history of many European countries. Through focusing on the contradictory relationship between figure skating and masculinity construction, Adams interrogated the sport in relation to the heteronormative culture and the dichotomous notion of gender and sexuality.

As exemplified, compulsory heteronormativity is "still" powerful through sport (Birrell & McDonald, 2000). Given that "queer" can be defined as "people whose individual sexualities do not fit into the traditional understanding of heterosexuality"

(ibid., p. 221), the three Korean MLB players in this study are never identified as queer. Rather, they are identified as obviously visible heterosexual men, what the media display reaffirms hegemonic representations of heteronormative male-female relations in the family (Jamieson, 2000). As a husband, father, breadwinner, or *Mr. Right* for many women who are in the marriageable age, the transnational sporting bodies reinforce normative heterosexuality and the practice, blurring and even blockading any possible appearance of queer characters. Considering the nationalist status, in particular, the heteronormative visibility instills an idea that who can be a proper national subject and who cannot be.

Feminist theory.

A number of current masculinity studies and scholars are galvanized by feminist theories (Gardiner, 2002). Most of the studies above under the category of hegemonic theory and new manism are also considered feminist inflected masculinity studies conceptually and methodologically. For instance, Harris and Clayton (2007) adopted critical pro/feminist approach to examine metrosexuality of Gavin Henson, and Messner and Montez de Oca also adopted insights from feminist cultural studies to analyze the gendered advertisements. Through presenting four researcherly consensus between masculinity studies and feminist theories, Gardiner (2002) clarified how the scholars in both areas mutually interact as below.

[First], men as well as women have undergone historical and cultural processes of gender formation that distribute power and privilege unevenly... Second is the consensus that masculinity is not monolithic, not one static thing, but the confluence of multiple processes and relationships with variable results for differing individuals, groups, institutions, and societies... [Third,] both genders

can and should cooperate both intellectually and politically... A fourth area of consensus is more broadly methodological. [The scholars from both areas] agree that the critique of essentialist categories is politically imperative to induce social change. (ibid., p.11-12)

In this way, both theoretically and methodologically, feminist scholars of masculinity studies interrogate the prevailing paradigms of academic masculinity studies and attempt to develop more comprehensive theories of gender (ibid.).

Considering the intimate relationship between two scholarships, my recognition of feminism refers to a political movement for “all of the oppressed” including socially and historically marginalized men beyond essentialist and simplistic definition of women’s liberation (hooks, 2000). Given that Asian masculinities are considered as marginalized, effeminate, and exotic compared to western dominant masculinity (Cheung, 2002), it is fair to contextualize a study of Asian sporting masculinity or racialized sporting masculinity as a feminist inquiry project.

One of the remarkable benefits of feminist approach is the underscored intersectional identity. As Hall (1997) argued, gender can be truly understood with other forms of oppression. Critiquing white bias within feminist sport studies among Euro-American scholars, she foregrounded the necessity of analyzing the junctures of gender, race, class, and other classifications upon which oppression is based. The intersectionality works as a useful analytic tool to understand falsely simplified Asian sporting masculinity and the multilayered discourses (Hall, 1997; Gardiner, 2002; Espiritu, 2004; Connell, 2005b; Reeser, 2010). As “all women do not experience sport in the same way”

(Hall, 1996, p.75), men (of color) also do not experience it in the same way and the differences produce myriad configurations of masculinity and femininity.

Given that a principle premise of critical theory is that it critiques historical, cultural and structural conditions of oppression (Glesne, 2011), feminist theory is often allied with the approach of critical theory. Through the collaboration, critical feminist researchers unpack issues of justice and power, and are committed to uncovering and understanding the forces that cause and sustain oppression (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Hence, feminist informed media scholars have interrogated representation of gender and the stereotypical nature of media texts. Along with Davis's (1997) study on the swimsuit issues, Dworkin and Wachs's (2009) study on body politics in contemporary US culture provided an in-depth feminist analysis. Paying close attention to health and fitness magazines, they discussed the intersectional masculinity/femininity, race, class, sexuality, terrorism, and nation in the sport and fitness media. Throughout the research feminist informed notions of relational masculinity and femininity stood out. When it comes to masculinity, specifically, the mediated men and masculinities were interpreted as a kind of strategic practice to respond to the "crises in masculinity". In contrast to antifeminism or masculinism, according to the authors, the contextualized male body panic relies on healthism featuring the contemporary consumer culture—"the idea that the individual is responsible for the health of the self and the nation" (p.104). As this study exemplified, feminist approaches contribute to a fruitful analysis not only for women and the bodies but also for males and the diversified subjectivities, considering interactive relations. In sum, feminist theoretical lens can effectively debunk common stereotypes of masculinity

and femininity produced in the discursive media, whereby it deconstructs the false binaries in the texts and the systems of inequity that they support (Ott & Mack, 2014).

Postcolonial theory.

The underlying assumption of postcolonialism is that the colonial period is still ongoing. As Davis (1997) noted, the contemporary colonialism can be defined as symbolic colonialism in that, unlike former colonizers, the current colonizers retain their influence over the other countries through politics, religion, media, and economics rather than a physical domination. Thus, local subjects are inevitably influenced by “geopolitical struggles, Western imperial expansion and colonial empires, global markets, multinational corporations, labor migration, and transnational media” (Connell, 2005b, p.72). Emerging from the debates in anti-colonial scholarship, postcolonial theory has played a pivotal role in “theorizing and explicating the texts, cultures, and politics arising out of Third World contexts after their hard won independence from colonial rule” (Stanovsky, 2007, p.494). In developing theories of race, gender, and subjectivity, two representative postcolonial theorists, Edward Said (1978) and Gayatri Spivak (1988) have critiqued Western centered representations of “the Other” which has become central to the study of postcolonial masculinities (Stanovsky, 2007). One of the common portrayals about native men in the Third World is that they are dangerous and hyper-sexualized figures. They threaten both white women and native women with the brutality so stereotypically represented masculinity has supported the intercessional and repressive masculinities in the First World; finally, it reinforces First World norms of masculinity and heterosexuality (ibid.).

As Stanovsky (ibid.) pointed out, however, the dichotomous representations between the First and the Third World run the risk of producing an essentializing and homogenizing postcolonial masculinity. The First/Third World demarcation is typically considered a basic premise to contextualize postcolonial theory but it works to create re-marginalized subjects such as the people who are on the line of the center and the periphery. That is, with the dichotomous recognition based on the geographical terrain, global Korean sporting masculinities considering the race, class, nationality, and sexuality cannot be fully understood because it “obscures the actual diversity and plurality of lived postcolonial masculinities around the globe” (ibid., p.495). In postcolonial theory, as Morrell and Swart (2005) foregrounded, one of the most influential concepts is the term hybridity which is defined as “a term developed to try and capture the fluidity of postcolonial life and the postmodern insights into the multiple identities and subject positions available” (p.94).

To many postcolonial theorists, globalization is accepted as another mechanism of colonialism and imperialism. Despite the underexplored sport gender studies framed by postcolonial theory, the existent literature presents a useful analytic lens connecting sport and postcolonial gender. Here transnational sport migration is one of the frequently illuminated sites by sport study scholars. Bruce and Wheaton (2009), for instance, discussed transnational citizenship, identity and nationalism focusing on the ethnographic migration of yachtsman Sir Peter Blake. Considering the global multiplicity of identities, they attempted to add one more insight to understand the nature of contemporary sporting migration. Specifically through analyzing newspapers about Blake in both New Zealand

and Britain, they paid attention to the mechanism that hegemonic whiteness is re-articulated through the male sport hero. The necessity of new understandings of diaspora is also emphasized through the research, following Cohen's (1997) "cultural diasporas" (cited in Bruce & Wheaton, 2009), they sought to expand their thinking beyond the traditional focus on oppressed dispersal and racial minorities. Similarly, Kim (2012) explored the discursive production of transnational athletic bodies, informed by postcolonial feminist analysis. Focusing on Korean LPGA players, she scrutinized how both the US and Korean print media shape the women's gender, race, and nationality. Methodologically, in particular, she pointed out the significance of anticolonial translation. Given the asymmetrical linguistic relation between US and Korea, the attempt to illuminate nuanced cultural differences is understood as a postcolonial researcherly strategy to blur the hegemonic cultural power of English.

Chattopadhyay's (2011) study also brought about a crucial attention to formation of postcolonial gender. Focusing on Bengali masculinity, the study discussed how the construction is negotiated with race, gender and nationality. Through a historical approach to the discursive production, he was mainly concerned with the mechanism that reinforces hegemonic national masculinity both in colonial times and in the post-independent period. As many other types of colonial masculinities are, in colonial times, the Hindu/Bengali masculinity was widely perceived as effeminate and compliant. Furthermore, the Hindu masculinity was othered in comparison not only with British colonizers but also with Muslim males, the other regional forms of Indian masculinity, whereby the Bengali masculinity became subordinated to the Indian national-masculine.

The notion foregrounding both transnational and local contexts for the formation of gender identity illuminated well an inherent cross-cultural nature of postcolonial theory.

In summary, as Appadurai (1990) contended, globalization is “a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models” (p.296). When transnational gender politics are studied with the expanded premise of global, not only media practices within cultural imperialism exploiting information, technologies, and markets but also hybrid masculinities created through the cultural fusions of global diasporas are properly illuminated, and further it will contribute to secure a space for alternative narratives (Stanovsky, 2007; Morrell & Swart, 2005).

Critical race theory.

Given that race is inevitably involved in postcolonialism, critical race theory (CRT) works as another useful analytic tool for this study. Focusing on social and political forms of power around race, CRT interrogates how both work to include and exclude people of color (Glesne, 2011). CRT is commonly known as “a body of legal scholarship that was initiated by a group of lawyers during the civil rights movement” (Kumasi, 2011, p.206) in context of the US. For this study, I adopt a more comprehensive concept that CRT is a scholarly response to the oppression experienced by racial minority groups throughout history. Within this framework, transnational Korean subjects and the sporting masculinities that are typically relegated to a monolithic masculine or feminine image based on Western stereotypes will be debunked.

CRT tends to depend solely on the Black-White binary particularly in US-centered Western academy (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Thus, it is often conceptualized as a framework that examines racism privileging whiteness over blackness (Hylton, 2009). Based on a true understanding of the theory, however, it is clear that the approach is inherently including other marginalized groups outside the black and white racial relations. In addition, intersectionality is also a pivotal axis for CRT scholars. The racial oppression should be considered with other forms of subordination such as gender, class, and sexuality and the people within the relationship are consequently affected by inequality in more than one way (Kumasi, 2011). On the same line with postcolonial theorists, CRT scholars also argue that it is important to secure a place for people of color to speak their unique racialized experiences (ibid.).

Relating to masculinity and media representation, more specifically, there are several analytic key concepts explaining how media texts operate within the context of American culture: exclusion, stereotyping, assimilation, and othering (Ott & Mack, 2014). As Ott and Mack (2014) noted, one of the dominant representation of race in US is characterized as an absence of representation. Here, exclusion is conspicuous in that “it is the process by which various cultural groups are symbolically annihilated, or ‘written out of history,’ through under-representation in the media” (ibid., p.151). That is, racial minorities simply do not “exist” in the media that people consume everyday, whereby it reinforces ideological power for the dominant groups. Even though people of color are visible in the media, they are oversimplified and flawed. The stereotyping overlooks the inherent complexity of a racial group and instills ideas supporting the majority of white

privilege into consumers' mind. Sometimes media texts represent minority racial groups in a positive light. That is, racial minorities become assimilated into the same social status of white groups, while obscuring their cultural identities and real issues of racial dominance. The images of false diversity mislead media consumers, presenting a racially (made) equitable world. Othering is "the process of marginalizing minorities by defining them in relationship to the (white) majority" (ibid., p.156). In popular sport, the process relies upon visual culture such as the television broadcast or the print ads (Chon-Smith, 2006). Here the ideology of difference and exoticism work as underlying assumptions operating the othering process in media. As Ott and Mack (2014) identified, for example, there is a generically depicted Asian-ness or Asian masculinity that is racialized as a source of pleasure for the US American consumers such as kung-fu fighter (difference), and the exotic others represent a mental distancing and equate white with normalcy (exoticism). As Hirose and Kei-ho Pih (2010) contended, the Eastern cultural uniqueness solidifies the asymmetrical relationship between the East and the West, legitimizing "the impenetrability of the Western self" (p.204).

Even though a number of studies featuring sport, masculinity, and media that adopted critical race perspectives did not explicitly identify themselves as a study framed by CRT, most of the studies are deeply involved with the analytic association with CRT (Majors, 1990; Dworkin & Wachs, 2000; Rowe, McKay, & Miller, 2000; Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2005; Butterworth, 2007). As I presented above, in the recent study of Mark Graham by Delia Douglas (2014), she focused on the intersections of masculinity and nationality with a CRT lens. Analyzing mediated accounts of Graham's death, she

demonstrated how a white national identity is linked to anti-black racism in Canada. In the study of *Sport Illustrated* swimsuit issues, Davis (1997) also pointed out how the produced images reinforce racist notions about the Self and Other, critiquing the black-white dichotomy in the representation and the obscured other people of color as a consequence. Working from a CRT approach on Asian subjects, Lavelle (2006) focused on the rhetorical construction of Yao Ming, transnational Asian National Basketball Association star. In the study of examining his racialized masculinity in game commentary, she points out the rhetorical construction reinforced Yao Ming's place as a minority model who had not assimilated into American culture. Through the review on race and representation, it was noted that the complexity of racial and ethnic intersections are not accurately presented in a number of media texts. As she said, "racial representation is not just about whether or not there is representation, but what the quality of representation is" (p.21).

While many sport studies concerning race and the representation focused on a White-Black or White-Asian relationship as a main focus, in the study of Asian American and African American masculinities, Chon-Smith (2006) paid attention to the relational Black and Asian men, indicating it as a "racial magnetism" (p.ix). Considering two Asian sport stars, Yao Ming and Suzuki Ichiro, in US media, he explored the relations between minority masculinities in American popular sports, National Basketball League and Major League Baseball, with positive connotation to the subjects for new construction of Asian masculinity in post-civil rights US.

Preferred theoretical frames for sporting masculinity.

Considering the features of each theoretical tool that are discussed in the above sections, I now identify my theoretical frames for this study. As a number of studies that adopted hegemonic masculinity theory displayed, the theoretical lens of hegemonic masculinity offers an opportunity to look at historically changing multiple masculinities. In particular, with considering specific gender relations between groups of men such as subordination, complicity, and marginalization, it effectively illuminates the re/production mechanism of dominant masculinity as a hegemonic form. Given the transnationality as a significant contextual background for this study, hegemonic masculinity theory can offer a useful analytic tool to illuminate a transnationally constructed gender hierarchy and the specific relations between males. Focusing on changing contemporary masculinities, I believe that a theory of new manism can also show the ways in which the inclusive masculinity such as new man, metrosexual, or new lad strategically functions as an element of the male dominance. In the discourse of “Mr. Nice”, specifically, this theory can be a help to explicate the transforming Korean contemporary masculine dimensions through the transnational athletic bodies. Additionally, an analytic lens from queer theory effectively debunks embedded heteronormative culture. Through highlighting compulsory heteronormativity for three Korean players in media sport, queer theory interrogates a culturally accepted masculinity and the mechanism upholding the ideal gender images. Given that this study particularly focuses on Korean players, a lens from critical race theory that puts concerns for social and political forms of power around race works as another useful analytic tool for this

study. Resisting a researcherly tendency focusing on Black-White binary, furthermore, I adopt a more comprehensive CRT concept including the oppression experienced by all of the racial minority groups throughout history. Given the transnationality this study assumes, an approach from postcolonial theory also better illuminates the racial relations of masculinities that are situated in transnational contexts. Foregrounding plural masculinity and intersectionality of feminism, postcolonial theory invites scholars to think about the hybridized and fluid postcolonial life of the subjugated subjects. In order to interrogate the ongoing symbolic and cultural colonialism through/in sport, in sum, I adopt postcolonial feminism as a fundamental theoretical tool and also look at how the other theoretical categories are interacted to re/produce Korean masculinities in a transnational sporting context.

Theorizing Asianness/Koreanness in Sporting Masculinity

In recent years, there has been a significant increase on scholarship adopting transnational perspectives to study men and masculinities in North America. In particular, masculinity scholars informed by poststructural feminist thoughts have begun to have an interest on marginalized subjects including Asian masculinities (Pringle, Hearn, Pease, and Ruspini, 2011). Nevertheless, East/Asian masculinities are relatively unknown and seldom a scholarly topic in the international academic work (Taga, 2005). In this section, focusing on largely East Asian men and masculinities among the multiple and hybrid dimensions of Asian masculinities, I review the relevant literature and crucial viewpoints.

Given that masculinities are constructed not only by the global and transcultural influences but also shaped by local traditions culturally and historically (Pringle, Hearn,

Pease, and Ruspini, 2011), several scholars offered a rich understanding of “the micro politics of local gender orders” (Louie, 2002; Taga, 2005; Roberson, 2011; Zhang, 2011). In the historical review of East Asian masculinities by Taga (2005), he examined diverse forms of masculinities in East Asia including China, Japan, and North and South Korea from premodern society through recent decades, regarding the chronological moments and relevant political, social and cultural ideologies in each milieu. Through discussing the relational gender issues between men and women, the study illuminates the point that, (even) among the East Asian masculinities, not only similarities and continuities, but also differences coexist. He, thus, noted that “a comparison with other societies within East Asia is as important as comparisons with countries outside the region” (p.138). Critiquing the global masculinity scholarship which is dominated by the Western centered perspectives, Taga underlined the importance of studying East Asian realities from Asian positionality. As Pringle, Hearn, Pease, and Ruspini (2011) argued, the masculinity model which is developed in the West focusing on normative white Western subjects marginalized understandings of men and masculinities in other parts of the world. The partial and incomplete Western views easily distort the plural masculinities of others by using the hegemonic power in the global relations. Understandably, it is often critiqued that the studies in North America rely too much on a Western model of hegemonic masculinity. Louie (2002) argued that the Western centered masculinity paradigms are inappropriate to the Chinese men and masculinity, claiming differences between the Chinese wen-wu model and the Western model¹⁰. Although Louie’s somewhat

¹⁰ According to Louie (2002), “*wu* was then related more to the non-elite men who had less social power

essentialist and simplified perspective on Western hegemonic masculinity is critiqued, it is important to note that he emphasized the significance of theorizing masculinity from the cultural foundations that characterize the gender construction (Hirose & Kei-ho Pih, 2010).

In addition, a number of studies on Asian masculinities illuminated the mechanism that how Asian males become feminized or trivialized within the context of a US-centered Western imaginary (Eng, 2001). Although the study paid particular attention on Asian American male subjectivity in the US society, Eng's theoretical frame and the fundamental approach to racial minorities are significantly helpful in understanding complexly gendered, sexualized, and racialized Asian subjects in a cross-cultural context. Throughout the study, he foregrounded the intersectionality of gender and sexuality on the racial formations of Asian American men. Informed by psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theories, Eng noted, "racial fantasies facilitate our investments in sexual fantasies and vice versa." (p.2). In addition to a focusing on Chinese immigrant laborers and the cultural nationalism, it was discussed that gendered and racialized subjects have been barred from becoming a "complete" US national subject. Acknowledging the mutual imbrications, the work sheds light on the social construction of masculinity and femininity in Asianness. In a study of hegemonic masculinities in mixed martial arts, Hirose and Kei-ho Pih (2010) illuminated interactive and relational nature between hegemonic and marginalized forms of masculinity, focusing on how Asian masculinities serve the hegemonic status of white American masculinity. They noted that the sporting

while *wen* is more clearly the masculinity of the elite" (p.18). The primacy of *wen* over *wu* play a crucial role in constructing Chinese masculinity unlike Western model of hegemonic masculinity.

mechanism of Asian masculinity is appropriated as a “useful other” to support the positional superiority of the West rather than a sheer exclusion. Relying on Edward Said’s conception of Orientalism (1978), they pointed out that the Orient and Europe are not mutually exclusive because “The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture” (ibid., p.2). However, what is clear is Asians are invariably assigned a role at the bottom, while the Westerners occupy the top (Eng, 2001). Tran and Chang (2013) displayed how the subjects “at the bottom” negotiate their own sense of masculinity and represent the recognized characters. Through looking at undergraduate Asian American fraternity members, they paid close attention to the strategic performances and attitudes of young subjects adopting hyper-masculine characteristics to negotiate and endure racism for patriarchal privilege. Under the prevailed stereotypical representation of Asian males as being sexually deviant creatures in US media representation, the study revealed that Asian American students attempt to recover the relatively inferior and marginalized status through extreme social behaviors.

While a number of masculinity studies on Asian subjects analytically focused on the oversimplified and effeminate representations, several researchers attempted to examine new or alternative masculinities of Asian bodies (Cheung, 2002, Joo, 2012). Joo (2012) discussed a new image of Asian masculinity as sporting bodies. Although Asian males are typically considered as sexual deviants in diverse US media, the physically powerful and competitive images contribute to construct a new dimension of Asian masculinities, disproving theories of biological inferiority. As she noted, the athletes “complicate stereotypical narratives of Asian male emasculation and perversity that have

characterized the history of Asian male racial representations” (p.119). However, despite the possibility for resistance, it is limited in that the “hyper visibility” reproduces the ruling ideologies of global capital, masking the unequal historical relations between Asia and US. In this sense, the majority of Asian (American) males as complex individuals remain invisible in a number of cultural spaces.

In terms of Koreanness, which is more specific focal point of this masculinity study, as I identified earlier, relatively little research is conducted and compared with other East Asian masculinity studies that focus on China or Japan. To say nothing of the analyses in sporting context, both in English and Korean, academic interest on Korean subjects, specifically, cultural understandings of Korean masculinities is minor and invisible. As an attempt to explicate the tendency, some might argue that it is because of the historical fact that first Chinese and later Japanese migrated to the US market during the pre-World War II period and then ongoing migration increasing the sheer number of the two ethnic groups in US (Espiritu, 2004). Considering the contemporary transnational masculinities, however, the skewed academic order should be denied in that it creates an essentialist notion of who can be considered as an object of knowledge, sustaining cultural hierarchies within East Asia. In spite of the limited numbers of study, the scholar who considered Korean masculinities as a major topic provide rich and fruitful insights to understanding construction of Korean males, masculinities, and relational gender order (Moon, 2002; Taga, 2005; Tikhonov, 2007; Joo, 2012). To understand masculinities manufactured by Koreanness, a historical approach to the socio-political and cultural context is inevitable. Tikhonov (2007) offered in-depth historical review of ideal Korean

masculinities in the 1890s-1900s Korean enlightenment discourse. Based on two distinctive types of premodern masculinities, fighting prowess and Confucian moral values, he discussed how Europe's nationalized masculinity was imported to early modern Korea and fused with the traditional values in conceptualizing the modern masculine men in Korea. Considering Korean class and gender under neo-Confucianism, he discussed a complex range of diverse masculine types in premodern Korea including *kunja* (lofty gentleman), *Pyon Kangsoe* (world's boor), and *yangban* (stoic literati).

In a similar context, Moon (2002) explored several notions relating to contemporary hegemonic Korean masculinity considering both traditional and modern gender, class, and sexuality ideologies. The attempts to explicate Korean gender inequality through the persistent Confucian tradition is generally critiqued by Moon. She argued that what is important is to investigate "why the Confucian tradition persists and how tradition itself is constructed" (p.82) within the contemporary Korean socio-political context. Regarding the roles of family provider, soldiering, and being distant from domestic responsibilities as major elements of hegemonic masculinity in Korea, Moon discussed how the formation and the gender hierarchies negotiate between traditional and modern values in Korea. In a study on transnational consumption of South Korean masculinity, adopting Moon's analytic points, Jung (2011) reorganized three major stereotypical images of South Korean masculinities as patriarchal authoritarian, violent, *seonbi* (wen). In terms of *seonbi* masculinity which is influenced by elite Chinese *wen* masculinity, particularly, she argued that it became a base of constructing South Korean soft masculinity, emphasizing gentle and cultured mentality. Based on the created soft

masculinity, postcolonial *mugukjeok* – Korean vocative for non-nationality – masculinity was discussed. Assuming *mugukjeok* as a major characteristic of transnationally migrating bodies, she argued that the Korean transnational subjects in this global era work as a site of more hybrid and heterogeneous styles of masculinities¹¹.

Going back to Tikhonov’s analysis (2007) again, he contextualized the modern type of Korean masculinities being associated with “sporting nationalism”. Sport, the physical vigor, and powerful manly bodies existed as strong metaphors for nationalized masculinity. As he noted, “...the lack of sportive training in a masculine individual could endanger both the nation/race and the state...” (p.1057). Sporting nationalism was built on “all-permeating sense of national emergency” (p.1059) and it called for regenerated Korean manliness. The emphasis on Korean men’s inherent virility through sport in the nationalist discourse contradicted the Japanese colonialist assumptions on Korean men as effeminate, cowardly and unpatriotic. Adding a contemporary transnational perspectives to the “healthy national sporting body” discourse, Joo (2012) explored the new dimensions of mediated Korean masculinities through transnational athletic bodies who are typically considered as national icons. Focusing on visual representation of masculinities in transnational media sport, the national icons are interpreted in the context of national erotics. She argued that the Korean athletes function as a sexualized national agent of capital through the obtained wealth and sculpted bodies of both for Koreans and Korean Americans. As the scholars above considered the militarized masculinity as a

¹¹ Jung (2011) clarified the concept of *mugukjeok* as follows: “the concept of *mugukjeok* in this book does not mean complete odorlessness or *non-nationality*; rather, *mugukjeok* implies the transcultural hybridity of popular culture, which is not only influenced by odorless global elements, but also by traditional (national) elements” (p.3).

significant site in Korean nationalist discourses, Joo also paid a close attention to the relationship between sexualized masculinity, nationalist discourse, and Korean militarism. The Mandatory military conscription is generally considered as a kind of “coming-age-of-males” ceremony to South Korean abled male bodies. Under the present Korean policy that athletes who are successful on a global sport stage get an exemption from compulsory military service, Joo (2012) identified that the South Korean government used extraordinary standards of success for a few global sporting events or players and the exemption opportunity worked as an incentive or impetus for the players. Ironically, the athletes are away from a chance of being privileged men but they continue to have the contradictory national status as a representative Korean male icon without having to serve in the military. Similar to the specific militarized masculinity practice by athletes contributing to global reputation of Korean success, to Asian audiences, sporting Koreanness—not only Koreanness but also Chineseness, Japaneseness, and any other ethnicity—promotes “ethnonational identification” (p.124). Rather than shaping an Asian (American) racial connection or mugukjeok pan-Asian symbol, the transnational Asian subjects demarcate nationally identified boundaries and force the ethnically distinctive characteristics. As she instantiated, Korean Americans do not see Yao Ming or Hideki Matsui as a hero or an icon. Along the same line, Jung (2012) noted that transnational gender tends to be more hybridized and multifaceted. While Korean male celebrities crossing national borders are exemplified as a stateless cosmopolitan citizen, a global sporting context promotes definite nationhood and national identities.

By considering these diverse and ambivalent cultural/historical contexts that generate hybrid Koreanness, In these ways, multifaceted junctures connecting transnationality, sporting masculinity, and Koreanness can be effectively discussed.

CHAPTER III

HOW TO STUDY MEDIATED CROSS-CULTURAL SPORTING MASCULINITY

Methodology is typically understood as “a framework or logic or relations between different elements in the research process” (Hearn, 2013, p.26). As a bridge linking research methods and broader theoretical questions of epistemology and ontology, it includes epistemological assumptions, positionality, and the relations between the researcher and the researched. In this chapter, I first discuss epistemological choice including the selected research paradigm, positionality, and trustworthiness. And then, in the remainder of the chapter, I explain data generation and analytic technique.

Epistemological Choice

Interpretive research paradigm.

Fundamentally, qualitative approaches allow sport-media researchers to consider the complex nature of media production between producers, consumers, and texts (Plymire, 2005). Unlike deductive positivists assuming that a single, objective reality can be known precisely and exactly, qualitative researchers believe reality is subjective and socially constructed (ibid.). For this study, I was largely informed by critical theory and feminist postmodernism, more specifically, postcolonial feminism to understand multifaceted masculinities and the media construction.

First, critical theory positions a researcher as an interpretivist, seeking to investigate “what would be” rather than describing “what is” (Glesne, 2011). In critical

theory, the term critical refers to “detecting and unmasking of beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice, and democracy” (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p.47). A central concept in critical theory research is that cultural ideologies work to distort reality. The role of critical theorists, thus, is to “reveal and critique these distorting ideologies and the associated structures, mechanisms, and processes that help to keep them in place” (Glesne, 2011, p.9). Given that a critical theory approach highlights the “other” in the process of research, rejecting generalized theory from the experiences of Western, white, middle-class, heterosexual men and women (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Hall, 1996), it will contribute to the comprehensive understanding of transnational “others” and the particular cultural contexts.

Second, postmodernism is also fundamentally helpful in studying Korean/Asian masculinity in that it challenges virtually every aspect of hegemonic Western philosophy and science. As Delamont (2002) noted, “postmodernism argues that there are no universal truths to be discovered, because all human investigators are grounded in human society and can only produce partial locally and historically specific insights” (p.157). Researchers within these traditions, thus, resist traditional methodological conventions and knowledge claims (Hall, 1996). For this masculinity study, postmodern perspectives greatly contribute to understanding of the nature of masculinity. Against generalized positivistic and essentializing perception on masculinity emphasizing biological perspectives and natural attributes “within” a body, postmodern thinking helps to define masculinity as not fixed, stable, and standardized but socially constructed behavior (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; Clatterbaugh, 1998; Beynon, 2002; Moon, 2002; Reeser,

2010). The postmodernist premise of valuing multiple truths also bolsters legitimacy of “plural masculinities” rather than a monolithic and a singular masculinity.

As Glesne (2011) noted, any paradigm of inquiry informed by postmodern thinking produces not only a singular postmodernist paradigm but also poststructuralist, postcolonialist, and post-Fordist paradigm. Considering the inherent political and cultural resistance of postcolonialism within postmodernism, I particularly adopt a feminist postcolonial lens to investigate Korean/Asian sporting masculinities (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Postcolonial feminists consider the continued colonialism dominating everyday lives of people through language, values, and customs. With the epistemological tenets, the scholars are particularly aware of knowledge production and the procedure in crossing over cultural and geographical boundaries. Through a postcolonial feminist approach, thus, the complexities of diasporic subjects who cross boundaries and inhabit the borders can be effectively discussed (Hai, 2000). In critiquing Western centered philosophy, the researchers struggle to bring the subjugated voices at the margins to the center through paying attention to the discursively constructed reality (Glesne, 2010). Relying on postcolonial feminist theories, therefore, this study also attempts to create alternative discourses for the subjects who have been historically silenced while challenging the hegemonic Western frameworks.

Positionality.

Considering epistemology as a process to respond to a question about relationships of the knower and the known, I pay attention to postmodern feminist standpoint theory which offers a useful interpretive point to understand the relations,

seeking to situate knowledge. While standpoint theory is often critiqued due to the essentialist notion that solidifies the dichotomous relationship between a researcher and the researched, Pease (2013) identified a convergence between standpoint and postmodernist epistemologies. Arguing the importance of embracing myriad positionings and standpoints, he noted that “knowledge is situated, embodied and plurivocal, as opposed to being universal, abstract and categorical” (p. 43). Unlike objectivist standpoint, when studies of masculinity adopt multiple standpoints informed by postmodern feminism, the research has a potential to respect diversely neglected voices. Relating to my positionality conducting this masculinity research, I also specifically valued a postcolonial/transnational feminist standpoint theory. When I decided to initiate this study, I inevitably had to ponder the meanings and the values of studying masculinity by “me”—Asian/Korean transnational female scholar. Spending almost four years in this US higher education, diverse academic and non-academic experiences inevitably gave me an opportunity to keep rethinking about being and doing Korean/Asian in this Western nation-state. As a transnational border inhabitant who lives as an insider and outsider at the same time, I have often realized that my ambivalent transnational positionality can be better understood through postcolonial feminist epistemology. Based on the epistemological tenets, finally, not only my researcherly position but also what I study was formulated. The concept of multiple standpoints valuing marginalized voices and intersectionality provides a more inclusive perspective against a single feminist standpoint (Hall, 1996). Assuming that people live multiply layered identities, postcolonial feminist epistemology highlights the interacting relationships between

racism, sexism, heterosexism, and class oppression as additional standpoints in understanding the social reality (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Human society is not equally knowable from all standpoints by all people (Messner, 1990). As Hall (1996) noted, “we must accept that there are women’s ways of knowing” (p.74). However, I want to make sure that I do not merely claim that women’s standpoint provides a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of humans’ experiences than men’s standpoint, or my positionality can fully represent all of the dimensions of the object of my analytic attention. Instead, I trust that my transnational minority positionality informed by postmodern feminist sensibilities can add one more critical insight to illuminate how to produce alternative accounts of Korean transnational masculinities in sport with resistant political possibilities as opposed to privileged, androcentric, White Western thinking. Considering the significance of critical reading of sport for a counter-narrative, as McDonald and Birrell (1999) noted, “the resulting counter-narratives are also counter-knowledge, and even counter-truths” (p.296).

Trustworthiness.

Relying on thoughts of poststructuralists, qualitative researchers cannot and do not attempt to show an objective social reality. While quantitative researchers demonstrate trustworthiness of their work based on statistical processes, interpretive researchers try to secure and elevate validity of their work through a different approach, claiming that there is no single correct way of making sense of reality (Plymire, 2005; McKee, 2003). For the validity of accounts, textual analysts particularly draw on “the relevant social, historical, political and/or economic context as well as their own

knowledge of the text's place within the broader culture in order to understand the most likely sense-making strategies" (Brennen, 2012, p.206). That is, although there is more than one "true" interpretation in textual analysis, it is not a free-for-all, whereby it is important to create more reasonable and trustworthy interpretation (Brennen, 2012). Adopting the point by McKee (2003), "ways of making sense of the world aren't completely arbitrary... They're not infinite, and they're not completely individual" (p.18).

Under the post-structuralist informed perception, Creswell (2007) addressed eight strategies to produce trustworthy knowledge that are typically used in qualitative research: 1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; 2) multiple sources of data, methods, investigators, and theories as corroborating evidence; 3) member (participant) checking process to increase credibility what a researcher interpreted; 4) peer review process; 5) external audits to evaluate both the process of research and findings; 6) thick, detailed and rich descriptions allow readers to apply the produced knowledge to other settings; 7) negative case analysis; 8) clarifying bias or assumption of researcher in the outset of the writing. He noted that qualitative researchers should consider at least two standards among the eight. Although most of the categories seem more properly fit ethnographic studies using observation and interviewing as research methods, there are several approaches which can be usefully applied to study mediated Korean sporting masculinity.

As I explained above, both literary and visual constructs are helpful to comprehend how masculinity is reproduced and represented in media. By using multiple

data sources including news articles and reader comments, the study can illuminate locally and transnationally constructed hybrid Korean masculinity and the plural dimensions. The peer review process was also used for this study as another strategy to secure trustworthiness. Dr. Kyoung-yim Kim, visiting assistant professor in Boston College, was invited. As a bilingual scholar of Korean and English, she has an expertise on postcolonial translation practice crossing sport and cultural studies between South Korea and Japan. Specifically, Dr. Kim was invited as a second reader for my analysis. On Feb. 15 2015, through email, I shared one sample analysis from online newspapers and another from reader comments—color solidarity and othering masculinities—with randomly culled original media texts, the table of contents, and summarized data analysis frame. In order to identify whether there is any untold or overgeneralized analysis, I asked her to critically review on the writing and I received her response on Feb. 19 2015. Informed by Dr. Kim’s reading on the sample analysis, I was able to deeply reconsider an interpretive rigor in research writing, especially for translation of Korean to English. Specifically, I found unintentionally omitted information in a bracket in a translating process. Given that the bracketed information can give more culturally nuanced contexts, it should be equally translated to the non-bracketed texts. Likewise, this second reader process led me to be a more methodologically rigid and thorough researcher, inquirer, and translator.

Data Generation

Postcolonial theorist Spivak (1988) noted that representation of subaltern subjects is oppressed and limited within Western discourse. For the purpose of disturbing

Orientalism (Said, 1978), for this study, both US and South Korean media contexts are explored seeking to reach an integrative understanding of transnational bodies and constructions of masculinities. According to Rose (2007), as well, intertextuality is important to understanding a discourse in that it refers to “the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts” (p.142). Discourses are produced and articulated through all sorts of visual and verbal images and texts (ibid.) so an attempt to examine multiple levels of media production will effectively illuminate the complicated cultural belief systems and relationships of power among different cultural and social groups (Plymire, 2005). In this context, this study adopted the diversity of media forms including online newspapers and reader comments.

Online newspapers.

Newspapers are an important provider of sport content. As an attractive content category to readers, most newspapers distinguished sport as a particular section. Although newspapers are believed to be a source that provides accurate and vivid depictions of events (Mahan & McDaniel, 2006), similar to many other mass media texts, they are also a dominant provider of prevailing cultural values, debunking power hierarchies in relation to gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality, etc. Following poststructural sensibility, it is resisted that news articles reflect “the reality” objectively and neutrally. Based on who is the author, where is the story written, and/or who are the target readers, each coverage internalizes certain values and ideologies. Adopting the critical cultural perspective, for this study, I explore online newspapers in US and South

Korea.¹² In terms of Korean news articles, I focused on top three daily newspapers, *the Chosun Ilbo*, *the Dong-A Ilbo*, and *JoongAng Ilbo*, based on subscription rate in South Korea. The widely called *Cho-Joong-Dong* by each first syllable, has had a nationwide market share of more than 50% (Moon, 2003). In each website of news papers, I typed in the names of three players in the search box and set up search period centered on each athlete's heyday in MLB, at this current point in time: Park Chanho (January 1996 – December 2012), Choo Shinsoo (January 2006 – December 2013), Ryu Hyunjin (November 2012 – September 2014).

According to *the State of the News Media* (Edmonds & Guskin, 2013), the top three daily digital newspapers in US were identified as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *New York Post* by paid daily circulation. Given that The Wall Street Journal is particularly focused on business and economic news, offering a very limited number of sport stories, *The Denver Post* which is the fourth most popular newspaper is included instead of The Wall Street Journal¹³. Using *LexisNexis*, I searched the name of the athletes, Park Chanho, Choo Shinsoo, and Ryu Hyunjin in each news source. Considering the far lesser number of news articles compared to the number of Korean media texts, for US news media, search period was extended. Without setting up beginning date, all of the data were searched as of September 4, 2014. For this study of

¹² The reason why I relied on “online” newspapers draws upon methodological issue: the convenient accessibility. Given that a difference between print version and online version of newspapers is not a significant analytic factor for this study, I do not include the specific perspective here. However, considering the ever-changing media environment based on technological advance, it is also important to study discursively produced masculinity through a comparative approach identifying differences between the two versions or a historical analysis of tracking the evolved online newspapers sites (Mahan & McDaniel, 2006).

¹³ When I searched “Park Chanho”, the searching engine showed only five results and among them only one article is related to this athlete. It was not different with the results of Ryu Hyunjin and Choo Shinsoo.

Korean sporting masculinity, I briefly read all of the search results and identified significant thematic points to find more relevant sources. Based on six distinctive discourses, I culled and re-categorized the news articles for analysis.

Reader comments.

Jurgen Habermas has noted an importance of securing space for public discussion. The public sphere is a communicative site for diverse private interests of all citizens (Hanks, 2011). Adopting Habermas's concept of public discussion, Borton (2013) paid attention to reader comments on online news sites as "a democratic utopia in which all citizens have an opportunity to participate in discussing social and political matters important toward making decisions for the common good" (p.3). That is, as a public space for unconstrained expressions, online news reader comments offer a sphere where readers can communicate as both providers and receivers, and the comments provided may influence how news readers shape their opinions (Plymire, 2005; Ahn, 2011; Loke, 2011). Thus, within and through this domain, media audiences are considered active consumers of media products resisting, questioning and producing discursive messages rather being mere decoders. As Plymire (2005) noted, "the text is incomplete until the audience has finished with it" (p.149).

In this transnational multimedia age, as well, "found" material such as letters to the editor or postings to Internet newsgroups work as a new space providing useful source to understand transnational consumers of mass media products with the advantage of spontaneity (Plymire, 2005). As Plymire (2005) noted, without guiding the writers of found materials to read or interpret the texts in a certain way, this method can provide "an

in-depth look at the complexities of media consumption” (p.150). Beyond geographical division, the Internet bulletin board postings such as online news reader comments particularly have several benefits over traditional found materials such as the sheer volume of postings available including racial, ethnic, and national diversities. Considering the potential for new knowledge production, I included reader comments from online news sites as data for this study. Focusing on the most symbolic and crucial stories of the three baseball players that generated active public discussions about their subjectivities, the following reader commenters were analyzed. Along the same line with data generation of news articles, I briefly read all of the comments and identified significant thematic points to find more relevant sources. Based on four distinctive discourses, I culled and re-categorized the news articles for analysis. For this media outlet, I chose *dongA.com* through *Naver* for Korean stories and additionally *ESPN.com* for US stories due to the limited circumstances of the websites for reader comments of The New York Times, New York Post, and The Denver Post. The New York Times and New York Post do not offer free-access comment sections. Although The Denver Post provides a free-access comments section, the volume of comments on the selected stories is remarkably small. Thus, ESPN, another influential US based sport news provider managing “comments”, was selected to particularly look at the discourses in reader comments.

Reading the Texts

For this section, I explain about the selected news articles informing the most symbolic and crucial stories in the professional career of the three baseball players. Here

I posit that the masculinities of the athletes are constructed through media discourse combining with diverse cultural factor and ideologies including gender, race, sexuality, nationalism, and capitalism. Considering the discursively produced significant event or moment induces the public conversation, I chose one news article for each athlete and analyzed the corresponding reader comments and the produced discourses. The generated comments were selected on September 30, 2014. When there were plural news articles for one story, I chose the news article holding more number of data, the comments by the readers. Articles with less than five comments were excluded.

Park Chanho and the retirement.

After a 19-year career as a professional baseball player in US, Japan, and South Korea, Park Chanho retired in 2012. He left the mound without any special ceremonies. However, two years later, KBO decided to carry out a retirement ceremony at the 2014 Korean professional baseball all-star game with support from many of Park's junior Korean colleagues and the Hanwha Eagles, the last team he joined. Highlighting Park's symbolism, through the Naver sport section, a journalist in the Dong-A Ilbo reported that the retirement ceremony in the all-star game is an exceptional and unprecedented case. Also, she added "this is possible because it is Park Chanho, the first Korean major leaguer and the all-time winningest Asian-born pitcher" (Jul. 4 2014). This article produced 57 reader comments. Given the transnational status of Park Chanho, this was reported by the media outlets from both US and South Korea. Under the headline "Park Chanho said to the fans 'never forget this'", one article reported on the retirement event on July 25, 2014. The article focused on Park's speech regarding his retirement that he

gave at the ceremony. ESPN also reported his retirement in an article, titled “former all-star Chan Ho Park retires” (Nov. 30 2012). Enumerating details of his professional career and the records he set, the article illuminated his transnational migrations, including in US, Japan, and South Korea. This article generated 20 comments by the readers.

Choo Shinsoo and the *jackpot* contract to the Texas Rangers.

In December 2013, Choo’s move to a new MLB team, the Texas Rangers, was reported by both Korean and US news. The media coverage paid the most attention to the financial amount of Choo Shinsoo’s contract. As \$130 million dollars for seven years, it was the highest contract amount among Asian players in the MLB. A number of Korean news outlets reported the specific terms of a contract. One article in the Dong-A Ilbo through Naver, titled “Choo Shinsoo, the Jackpot including limited no-trade provision and performance bonus package”, reported the calculated annual salary of Choo for each year by 2020 emphasizing that it is a “real jackpot contract” (Dec. 24 2013). The news generated 24 reader comments. ESPN also reported the contract news, titled “Rangers land OF (outfielder) Shin-Soo Choo” (Dec. 21 2013). In this article, not only were the specific terms of contract condition described but the article scrutinized Choo’s professional career, including his records and ranking. Illuminating the financial dimension of the contract that “the Rangers will have to forfeit their first-round draft pick to sign Choo”, similarly to the Korean news article, it accentuated Choo Shinsoo’s marketability in the MLB. This story garnered a heavy number of comments, 1,535.

Ryu Hyunjin and the bidding by the LA Dodgers.

Compared to Park Chanho and Choo Shinsoo, Ryu Hyunjin is a newcomer to the US professional baseball. He was highlighted by the media as the first Korean player to jump directly from the Korean league to the major leagues through the bidding system. The LA Dodgers won the bid to sign left-hander Ryu for \$25.7 million. Implying Park Chanho's long time play with the LA Dodgers, one article in the Dong-A Ilbo through Naver titled it as the "New 'Korean express' Ryu Hyunjin took part in an official joining ceremony to the LA dodgers" (Dec. 11 2012). While Choo's new contract explicitly reflected the capitalist aspects of the joining, the news report about Ryu's contract focused more on his Koreanness by repeating terms such as "new Korean express" or "the best pitcher in South Korea". Even though the \$25.7 million was also revealed as *moem-gap* (몸값: the pecuniary worth of a body) which is a Korean colloquial expression, the story was positioned as additional information at the satellites. Also, the article paid attention to the owners of the team, especially Magic Johnson, the co-owner with Stan Kasten. Revealing the specific body size of Johnson and Ryu, the two male athletic bodies are compared: "Ryu Hyunjin's look like a little kid [as he] raised a laugh standing next to Johnson who has a magnificent physique, 206cm and 98kg. Of course, Ryu Hyunjin is also a big body at 187cm and 100kg" (see Figure 2 & 3). In these and those ways, this news story generated 714 comments.



Figure 2. Captured Image of Ryu Hyunjin at the Official Entrance Ceremony to the LA Dodgers (Cho, 2012)



Figure 3. Captured Image of Ryu Hyunjin [with co-owners of the LA Dodgers and Scott Boras] at the Official Entrance Ceremony to the LA Dodgers (Cho, 2012)

The news coverage by ESPN, titled “Dodgers win Ryu Hyunjin bidding”, also introduced the Dodgers bidding win for Ryu (Nov. 10 2012). The LA Dodgers was portrayed as an international team “searching for talent all over the globe”. Similarly to the Korean newspaper, they illuminated his Koreanness listing his successful career in the Olympics and the World Baseball Classic. A total number of 385 comments were produced.

Data Analysis

Feminist critical discourse analysis in media studies.

Given that culture is constructed in textual representations, no one would disagree with an importance of text and language in sport-media analysis within critical cultural studies (Plymire, 2005). Following Foucault’s notion of power, it is possible to say that the world can be known and explained by discourse. Discourse refers to a set of related statements through an interplay of language and visual structures that produce and

organize a particular order of reality (Lazar, 2005; 2007). Here, critical discourse analysis (CDA) works as a useful analytic tool in that it can reveal discursively produced and perpetuated taken-for-granted social assumptions and hegemonic power relations (Lazar, 2005). For this transnational sporting masculinity study, in particular, I adopt feminist CDA as a specific analytic lens for the purpose of adding one more insight to the nexus of sport, media, and gender studies. In spite of the understandable interrelated principles between CDA and feminist studies in that lots of feminist studies were already conducted under the rubric of CDA, Lazar (2005) argued that it is important to “explicitly flag a feminist perspective” (p.2) suggesting the reasons as below.

First, the most straightforward is that studies in CDA with a gender focus mostly adopt a critical feminist view of gender relations, motivated by the need to change the existing conditions of these relations... [Second,] it is necessary within CDA to establish a distinctly ‘feminist politics of articulation’, by which I mean the need to theorize and analyze the particularly insidious and oppressive nature of gender as an omni-relevant category in most social practices... Third, a consequence of the absence of self-naming has meant that feminist critical discourse analysts dispersed across the globe have not sufficiently organized themselves to come together in a shared forum. (ibid., p.2-4)

Both feminist and CDA approaches properly support my aim to produce alternative accounts of Korean transnational sporting masculinities with resistant political possibilities. A feminist critique is already well-known as an inherent political intention, seeking social transformation (Lazar, 2005). Similarly, CDA is also regarded as a form of analytical resistance, interrogating the workings of power-sustaining oppressive social relations. Considering the intended praxis-oriented research practice of feminist CDA based on an assumption that “all knowledge is socially and historically constructed and

valuationally based” (ibid., p.6), the analytic framework serves as a productive research sphere that produces insightful knowledge for resistance and change. Studies informed by feminist CDA, therefore, debunk sustained unequal gendered social order, demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power and ideology in discourse. And further, the fruitful marriage will contribute to understand not only the hierarchical gender ideology but also the complex and plural relationships of power, race, ethnicity, sexuality and nationality in discourse.

The data analysis framework.

As Lazar (2005; 2007) pointed out, there is more than one way to conduct (feminist) CDA so the approaches and tools are varied and wide-ranging. For the purpose of this study, I adopted Norman Fairclough’s (1989; 1995; 2003) three stages of critical discourse analysis: (1) texts; (2) discourse practice; and (3) sociocultural practice. At the first stage, analysis of text refers to traditional forms of linguistic analysis including analysis of vocabulary, semantics, the grammar of sentences and smaller units. It takes a close look at what is written (or spoken) on paper. At the discourse practice level, analysts conduct the intertextual analysis of text focusing on the borderline between the written text and discourse practice. While linguistic analysis of text is descriptive in that it provides cues for intertextual analysis, intertextual analysis is a stage linking the text to a relevant cultural repertoire. It aims to articulate and interpret a variety of discourses in the text. Going one step further, the sociocultural practice deals with a relationship between interaction and social context. It focuses on wider social and cultural frames through looking at discourse on a macro-level.

Based on these three dimensions of analysis, several properties for each phase are reformulated for the purpose of this study as the table 2 shows (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; 2003). Given that discourse analysis is an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices (Fairclough, 1995, p.17), rather than dividing the chapters of analysis into each element separately, in the following chapters for analysis, the results of analysis are constructed based on dominant masculinity discourse categories, while the interconnections of analytic properties in the dimensions are considered.

Table 2. Dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; 2003)

Dimensions of analysis	Analytic properties
Texts (linguistic analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vocabulary: metaphors and idioms ○ Grammar: a use of tense, sentence (e.g. active/passive), or pronouns (e.g. <i>we</i> and <i>you</i>)
Discourse practice (intertextual analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Genre: schematic view (headline + lead + satellites + wrap-up) - what comes first in the article, looking at the formulaic nature of media output; mood of the writing (e.g. declarative, interrogative, imperative, giving information, eliciting action) ○ Discourse: representation of events; inclusion/exclusion; characteristics of scenarios ○ Style: one feature of genres or combinations of genres ○ Voice (social actors): inclusion/exclusion of particular voice
Sociocultural practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ideological assumptions; interaction between discourses and its relation to mainstream ideologies; dominant power relations

Practicing postcolonial translation.

In this study dealing with bilingual media texts, translation is inevitably important in that it is not a work only to change the shape of language to other for a mere communication. As Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) argued, translation is always connected to cultural, political, and historical contexts of the languages. According to how it is practiced, thus, the relations are redefined and reinterpreted. Therefore, it is crucial for writers not to make translations as a means of reinforcing the supremacy of the dominant. Here postcolonial theories offer a significant perspective in translating: paying attention to asymmetrical relationships between cultures (ibid.). According to Bassnett and Trivedi (ibid.), the postcolonial writers question the supremacy of the standard language and open a new reading to audiences by defamiliarizing the language. Thus, at the new *contact zone* [emphasis added], the power ideologies can be reestablished according to who and how enacts the translation practice (Pratt, 1992).

For this study, specifically, my translation practice was illuminated by *abusive fidelity* translation (Kim, 2013). As a postcolonial translation strategy, the concept that originally derived from Lewis's theory of translation was introduced as a potential to unsettle hegemonic power of English. In the study of exploring media texts and the translation practice, Kim claimed that the postcolonial abusive fidelity strategy is methodologically useful to interpret the linguistic and cultural differences between two different languages, especially when the traffic moves from a peripheral language into English. As Kim pointed out, translated Korean texts to English with abusive fidelity may bring about uncomfortable feelings to English readers but it is important to "establish the

cultural discomfort at the very beginning...so that the reader may read and recognize the difference” (p.346).

Relying on these postcolonial philosophies and practices, I attempted to carefully engage in the manipulative activity not to undermine or subjugate Korean voices to hegemonic American English. Relying on Kim’s abusive fidelity translation, I engaged in translation “adhering as closely as possible to Korean language” (p.346). In principle, I use *Revised Romanization System for Korean* that is designed by Ministry of Culture and Tourism of South Korea in 2000 and has been broadly disseminated since then. Compared to *the McCune-Reischauer system* which a number of Korean study scholars previously relied on, the revised system eliminated diacritics and better reflects the phonetic characteristics of the Korean language (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2000)¹⁴. In the new system, for instance, *sŏnbi* masculinity is changed to *seonbi* masculinity.

In addition, I retained Korean mode of naming: Korean personal names are written by family name first, followed by the given name, without comma. Additionally, Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese names were also retained following their own cultural mode of naming which is same to the Korean style: family name comes first, followed by the given name. That is, 박찬호 (박 is surname and 찬호 is given name) is transliterated to Park Chanho instead of Park Chan-ho, Park, Chan-ho or Chan-ho Park. Also, I paid attention to the culture-specific idioms. For example, in regards to kinship terms such as

¹⁴ The McCune-Reischauer system was developed by G.M. McCune and E.O. Reischauer in 1939 and it remains the approved system in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) (Ministry of Culture & Tourism, 2000).

hyung (형: older brother), I used the original term *hyung* but added explanation about the extra semantic features that are assigned to the address in the Korean cultural contexts.

Furthermore, when I translated comments from the reader comments' section, I tried to retain the original meaning, lexically and syntactically. For example, *Chosun*, the old name of Korea, is often translated to Korea but the mere transformation misses the historicity of the language which might be deeply intertwined with colonial rule between Korea and Japan. Given the unconstraint of the reader comments' section, also, it was observable that commenters tended to use more everyday words such as informal language and/or incomplete sentences. Although the translated expressions may sound strange to English readers, I attempted to transmit the meanings, retaining the original forms from the cultural practice.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS I: ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

This chapter analyzes the media texts from online newspapers. First, I begin with examining production practice for discourse in the selected online newspapers, three South Korean daily newspapers and three US daily newspapers. Then I provide a brief picture of chronological frame focusing on the three players in that the analysis is thematically contextualized. Next, in-depth discourse analyses are unpacked using Fairclough’s CDA analysis framework. Based on the analysis, dominant masculinity discourses are categorized as follows: Athletic masculinities, heterosexual patriarchal masculinities, militarized masculinities, trans/nationalist masculinities, Korean Confucian masculinities, and color solidarity.

Table 3. Categorizing Media Texts for Thematic Discourses in Newspapers

Genre	Thematic discourse	# of data
Newspapers	Athletic masculinities	20
	Heterosexual masculinities	14
	Militarized masculinities	17
	Trans/national masculinities	26
	Confucian masculinities	14
	Color solidarity	17
Total		108

Discourse Practice in Online Newspapers

In the selected six newspaper's websites, users can find news articles through typing in the search word in the search box.¹⁵ While the results can be refined by specific dates in most of the newspaper websites, dongA.com does not offer the service. Instead, the results can be narrowed down for one week, one month, or one year and those can be sorted by the newest or the oldest. Each newspaper has several sections and news articles can be sorted by the sections. Although the categories somewhat vary newspaper to newspaper, they generally include politics, business, society, science, world, culture, and sports in common. While the majority of the news articles related to the three Korean baseball players were categorized to sports section, several articles were published in business, politics, or society. For example, one news article in the Chosun Ilbo, titled "Travel packages for Park Chanho and Sun Dongyeol are introduced" (Aug. 14 1997), was reported on the business section since the news illuminated a socioeconomic aspect which was stemmed from two transnational Korean baseball players. On the contrary, the three US-based newspapers offered articles about the three players in each sports section with few exceptions.

The news articles were mostly authored by journalists in each newspapers. Given that the three players perform in US, however, the Korean newspapers attempted to report vivid voices of the site by employing correspondents. The Chosun Ilbo sent Korean correspondents to US for the purpose of reporting the MLB stories. Through

¹⁵ The two South Korean-based newspapers use a different name for the online version—chosun.com and dongA.com, while JoongAng Ilbo and the three US-based newspapers maintain the original names for their websites.

headlining those articles as a “note of correspondent” or “journalist Hong Junki’s MLB sketch”, the immediacy of the articles was highlighted. JoongAng Ilbo tended to secure the immediacy by using Korean journalists who work in a US branch of the newspapers, *Korea JoongAng Daily*. JoongAng Ilbo has nine local branches in US, including LA, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington DC, Atlanta, Texas, Seattle, and San Diego. In a similar way, the Dong-A Ilbo offered a special section titled “Reporter Anthony’s Story (of Choo Shinsoo)”. Introducing Anthony Castrovine as a reporter in MLB.com who closely covers all of the games of the Cleveland Indians where Choo belongs, the Dong-A Ilbo published the section for almost three years. In these articles, the voice was assumed solely from Anthony, the US journalist. Despite the geographical distance between South Korea and US, in these ways, the voices of the site were reported to Korean speaking audiences.

Reflecting Chronological Frame

Given that the analyses are constructed not by a chronological order but a thematic categorization, in this section, I provide a brief historical picture of chronological flow on the three players (see “historicizing the sport migration” in Chapter II).

As the first South Korean-born major leaguer among the first generation of Korean baseball players in major league baseball, Park Chanho “opened the door” for other Korean players looking to play in major league baseball. From 1998 through 1999, as many as twelve players were joined the American professional league. Given the particular historicity of South Korea under the IMF crisis, also, Park Chanho and his

pitching were frequently symbolized as an “IMF cooler” in Korean media contexts. From 2000, the number of Korean players in MLB began to decrease. The players who contracted with a major league baseball team between 2002 and 2012 never made debut for the Big League. Under the circumstance, Choo Shinsoo, who contracted with the Seattle Mariners in 2001, has stood out as an outstanding hitter since he was traded to the Cleveland Indians in 2006. In 2009, he broke his own records for home runs, RBIs (runs batted in), stolen bases and hits; and became the first Asian in MLB history who hit 20 home runs and steal 20 bases in a single season. In 2012, Ryu Hyunjin, a seven-time All-Star for the Hanwha Eagles of the KBL, became the first player to join a MLB team via the posting system. The Dodgers bid \$25.7 million and Ryu agreed with the contract. About a year later, in December 2013, Choo Shinsoo signed \$130 million contract with the Texas Rangers, all-time highest for an Asian in MLB. Although the conspicuous Korean Big Leaguers are only Choo and Ryu for the two seasons of 2013 and 2014, the capital value of Korean players was higher than ever and Koreanness was accentuated in MLB with increased global popularity of Korean pop culture. Following the chronological order, the media texts are analyzed focusing on each athlete’s heyday in major league baseball.

Athletic Masculinities: Naturalizing Male Athleticism

The first dominant discourse theme present in the media of online newspapers is athletic masculinities. Media construction of the three baseball players continued to rely on the connection between athletic power and male bodies so that the bodies functioned as a powerful space to reaffirm the male centered athleticism. In the section, the athletic

masculinities are identified as the following three categories: masculinity as power, espousing values through male bodies, and male athletic subject vs. Female athletic object.

Masculinity as power.

First, the selected nicknames of the three players worked as a representative symbol showing the power of the male body. In almost all news articles, for example, Park Chanho has been described as a “Korean Express” (CI, Sep. 25 1996 and et al.), the well-known nickname among Koreans. Referring to his fastball, the label was used to emphasize his unique ability to throw the fastball. Ryu Hyunjin was frequently characterized as a “Korean monster” (DI, Jan. 24 2013 and et al.), a “left-hand monster” (DI, Nov. 12 2012 and et al.), or a “monster pitcher” (DI, Nov. 2 2012 and et al.), implying that he shows a fearsome monstrous pitching. Choo Shinsoo was termed as a “wildcat engine” (DI, Sep. 15 2009 and et al.) or a “choo-choo train” (DI, Dec. 28 2013 and et al.), following his last name, it represents that his batting reminds a powerful locomotive. Although the names are various, all of them characterized each player’s superior athletic force and skill embedded in the male bodies. With the modifiers, the athletic bodies were frequently identified as powerful physicalities: “his fastballs that go over 160km/h” (CI, Oct. 7 1998), “a 28-year-old right-hander with powerful stuff” (NYT, Nov. 20 2001), “Texas got the on-base machine, (Choo Shinsoo)” (NYP, Dec. 22 2013), “Choo Shinsoo as five tool player having hitting for power, hitting for average, fielding ability, throwing ability, and speed” (JI, Sep. 9 2008), “Blue monster, fearsome changeup” (DI, Feb. 26 2013). The naturalized connection between a male body and physical power

was more vivid through metaphors for war or hunting which is another male monopolized area. In the discursive frame, the players were consequently identified as a warrior or a hunter with diverse warlike expressions in the media: “Ryu Hyunjin goes hunting for 14th win against Ervin Santana of Atlanta Braves” (CI Aug. 14 2014). Park Chanho’s mother was also termed as “the best reinforcement” (DI, Jan. 4 1997) and his curve ball was named as “the main weapon” (DI, May 16 2000). Adding to it, Park Chanho’s win was substituted by a rhetorical figure, “capture (an enemy’s fortress on) a hill” (DI, Aug. 1 1997). Quoting Dusty Baker, the head coach of Cincinnati Reds, Choo was also more explicitly portrayed through the metaphors of war: “Choo Shinsoo seems like a warrior. He steadily evolves in difficulty situation.” (JI, Sep. 8 2013).

Espousing values through male bodies.

In addition, not only physical but also psychological attributes were associated with the male athleticism. That is, the star players in baseball demonstrated both physical prowess and virtues such as courage, fortitude, or discipline (Adelman, 1986). One article in the Chosun Ilbo highlighted Park Chanho’s abstemious lifestyle with no drinking and smoking: “(Park Chanho) keeps off smoking and drinking as a part of self-management. It takes large patience to give up liquor and cigarette. It seems Park Chanho strongly believes that the restraint is a definite investment for the future” (CI, Oct. 29 1997). The abstemious lifestyle was also underlined in the coverage on Choo: “When he was in a high school team, he heard that soda is not good for athletes and since then never drinks it” (DI, Nov. 20 2010). Along the same line, one article in JoongAng Ilbo illuminated that his “challenge (resilient) spirit and strong will are two keywords enabled his success” in

the MLB (JI, Dec. 23 2013). Adding to it, Choo Shinsoo was also portrayed as a dogged and tenacious man who used to train the most often among the players in his middle and high school team. Supporting the physical athleticism, in these contexts, the mental strength was emphasized as a natural attribute embedded in male body.

Male athletic subject vs. Female athletic object.

The anecdote between Park Chanho and his cousin, Park Hyunsoon, Korean professional female golfer, more vividly reaffirmed the male superiority in sport. With the headline “There is Chanho’s advice behind the win”, her athletic prowess and the following victory in KLPGA were reduced to Chanho’s contribution (CI, Nov. 12 2001). Quoting her interview “although he is younger than me, the advice of super star served as a momentum to correct my mindset”, the article glorified Chanho’s encouragement and reprimand as major effects enabled her victory in the tournament. Thus, the connection between male body and athleticism was reinforced while a female body was degenerated into incongruent object in sport fields. Here, the privileged transnational status of Park Chanho worked as another factor naturalizing athleticism through a male body.

Heterosexual Patriarchal Masculinities: Imagining New Korean Patriarch

Another dominant discursive theme is about heterosexual patriarchal masculinities. Sport is one of the cultural places where two mutually exclusive sex categories are coerced (Birrell & Cole, 2000). Based on the system underlining opposite sexes, heterosexuality is accordingly highlighted as a norm defining the nature of the field. Here media coverage plays a crucial role in reaffirming heterosexual masculinities of the athletes that it covers (Dworkin & Wachs, 2000). In this section, heterosexual

patriarchal masculinities are categorized as three: be my nanny, a domestic husband and his perfect woman, and performing a good father.

Be my nanny.

When Park Chanho was at the center of a great deal of media attention, his single status and the potential marriage issues were also located in the public eye. In reporting a survey from a Korean wedding consulting agency that Park Chanho was chosen as the star who Korean women wanted to marry the most, he was idealized as not only economically competent but also physically attractive (DI, Jun. 22 2001). A number of sports reporters frequently commented his handsome face to explain his popularity in the transnational context. Not surprisingly, the narrative was always juxtaposed with female fandom.

The media sports assuming heterosexuality as the norm also forms the basis of patriarchal practices. Under the headline “Park Chanho *jang-ga ga-go-ship-da* (장가가고 싶 다: wants to get married)”, the Chosun Ilbo reported Park’s privatized view on marriage (Aug. 26 1998). Focusing on describing the ideal female type of him, the story defined and naturalized the exemplary image of Korean women.

Park Chanho once was looking for a new generation woman but it seems that it is changing. As his mother wants a prospective daughter-in-law who gives birth to babies well and takes good care of household chores, he also said that he should find a woman who is very considerate, patient, and knows how to wait.

In the patriarchal context, a woman’s position is confined to domestic spheres and the major role is reduced to assisting and taking good care of her husband and family.

Naturalizing Park Chanho as a breadwinner, the discourse reinforced the gender-based divisions of labor and the privilege of patriarchal masculinity (Trujillo, 1991).

In addition, it is important to note the use of vocabulary. Marriage is one of the heterosexually gendered languages in traditional Korean cultural context. When a man gets married, it is expressed as “jang-ga-ga-da (장 가 가 다)” connoting the man *takes the wife*, while a woman’s marriage is uttered as “shi-jib-ga-da (시 집 가 다)” implying the woman begins to *belong to the husband’s family*. In spite of the non-gendered modernized term, *gyeol-hon* (결혼 : marriage), the usage of a specific vocabulary defines Park Chanho as a hegemonic subject in the romantic relationship assuming heterosexuality as normal. On the contrary, women are reduced as the powerless objects in this symbolic combination.

A domestic husband and his perfect woman.

Additional example of patriarchal/heterosexual masculinity lies in the story of Choo Shinsoo’s marriage and the family. Metaphors such as “family man” (JI, Dec. 23 2013) or “family love” (DI, Dec. 23 2013) were frequently applied to portray Choo Shinsoo’s life and personalities; and his outstanding athletic performance, such as a game-ending home run, was represented as “the greatest gift for his wife and the new-born daughter” (JI, Aug. 25 2011) or “booming a salute for the last daughter, Abigail” (CI, Aug. 25 2011). Under the title of “family is more precious than baseball”, the storyline emphasized “his life as a baseball player is meaningless without his family” (JI, Apr. 17 2009). The baseball career and the following income were also minimized as a means of the happiness for the family. In these ways, the media coverage reaffirmed the

heterosexually constructed family and the patriarchal masculinity positioning Choo as a devoted husband, father, and breadwinner.

When Choo Shinsoo signed \$130 million contract to the Rangers in 2013, all-time highest for an Asian in MLB, he was framed as an attentive and domestic male giving the glory to the support by his family, especially his devoted wife. According to one article of *the JoongAng Ilbo* quoting his interview, for example,

Choo Shinsoo revealed the story that the couple mingled tears right after the contract. He said, “I was really sorry to my wife because I was not able to help her to get recovered after childbirth due to the schedule of away game. I chose Texas after careful consideration to find a good place for my family. Right after the contract was confirmed, the 13 years in US seemed very short like 5 minutes.” (JI, Dec. 31 2013)

While Choo Shinsoo was portrayed as a protecting and thoughtful husband choosing the new team considering the family’s comfort, his wife, Ha Wonmi¹⁶, was highlighted as a patient, dedicated, and sacrificing woman. Despite the spotlighting to her in the interview, she was formed as a marginalized assistant who internalized self-sacrifice for her husband. The discursive construction of “the queen of assisting the husband (내 조의 여왕)” (CI, Dec. 28 2013; JI, Dec. 28 2013; DI, Dec. 31 2013) solidified her image as an epitome of ideal wife. With this kind of narrative, Ha arrested media attention as much as Choo and his new contract record did in 2013. According to the news report from *JoongAng Ilbo* (Dec. 28 2013),

¹⁶ In South Korea, women do not legally change their last names upon marriage.

Ha Wonmi is a master of housewife and also a manager (of Choo Shinsoo). She has learned sport massage for his husband and gives him the service whenever he stays at home...Ha is also a cook using the crops she raised for her husband and the children. As a player in the Big League, Choo Shinsoo can help himself to the finest hotel cuisine but he receives the dining table by her whenever he stays at home.

Although she was represented as a “perfect” woman who has versatile talents, the storyline continued to reproduce the subordinated women’s position and the dichotomously gendered labor. Giving up school and her dreams, her life story was illuminated by sacrifice due to her love for him, and also her aim in life was consequently defined as the success of Choo and the happiness for the family (JI, Dec. 28 2013). In addition to that, she was often emphasized as a beautiful woman in the media. By applying the metaphors such as “perfect face” (DI, Dec. 28 2013) or “beauty of goddess” (CI, Dec. 28 2013), they discursively produced women as an objectified spectacle.

Performing a good father.

Adding to the beautiful and devoted wife discourse, media coverage reinforced the *good father* narratives. Specifically, it verified the succession of patriarchal status. For example, the author from JoongAng Ilbo illuminated the sacrifice and dedication by Choo’s father to his son (Apr. 17 2009). According to the article, “despite the scanty livelihood when Choo Shinsoo was in high school, Choo Somin, the father, always prioritized Shinsoo’s future buying him three pairs of expensive handmade baseball sneakers.” Quoting Shinsoo’s interview, it further stated that Shinsoo is considering leaving a pair of the shoes, *the treasure* [emphasis added], to his son if he wants to play baseball. The narrative embracing three generations of the family functions as a

significant discursive mechanism constructing and maintaining his family based on the male centered tradition. In this way, male bonding is encouraged while women are excluded or subjugated within the family patriarchy.

The good father discourse was also extended to the public sphere pertaining to his athletic career. Reporting one of the fan autograph events in Los Angeles, the author interpreted Choo Shinsoo's affection toward children through the metaphor of good father (DI, Jan. 15 2011).

Choo Shinsoo, a native of Gyeongsang-do, South Korea, is seemingly blunt and taciturn¹⁷ but he is not to children. He tries to make time to participate in a youth baseball clinic despite the busy schedule. It is not irrelevant to his two sons and the baby about-to-be-born. His hobby is to play with the sons.

The glorified portrayal of Choo as a good father expanded his image to Mr. Nice who has the potential to be a hero to boys. In this way, the symbolic father discourse reaffirmed the hegemony of patriarchy and the recurring social practice through it.

Militarized Masculinity: Becoming a Korean Style *Real Man*

Although there are lots of things to do as I was born a *sanai*¹⁸/
You and I dedicated our lives for the honor of protecting our country/
Riveted comrade in arms in combat and combat/
When the sun rises and goes down on the mountaintop/
The parents and brothers trusting me sleep soundly (Republic of Korean Army, 2015)

¹⁷ People who are from Gyeongsang-do, the province in the southeast of Korea, are typically recognized as taciturn and blunt.

¹⁸ *Sanai* is a Korean term referring to a man but colloquially it implies a man of men or a real man.

As the first verse of *Jinzza Sanai* (진짜 사나이 : real men)—a well-known military song in South Korea—implies, the military is one of the male dominating spheres in the nation, producing “real men”. Given the situation that South Korea and North Korea technically remain at war after the Korean War ended in a truce, all South Korean able-bodied men between 18 and 35 must complete two years of military service. According to the military service law, however, outstanding athletes accomplishing notable sporting achievements are exempted from their military duties. Specifically, Athletes who win medals in the Olympics or a gold medal in the Asian Games are only required to do four weeks of basic training (Military Manpower Administration, 2014).¹⁹ All three Korean MLB athletes were exempted from the military service requirement through winning medals in either the Asian Games or the Olympics. Unlike Ryu Hyunjin who entered the MLB after receiving the military exemption obtaining a medal in the Beijing Olympics, it was a sort of benefit or fortune to Park Chanho and Choo Shinsoo who were supposed to fulfill military obligations as Korean males. After finishing the four weeks of basic training in South Korea, they were “free” to go back to the US baseball stadium.

In South Korea, over many years, the exemption for athletes has been a subject of controversy with two main opposing opinions. Some argue that the exemption is unfair, while others support it as compensation. Not surprisingly, the former stance is mostly taken by those who have already experienced the military life or have to serve the duty. From the athletes’ position, two-year of military service in their 20’s is considered potential damaging to their career, rusting the athletic prowess. Thus, they are anxious for

¹⁹ Since 2010, women are allowed to enroll in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.

grabbing a chance to take part in the international games and try to be free from the “death of their professional career”. As a nation, the exception has two significant functions: first, as compensation, it rewards them for raising the nation’s profile worldwide, second, as a great incentive, it works to push the players to overachieve (Joo, 2012). In this section, I unpack how the transnational male authority is negotiated within the triangulation of Korean military service, athletic bodies and masculinity.

Individualized Korean sport and nationalized Korean male body.

In 1997, when the major leaguer Park Chanho held the public’s interest, his military service exemption was as important as his winning in media coverage. The 24 year-old male player who postponed military service was supposed to join the service before he turns to 28. Given the situation, in South Korea, public opinion for a sort of special military service exemption for Park Chanho was created and several media sources defended the special case, quoting a result of public survey supporting the exemption. According to the Chosun Ilbo (Aug. 20 1997), for example, the users in PC communication argued that Park Chanho who enhanced Korean prestige should keep playing in the MLB for a long time through being exempted from the compulsory national service. One article in the Dong-A Ilbo reproduced the supporting voices such as “Park Chanho is already defending South Korea” (Aug. 19 1997). Adding a survey result that Koreans and Korean Americans in Los Angeles also agreed with his exemption (CI, Aug. 19 1997), also, his transnational Koreanness was reinforced. Although his Korean masculinity was not secured through joining the national service, the transnational

authority was identified with Korean military masculinity and thus Park Chanho maintained the prestigious male values.

Considering the associated public opinions, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism requested the Ministry of National Defense to expand the scope of the exemption for athletes who contribute to promoting national prestige. Although the Ministry of National Defense rejected this request giving a reason that it is against equity, the media coverage of the events played a crucial role in identifying this individual issue as the national issue and further reinforcing his prestige (CI, Oct. 6 1997). Accordingly, when the Korean baseball team including Park Chanho went to the finals in the 1998 Asian games, the media paid more attention to whether he can grasp the golden ticket for the exemption or not, rather than the game itself. When the South Korean team won the game finally, quoting Park's interview, "I feel much relieved because now the military service issue is solved and I can devote myself to the MLB", the Chosun Ilbo interpreted the finals as the game for Park Chanho (Dec. 17 1998). To win an international competition like the Asian Games can be pictured through a lens of a nationalist discourse in that it is often identified as a national success, yet this winning was reduced to one individual's glory focusing on the service exemption benefit. In reporting on the finals, one article in the Chosun Ilbo was titled "Park Chanho's Gold Medal" (Dec. 16 1998) (see also "Historicizing the sport migration" in Chapter II).

In addition, the following four weeks of basic training were discursively framed as nourishment for him to be a more successful major leaguer. Being engaged in the national service, the Korean masculinizing project played a crucial role in reproducing

transnationally athletic males. One article in the Chosun Ilbo quoted Park's interview that "there was not an easy training but I nearly died in the CBR (chemical, biological, and radiological) training. But I developed strong mentality which can withstand the extreme circumstances, I'm sure that it will be a huge help for my life in the MLB" (Nov. 7 1999). Also it emphasized the strong comradeship between the recruits using a metaphor like "(it was) thick as blood". The article added part of his interview: "I felt the human affection by the comradeship from the military mates and the instructors that I had lost for the six years in the MLB where players fiercely compete to survive". In these ways, the media discourses on Park Chanho's involvement in the military service define the Korean military as a male monopoly and also justify the naturalized relation between military service and male bodies.

The media discourses on the military service issue recurred for Choo Shinsoo. When he was not selected as a member of the Korean national team for the 2006 Asian Games, his military service exemption was specifically issued in media coverage. When he finally joined the national team for the 2010 Asian Games and obtained the gold medal guaranteeing the exemption, JoongAng Ilbo re-illuminated the situation when Choo was excluded from the national team for 2006 Asian Games. According to the article,

Fans started to petition for the exemption of Choo Shinsoo who has been boosting national prestige in US, the birthplace of baseball. Several soldiers even carried out the Internet relay arguing that they will extend their own military service term one more day for Choo Shinsoo (so that his obligation can be offset by their substituted service). (JI, Nov. 21 2010)

In these ways, the exemption “benefit” was justified. Also, the head coach, Kim Jaebak, who excluded Choo from the 2006 national team was reproduced as a negative image with mentioning the result of the team that obtained “only bronze medal”.

Un/militarized permanent Korean males.

In 2006, also, the World Baseball Classic (WBC) was held. When the South Korean team advanced to the semifinals defeating Japan twice in the first-ever WBC in 2006, the South Korean government quickly decided to provide the military exemption to the players but for the following tournament in 2010, the government withdrew the offer due to the fairness controversy among the public. One article in JoongAng Ilbo reported Choo Shinsoo as a patriotic Korean citizen who persuaded the Cleveland Indians and finally “represented South Korea in the international games” (Apr. 17 2009). The Indians was opposing Choo’s participation in the WBC tournament because the international game did not provide the benefit of military exemption. Along the same line, illuminating the issue that he refused the suggestion from the Indians to apply for permanent residence in US, the media coverage emphasized Choo Shinsoo as a “permanent” Korean male who is always willing to do national service and represent South Korea (JI, Nov. 21 2010; DI, Dec. 2 2010). The patriotic media discourse around Choo worked on to highlight androcentric nationalism. Even after he obtained the exemption from the 2010 Asian Games, the news media emphasized that it was not an unpatriotic act, quoting a part of his interview such as “I will come back whenever this nation calls me” and “I will never forget this gratitude and do my best to disseminate the South Korean power to the MLB” (JI, Nov. 21 2010). Identifying the military exemption as the “gift from the nation”, Choo

Shinsoo was positioned as an indebted male so he is expected to return the favor and to be patriotic through his being in the MLB.

The ambivalent transnational masculinizing project.

In addition, the “gift from the nation” was also mediated as a possibility of transnational masculinizing project. By reproducing a news article in *Yahoo Sports*, titled “Be like Shin-Soo Choo: 10 more major leaguers who could use a hitch in Korean army” (Mar. 1, 2012), JoongAng Ilbo re-highlighted the transnational voice honoring Korean armed forces (Mar. 20, 2012) with a title “US adores Korean armed forces”. Using a narrative that show how much the diverse military trainings were helpful for him to be more “strong”, the article pointed out that the original article enumerated “ten other major leaguers who could benefit from a hitch in South Korea’s army”. It also highlighted that the selfish, weak, and intemperate players should learn self-control and sacrifice by prioritizing the teams from the Korean army. What is accentuated throughout the article is that the system is effective not only to the Korean-born males but to all athletic males around the globe as a transnationally applicable masculinizing practice.

Not surprisingly, however, most of the US media considered the Korean conscription as a barrier to maintain athletes’ career. When Park Chanho was exempted from the service, NYP expressed the conscription as an “obstacle” and reported the news that “Park Chanho *avoids* a mandatory three-year stint of military duty that could *jeopardize* [emphasis added] his professional career” (Dec. 8 1998). The military exemption was also converted into the capital value of players. One article in The New York Times stated “Park Chanho stood to lose millions in salary if he had been forced

into military service” (Dec. 17 1998). According to the article, when the annual salary and the extra income as a major leaguer are considered, staying as a player in the MLB was worth millions of dollars in profits. In terms of Choo Shinsoo, also, one article in NYT, titled “Focus on Choo’s Future”, highlighted a “bright future” awaited after exemption which secured his long-term deal with the Indians and the financial profit (Nov. 20 2010). In these contexts, the Korean styled real men project was discursively framed as a “not-welcoming rite of passage” since the players are typically reduced to the capitalist value in the professional field.

To sum up, the Korean army was mostly represented as a male privileged sphere in media coverage. Considering the significance of armed forces in a nation, especially in South Korea, the hyper-visibility of males is engaged in reproducing androcentric nationalism. Given the situation, while Korean abled men who did not finish the military service are regarded as an effeminate or counterfeit masculine image, ironically, the masculine subjectivity of the transnational athletes is secured or rather elevated when they are exempted from the obligation. The media’s support of the exceptional case reproduced discourses that the waiver maintains the physical, neoliberal, and national value of the male athletes and thus the personal transnationality is identified with the nation itself, transnational Korea. In these ways, the three athletes are protected as more authentically and significantly privileged males in the media discourses.

Trans/Nationalist Masculinities: Announcing South Korea to the World

The South Korean players in the MLB—a symbol of US sports—are frequently mediated as a Korean pride and/or national hero in the nationalisms and transnationalisms.

“Korean boy”, “Korean power”, “Korean brothers” or “Korean son” was used as a metaphor implying transnational status of the players with rhetorical expressions such as “proud pitching” or “glorifying Korea”. In this section, I examine the three players through the lens of trans/nationalist masculinities.

Envisioning New South Korea.

A number of Korean newspapers constructed the images of the major leaguers focusing on Koreanness. One article in the Chosun Ilbo underlined Park Chanho as “the face of Korean sport”. Throughout the narrative, the journalist listed diverse ways that Park Chanho was planning to contribute to Korean sport and the nation (Mar. 4 1999). Adding that “the Korean son is running the world”, the article positioned Park as an unparalleled national member. The Dong-A Ilbo more dramatically reconstructed his image as an anticolonial national fighter. Adopting a postcolonial viewpoint, Park Chanho was imagined as a Korean independence army under the Japanese occupation (Dec. 28 1999). For this narrative, however, the hierarchical relation was reconstructed changing Japan to US.

In 1997, the Chosun Ilbo reported that Park Chanho will put on specially manufactured baseball shoes printed the Korean national flag on the right side and the US national flag on the left side (Dec. 12 1997). Illuminating the shoes as “*taegeuk* (태극: the central mark in the Korean national flag) shoes” (Oct. 29 1997), the patriotic image of Park Chanho was highlighted with the sentence that he wears these shoes on important days such as the opening day or Korean Independence Day. Along the same line, one article in JoongAng Ilbo reported Choo Shinsoo who used a bat attached the *taegeuk*

mark at the bottom of it (Jul. 26 2009). With the headline “Moved Netizens by the *Taegeuk* Sticker on His Bat”, the article illuminated Choo as a forever representative of South Korea who will never forget his national identity. In these ways, the sport figures were often identified with South Korea, the nation itself. Indicating Park Chanho as a “new Korean symbol in US”, a journalist in the Chosun Ilbo regarded his success as the achievement of South Korean baseball (Jul. 14 1997). In a similar context, the representation of Park Chanho as a “world star” also secured the global power and the status of Korea (CI, Jul. 06 2001). The reproduced nationalist discourse based on global Koreanness justifies androcentric nationalism while females or female athletes become invisible. Consequently, the male players are authorized to be the trans/national representative by media outlets.

National agent of capital.

When South Korea was under the IMF crisis in the late 1990s, Park Chanho, the national pride, was frequently mediated as a sort of an “IMF cooler” that lessened Koreans’ anxiety and woes (JI, Dec. 10 1997). Adopting heroic narrative genre, Park Chanho was depicted as a symbolic hero in the IMF crisis, the troublous age (DI, Sep. 25 2000). Given the transnational capitalist visibility of him, the media coverage particularly highlighted his image as “a pillar of industry” for South Korea. Reporting the anticipated income that the overseas Korean athletes would earn, one article in the Chosun Ilbo also illuminated the athletes as national agents of capital earning foreign currency (Dec. 3 1999). Referring Park Chanho as the one who made highest-income, the article highlighted that “he transfers the dollars to Korea”. In this way, the capitalist masculinity

through male athletic bodies closely interacts with trans/nationalisms. Although the IMF crisis was over in South Korea, the capitalist dimension of the sporting stars had a high profile in recent months. When Choo Shinsoo agreed to a big deal contract with the Rangers as \$130 million dollars, he was depicted as another national agent of capital: “The \$130 million dollars is equal to the price for 6,500 Sonata, the (Korean) automobile, which is exported at twenty thousand dollars per car” (JI, Dec. 23 2013). Applying the metaphor “the best export in Korean sport”, he was explicitly materialized as a high value product.

The politics of visibility: selectively announced Korean nativeness.

Furthermore, the driving force of the outstanding athletic prowess by the three players was frequently concluded to their Koreanness and/or Korean nativeness. For example, a journalist in the Dong-A Ilbo defined Ryu Hyunjin as the “power of Korean native” (Feb. 15 2013) and Park’s 8th winning was articulated with the headline “*Doenjang* Soup (된장국: Korean soybean paste soup) made me win the 8th” (DI, Jul. 21 1997). Rather than highlighting the individualities and the following success, reproduced athletic images as a Korean subject glorified the nation and its cultural power, and further worked as a media strategy gratifying the Korean audiences.

In reporting the “kick scandal” between Park Chanho and Tim Belcher in 1999, however, the Korean newspapers selectively incorporate Koreanness to interpret the athletic masculinities that were symbolized as violence. Being considered as one of the top five acts of baseball fight, the “attack” attracted transnational media attention. Due to the incident, Park Chanho was suspended for seven games and fined \$3,000. The

violence on the mound that is featured as a dangerous kick by the spiked shoes was reproduced in the US newspapers as a reprehensible behavior.

Several Korean media joined along with the US media blaming the lack of sportsmanship of Park Chanho, but they were visibly euphemistic compared to the US reports. With the headline “He is Understandable But the Kick is Wrong”, a news article in the Chosun Ilbo emphasized that “even though we love him, there is no excuse” (Jun. 8 1999). Yet, more newspapers reproduced the story explicitly standing by Park Chanho. For example, the report by the chief referee was questioned in that he did not include the actions by Belcher who provided the cause (CI, Jun. 8 1999). And the other players in the Dodgers were represented as supportive colleagues, quoting Trinidad Hubbard: “Park Chanho is the nicest player in the world. He does not pick a fight with somebody but if it begins, he has to see everything to finish” (CI, Jun. 7 1999). The article also paid attention to Park’s supporters in South Korea quoting: “I would have been pissed off too”. Rather than judging his act as violence or immorality, this news article was finished by defining the MLB as a rocky field where numerous difficulties can happen. One article in the Dong-A Ilbo even justified his action as an inevitable reaction through the frame of “the law of survival of the fittest” (Jun. 20 2000). Quoting his interview “If I let the situation go, I would have been a foolish figure”, the kick was defended as an “adaption to the law of the jungle where only the strong survives”. Here, Belcher, the MLB, and the US nation are naturally identified as the power while Park, the Korean player, is positioned as an impotent underdog so that any act can be tolerated to some degree for his survival.

When the story was reproduced by Korean media context, meanwhile, Park Chanho's Koreanness was less conspicuous than the other topics about him. The blurred visibility was selectively used to reinforce a particular tone of media coverage. Ironically, the Koreanness was rather stressed in the US media. According to one article in The Denver Post,

Anaheim pitcher Tim Belcher was peeved about the kick delivered by L.A.'s Chan Ho Park during their fight last Sunday at Dodger Stadium. Park taught taekwon do as a kid. "That's a poor excuse," Belcher said. "He knows taekwon do. So what? I like to hunt. I didn't take out a shotgun." (DP, Jun. 13 1999)

Here, taekwondo, a part of Korean physical culture, was discursively produced as a problematic exotic culture. In the context of degradation, consequently, the intentionally visible Koreanness was identified as troublemaking nature. Another article in The Denver Post even challenged Park's masculinity: "Yo, Chan Ho Park, whatever you call that sissy kick you laid on Tim Belcher the other day, lose it. Real men don't kick, especially where you were aiming" (Jun. 9 1999). In this way, the masculinity embedded in the Korean male body was blamed for the unacceptable actions on the mound while Belcher was secured as an innocent victim. In particular, Park Chanho's behavior was even ridiculed as unmanly and unauthentic so that the transnational masculine subjectivities by the Korean athletes were reproduced as an inferior value and practice in the media outlet.

Korean Confucian Masculinities: Penetrating US as Korean *Mr. Nice*

Although Confucianism is not the only value system that influences Korea, the majority of beliefs and customs shaping the life of Koreans have stemmed from it (Park & Cho, 1995). Confucianism is rooted in family so the major ethos of Confucianism is

filial piety. Under the virtue, children are expected to respect and serve their parents with devotion (Choi, 2004). Within the cultural background, a great number of Korean news media illuminated the three athletes not only as athletic bodies but also as a member of each family. In this section, thus, the discursive masculinities are unpacked focusing on three major ethos of Confucianism: *hyo* (효: filial piety), *chung* (충: loyalty), and reverence for teachers.

Hyo: performing a good son.

When Park Chanho's grandfather died of old age, one article in the Chosun Ilbo casted light upon Park as being "extremely devoted" to his grandfather. With the title of "speed homeward from abroad", the media reproduced Park Chanho as a devoted son (Jan. 17 2000). When he is positioned in the relation with her mother, the devoted son metaphor becomes more noticeable. He started his life in the MLB by himself. When he was asked why he does not want to stay with his parents by a journalist in the Chosun Ilbo, he answered "They may feel sorry for my sufferings". Quoting his reply in the newspaper, his "exceptional heart" was highlighted (Sep. 25 1996). In late 2000, his mom came to US to take care of him and the illumination on the relation of mother and son was more frequently paid attention by media coverage. The titles such as "I will go back to Korea with my mother", "Chanho visited a dentist for his mom", and "Park Chanho had a dinner with his mom", portrayed him as not only a Korean athletic hero but also a representative Korean son. The *hyo-ja* (효자: goon son) narrative is more emphasized in one of the quoted interviews of his father.

You know, other parents who have children as athletes buy restorative herb medicine for them. Chanho almost never asked me to buy something while growing up. So I just considered that other children are the same and passed it. But now I think he is a hyo-ja. I'm sorry I was not good enough to him. (CI, Sep. 10 1997)

Borrowing the voice of Park Chanho's father, the image of considerate and thoughtful son becomes more elaborated and the "good son" discourse is reinforced.

Chung: performing a Mr. Nice.

In addition, the metaphor is extended to outside of family relations. Under the title of "Park Chanho, hyo-ja of the Dodgers", the article reported Park's contribution to the attendance records and the following entrance fee revenue since Korean Americans and Korean students in Los Angeles flocked to the stadium to watch Park Chanho's play (CI, Apr. 10 2001). In Confucianism, hyo, the fundamental Confucian virtue, is reframed as a foundation for chung, loyalty. Indeed, the expanded hyo-ja metaphor reconstructed the hierarchical relation between Park Chanho and the team on the foundation of chung narrative. A well-known baseball commentator Huh Guyeon also highlighted the loyalty of Asian athletes, quoting Pat Gillick, American professional baseball executive: "Korean and Japanese players are very loyal and... follow instructions from the coaching staffs well". Huh added comments "this means that American or Latino stars are wayward when they are grown up (in the field)²⁰" (DI, Sep. 3, 2001). Comparing Asian players to non-Asian players, the orthodox Korean virtue is glorified and supported. In this way, the hyo-ja metaphor is expanded to the discourses of Mr. Nice. Reporting the story from

²⁰ He expressed it as "when their heads become large". This colloquial Korean referring to "getting old" or "grown up" was translated to "when they are grown up".

Park's childhood that he gave his scholarship to a junior colleague in a poor family in high school years (CI, Sep. 10 1997), Park Chanho was reconstructed as a faithful and warm-hearted man, rather than a mere good son. The news article from the Dong-A Ilbo also added a voice reinforcing the discourse of Mr. Nice. When Park Chanho failed to win the 14th game in 1997 due to the defensive mistake by his colleague, the article described Park as a "mature faithful man" who did not blame his colleague but rather ascribed the problem to himself. The mature attitude was depicted as a characteristic of a "real professional" in the news (Sep. 1. 1997). The good man image was also underlined in the news coverage on his good deed. The transnational context where he was positioned accentuated the reproduction of Mr. Nice. Calling Park Chanho the "LA angel", one article in the Chosun Ilbo reported the news that Park, at his own expense, will construct a new playground in the Wilcher elementary school that run a Korean language school. According to the article, "Park Chanho who performed a number of good deeds in South Korea, donating money for flood victims, sponsoring scholarship for Hanyang University—his old school, and helping undernourished children started to broaden the charitable boundary to compatriots in US" (Feb. 13 2001). As "Korean express who is also in good deed", transnationally constructed experiences in the media reinforced Park Chanho not only a mere global star but also an authentic good guy who deserves the popularity and the millions of profit.

The Mr. Nice narrative, in addition, can be reframed with new *seonbi* (선비) masculinity. Although the traditional virtues involving *seonbi* refrain physical and economic activities but devote himself to studying Confucian principles, in a neo-liberal

society, the *seonbi* masculinity can be newly constructed focusing on the cultural and mental attainment (Jung, 2011). The modified *seonbi* masculinity still focuses on the virtues such as politeness, faithfulness, and loyalty but labor-related characteristics are blurred. Embracing both physical and mental performances, in this way, portrayal of Park Chanho in the media contributed to constitute new *seonbi* masculinity securing male privilege and the dominance.

Teacher's gratitude and reverence for the teachers.

Similarly to Park Chanho, Choo Shinsoo was also mediated as a “modest and diligent major leaguer” (JI, Nov. 12 2010). The news article underlined Choo as Mr. Nice illuminating the anecdote that “he never made a wry face while signing autographs for his fans”. It also added “he signed the balls more than 2,000 but he rather said sorry to the fans who did not get it”. Choo was, in addition, portrayed as a good disciple obeying his teachers and coaches. When the Indians had a game against the Mariners, one article in the Dong-A Ilbo established the relation between Choo Shinsoo and Eric Wedge as “teacher and pupil” (Apr. 11 2011). With the title “good man, Choo Shinsoo who is grateful to his old teacher”, the mature baseball star's morality was underlined. With *chung and hyo*, reverence for the teachers is another significant virtue that implicates educational principle of Confucianism. In this background, there is a sociocultural practice to celebrate Teacher's Day on May 15 every year in South Korea. Quoting Choo's interview “I'm here thanks to two baseball teachers”, Choo Shinsoo—“baseball genius” and “big leaguer”—was reframed as a polite and respectful man in a news article that was published on Teacher's Day (JI, May 15 2009).

The media coverage of the three athletes based on the Confucian principles—*hyo*, *chung*, and gratitude for teacher—has an assumption that they are representatives of South Korea and thus the good man images are equaled to the national image itself. One news article in *JoongAng Ilbo* accentuated this discourse practice: “Choo Shinsoo minds his sayings and doings thinking he represents South Korea. Leaving a sound Korean image, it is always in his mind that do not cause a nuisance to the following Korean major leaguers and the nation” (Apr. 17 2009). Along the same line, the *Chosun Ilbo* interpreted Park’s particular act on the mound as an admirable Korean image (Jul. 14 1997). When a game begins, Park Chanho used to give a Korean style bow to umpires. Unlike the report from *The New York Times* that considered it as a bizarre and exotic Korean practice (Mar. 8 1994), the journalist in the *Chosun Ilbo* interpreted the gesture as “new Korean image”, defining it as the “trademark of Park Chanho”. In the media context, glorifying the behavioral practice and the underlying virtues, the baseball player was reconstituted as an ethical Korean male that embodied the traditional virtues.

Color Solidarity: White Idols, Black Fellowship, and Yellow Enemy

Transnational dimensions of male relationships in the major league baseball are diversely constituted in news media. Here, race and ethnicity majorly function as significant tools that characterize and/or demarcate each relationship. In so doing, they are engaged in constructing multifaceted transnational masculinities centered on Korean male athletes. In this section, I examine the diversely constructed masculinities considering the hegemonic male relations in the transnational sport network.

White heroes.

In spite of the increasing diversity in the MLB, it still reproduces a white-centered sport culture (Andrews, 2000). With this background, white players are frequently mediated as a hero or an idol to Korean baseball players. When Park Chanho decided to join the Texas Rangers, the Chosun Ilbo illuminated Park as a pitcher corresponding to Nolan Ryan who is considered a legendary player in the history of American baseball under the headline of “Chanho, be the 2nd Nolan Ryan”, the white pitcher (Dec. 23 2001). Similarly, one article in The Dong-A Ilbo emphasized the point that “Park Chanho now plays in the Texas Rangers where Ryan—hero of Park Chanho—played” (Dec. 31 2001). One article in the Chosun Ilbo focused on the story of Orel Hershisier and Park Chanho with the title of “*Mat-hyung* (맏 형 : the eldest brother), Hershisier’s love to Chanho”.

The 42 year-old veteran pitcher Orel Hershisier who came back to the Dodgers last winter has come forward to train Park Chanho. Hershisier who led the Dodgers to victory in 1994 gave lavish tips to Park Chanho, *the yokel*, at the official joining ceremony of Park Chanho to the Dodgers. Thus, Park Chanho always considers him as one of the most respected MLB players. (CI, Feb. 20 2000)

Despite the exterior attention revealing the close intimacy between the Korean rookie and more famously admitted player in the MLB in order to highlight Park Chanho’s transnational status, two persons were hierarchically situated. That is, Hershisier, the white player, was represented as a skilled and competent helper while Park Chanho is depicted as a person who needs help. By using a kinship term “elder brother” as an address for Hershisier, also, the narrative positioned the two men as almost siblings and thus Park Chanho was accordingly situated as a subservient younger brother of him. In

Korean cultural contexts, this is one of the language styles making an utterance honorific. Even though they are not related by blood, the use of kinship terms such as *hyung* (형 : appellation for older brothers that males use)/*nuna* (누나 : appellation for older sisters that males use) or *oppa* (오빠 : appellation for older brothers that females use)/*unni* (언니 : appellation for older sisters that females use) are reserved for those of superior age (Brown, 2013). Considering that the linguistic expression reflects the Korean Confucian ethos that older brothers should be cordial and look after his younger brothers and the younger brothers should respect the older brothers (Lee, 2000), the usage of “elder brother” in the news article denotes the male centered hierarchical family relationship within Korean Confucianism rather than simply indicating the age gap between the two males. Thus, the masculinity in the transnational relationship is solidified adopting the Korean traditional value of brotherhood.

Black fellowship.

While Ryan and Hershiser were positioned in a superior status in the hierarchical relation of brotherhood with the Korean players, the bond between the Korean players and the players of non-white color tended to show a different linkage. Juan Uribe, the infielder from the Dominican Republic, is one of the players who frequently appeared in the news articles of Ryu Hyunjin as his best MLB friend. It was not uncommon to find a modifier for Uribe as a “firm friend” or a “great friend” of Ryu. As much as Ryu’s play and his daily activities were given attention by news reporters and Korean fans, Uribe also attracted the media’s interest in association with Ryu’s stories thus enjoying the popularity among the Korean fans of Ryu Hyunjin. The Chosun Ilbo (Sep. 3 2013)

focused on Uribe's good and sunny personality illuminating the close relationship between Ryu and Uribe, the news items represented them as prankful but warm brothers who have intimate companionship. Mentioning the *You Tube* video showing a little prank they played in the dugout of Dodgers, the Chosun Ilbo quoted the post game in the Yahoo Sports reporting "Juan Uribe and Ryu Hyunjin act like brothers" and "this clip needs a parent telling these two rascals to settle down or there will be no dessert tonight". Also they added, "Uribe is a good big brother who takes care of Ryu Hyunjin well. When Ryu Hyunjin won his 11th game of the season, Uribe presented athletic shoes to him." Even though this article also adopted a narrative of brotherhood as the story of Park and Hershiser did, the mood of the scenario connoted a more horizontal and cooperative interaction rather than the vertically organized brotherly relation. Under the title of "Knuckling from Ryu Hyunjin who is 8 years younger than me? It's okay because we are friends" in the Chosun Ilbo (Jul. 30 2013), the news article explained that the mischievous prank by Ryu on Uribe was allowed because they are very close friends in spite of the age gap. Considering the Korean cultural custom between older men and younger men, the article reported, "although Uribe is 8 years older than Ryu Hyunjin, they like hanging out with each other as much as people of the same age do". Including Cuban player Yasiel Puig, another "rascal" enjoying pranks with Ryu and Uribe, the three foreign players were contextualized as "pleasant" three males in the Dodgers. When the media give an attention to the relationship, however, it is narrated as a more friends-like brotherhood characterizing vague layers in the age-centered male hierarchy rather than cordial older brothers with docile younger brothers.

Yellow enemy.

While non-white players tended to be reproduced through the discourse of fraternal comradeship in the white dominated milieu of the MLB, the association between the Korean players and other Asian ethnicity was ambivalently constructed. “Yellow gust” or “the Oriental typhoon” is a frequent metaphor for Korean players in the MLB but it is not limited to Koreans only. As a trope indicating people of yellow color, yellow gust and the oriental typhoon worked as a category embracing all of the Asian ethnicities. In the news article featuring the Asian players who are selected to participate in the All-Star game, the Chosun Ilbo focused on the outstanding plays of these three, Korean Park Chanho, Japanese Suzuki Ichiro and Sasaki Kazuhiro with an excited tone.

“The Oriental typhoon” hit the All-Star game of MLB. Only three which is 5% of the entire population are Asians including “Korean express” Park Chanho (the LA Dodgers) and “Japanese idol” Ichiro and Sasaki (the Seattle Mariners). But the 5% surprised the world. They played an active part as protagonists in the star festivals subverting the common belief that Asians fall behind westerners in power and skill... With a huge number of Korean and Japanese fans in the stadium, the game looked like an “Asian festival”. (Jul. 11 2001)

While the article above adopted a narrative of “competent Asians” demarcating them from the rest of the western players, the Chosun Ilbo’s (Jul. 17 2001) other news article covering the same game with the headline “comparison between ‘yellow express’ Park Chanho and Suzuki Ichiro” more focused on “who is better” as the title implies. Characterizing Park Chanho as a “late bloomer” and Ichiro as a “batting genius”, it more valued Park’s success than Ichiro’s one. That is, Park Chanho, who was an unknown athlete, finally accomplished the “American dream” based on his steady efforts while

Ichiro was already popular as a super star and a baseball genius in the Japanese professional league before he moved on to US. Likening Park Chanho to a bull and Ichiro to samurai, also, this article prospected that the powerful and honestly sincere bull will eventually be defeating the Japanese samurai who is manipulative and astute merely relying on his technique. Of course the MLB is the sport sphere where teams compete, not individuals or nations do, but the three Korean players were frequently juxtaposed with the Japanese players. When Park Chanho won the game against the New York Mets, a news article in the Chosun Ilbo (May 21 2001) focused on Park's victory against Japanese Shinjo Tsuyoshi in the team, the first Asian hitter in the MLB. By assessing Tsuyoshi as an outstanding player in the Big League, Park Chanho's pitching against him was rather discoursed as a more "superb and complete" victory. When Choo Shinsoo's ranking was released from the MLB.com, a related news article reemphasized Choo as the "Asian number one" only paying attention to the Asian population in major league baseball (JI, Feb. 7 2013).

Choo Shinsoo (31, Cincinnati) was ranked number one among the Asian players in MLB. The official website of MLB released player preview of 845 players in 30 teams. Choo Shinsoo was ranked the 52nd in the total players and the 20th in the outfielders. Japanese Darvish Yu (27, Texas) was ranked as the 55th and Taiwanese Chen Wei-yin (28, Baltimore) was ranked in the 340th so the Asian number one title was given to Choo Shinsoo... All of the Japanese players except Darvish didn't get included in the list of the 100th. Japanese Suzuki Ichiro (Yankees, 172nd) and Kuroda Hiroki (Yankees, 107th) in the Yankees both had low expectation.

Using the headline "(in) ML ranking, Choo Shinsoo is above Darvish", this article reconstituted the event only focusing on the mode of confrontation among the Asian

players in the MLB. Through mentioning the nationality of each Asian player, the story strategically elevated Choo's status to a more superior and outstanding level, the Asian top. As the story of Park Chanho's winning against the New York Mets was reformulated with Shinjo, the event of player preview in the MLB was also paid a particular attention centered on the discourse that which Asian holds the hegemony in the Western dominated sport sphere. Rather than considering other ethnicities, however, the narrative mostly aimed at Koreans and the relative Japanese. When Choo Shinsoo was ranked number 14 for the MVP award in the American league in 2010, the report created the headline, "Choo Shinsoo, 14th in AL, defeated Ichiro" (DI, Nov. 25). The scenario produced a positive evaluation to Choo by the MLB press corps, highlighting the point that he obtained higher points than Ichiro.

The narrative style situating Korean players and Japanese players in the hostile relations went way back to around 1995 when the Dodgers had only two Asian players Korean Park Chanho and Japanese Nomo Hideo. Belonging to the same team, the stories of Park and Nomo tended to be mostly narrated as a form of competitive composition. One article in the Dong-A Ilbo (May 9 1997) covered the rival relationship juxtaposing Park as Korean express and Nomo as Japanese express while referring Park as a rising star but Nomo as a sinking star. Another news item used "water and fire" as metaphors to explain the difference in the two (DI, Feb. 27 1998).

Park Chanho and Nomo are different like water and fire. Park Chanho who was discovered by a discerning scouter of the Dodgers signed with the team for \$12 million deal in 1994. He wins favor of teammates and reporters in that he always smiles in the clubhouse with good English skills. On the contrary, Daniel Nomura, Nomo's agent, who knows of the Dodgers well, said that they have a favorable

attitude that led to the \$20 million contract of Nomo in 1995. From the first day, Nomo didn't like a spotlight so he tried to avoid the interviews by the reporters for the MLB.

Based on the narrative style, the oppositional metaphors not only implied different personalities between two but also their conflicting cosmopolitan sociality. Applying positive perspectives on Park Chanho while denigrating Nomo Hideo as a passive, quiet, and retiring man, Park was affirmed as a confident, sociable and culturally competitive man who is worthy of the transnational popularity. One article in the Chosun Ilbo (Aug. 23 1997) even reprovingly issued the Nomo's "problematic" attitude rejecting Americanization. Identifying being transnational as being Americanized, the genre fortified the American-centered hegemony among the players in the US-based professional baseball league. When Nomo was given noticed that he would go to the minor leagues, the vocabulary and rhetoric in the news article embraced a more negative and offensive connotations: "he was ousted", "going downhill", "powerless pitching", or "incompetent" constructed his story (CI, Mar. 26 1999).

In addition, the competition between the two for the title of the winningest Asian-born pitcher was discursively formed as a rivalry between the two nations rather than the individuals. When Park Chanho renewed the winningest record of Nomo, the personal accomplishment was represented as a historical victory of South Korea against its "old foe", Japan.

...Although (the modern) baseball was introduced from Japan to Korea when Korea was under the Japanese occupation²¹, Korean baseball has been developed

²¹ Korea was under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945 with Japanese militarism.

so it defeated Japan in the Sydney Olympic Games. Park Chanho rewrote the history of the MLB recording 18th winnings that breaks 16th winnings of Nomo. (DI, Oct. 1 2000)

The news stories of Park Chanho and Nomo Hideo are not always narrated within the hostile relationship. For example, the Dong-A Ilbo reported that Nomo's success story is going to be included to an English textbook for high school students in Japan (May 9 1997). Although this narrative was constructed without the conflicting relation to Park, it implied that Nomo, the biggest rival, attracted the attention of the Korean media even outside of the mound. Highlighting his status in Japan as a significant national icon, the story reaffirmed the national identity of this Asian pitcher in the Dodgers as Japanese. In this context, relatively, Park Chanho's Koreanness was solidified, and further, both males were identified as each nation respectively. Considering the colonial period of Korea by Japan, sport is frequently functioned as a quasi-war to Koreans. Connecting masculinities with national strength and pride, the media discourses continued to compare Korean males with Japanese males as oppositional compositions.

They were, however, sometimes categorized in the same group which was bound together by yellowness or the Oriental. By locating both Koreanness and Japaneseness within a relation of companionship according to the race, the narrative strategies demarcated the Asian males and the non-Asian western males. The ethnic differences become blurred under the purpose of elevating and visualizing the Asian subjectivity in the western-centered sport milieu. Strategically either expanding or delimiting the scope of race and ethnicity though, the transnational aspects of Korean masculinities were consequently emphasized more. The ambivalently formed media discourses, thus,

fortified “ethnonational masculinity” (Joo, 2012, p.124). While white athletes were easily idolized to Koreans and other Asians, Japanese players never reached the level in the Korean media practices. In the twofold discourse mechanism and the complicated relationship models, transnational Korean masculinities are reproduced.

CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS II: READER COMMENTS

This chapter analyzes the media texts of reader comments. First, I examine production practice for discourse in reader comments' section. Then I provide in-depth discourse analyses using Fairclough's CDA analysis framework. Based on the analysis, dominant masculinity discourses are categorized as follows: othering masculinities, regulating bodies and masculinities, commodified transnational masculinities, and multifaceted androcentric nationalism.

Table 4. Categorizing Media Texts for Thematic Discourses in Reader Comments

Genre	Thematic discourse	# of data
Reader comments	Racial caricaturizing	24
	Regulating bodies	17
	Commodified masculinities	22
	Androcentric nationalism	20
Total		83

Discourse Practice in Reader Comments

Naver and ESPN.com generate discursive public spaces based on different media mechanism. The first is about the accessibility. As a search portal, Naver reprovides the already published news articles from their original newspaper company. The list of main news articles is introduced on the first page and thus readers can access the news by clicking on the headline. When readers click on a story, the page is linked not to the

original newspaper's website but to the reformulated page by Naver. Although the news contents, including photo, date, and the name of journalist, are preserved without change, the mechanism leads the readers to leave comments on the article, not in the original source page but on the Naver website, the secondary source. Thus, even for the same article, there may be few or no comments in the original newspaper's website such as dongA.com or joongang.joins.com while the reproduced Naver articles have more. In regards to ESPN.com, however, readers tend to read the news articles on the original ESPN website. Although a news article is found using a US-based search portal such as *Google*, when the listed headline is clicked on, the original webpage is opened. Thus, the comments by readers are left on the ESPN.com website.

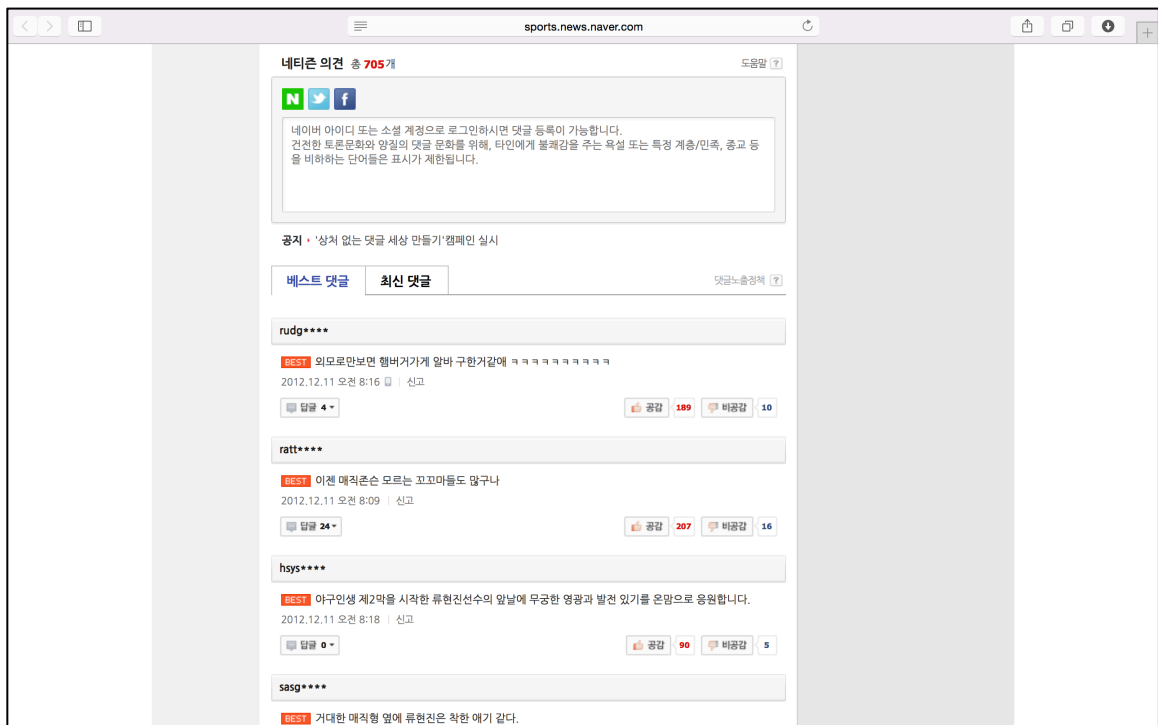


Figure 4. Captured Image of Reader Comments Section for Ryu Hyunjin's story in Naver.com

The second difference between the two media sources is about anonymity. In terms of ESPN.com, although it is free to read users' comments, individuals need to sign in with a *Facebook* account to leave comments. The website offers the instructions for the commenters: "Your Facebook name, photo and other personal information you make public on Facebook will appear with your comment, and may be used on ESPN's media platforms" ("Comments", 2015). ESPN.com also warns that users have a responsibility for the content they post and also profane, inappropriate, or antisocial comments such as spamming or trolling will be removed. Similar to ESPN.com, in Naver, it is also free to read users' comments but people should login with a Naver, Facebook, or *Twitter* account to leave comments. Naver also warns users not to leave comments that may damage someone's reputation, informing the users that "abusive language generating displeasure or insulting certain class, ethnicity, and religion will be restrictedly displayed" ("Netizens' opinion", 2015). In comparison to ESPN.com, the Naver users tend to leave comments using a Naver account rather than a Facebook or Twitter account. A major difference between two approaches is that the Naver account has more guaranteed anonymity. When a user leaves a comment through the person's Naver account, the only revealed information is the user's created nickname while a Facebook or Twitter account offers other users a chance to link to the commenter's Facebook or Twitter page by simply clicking the name.

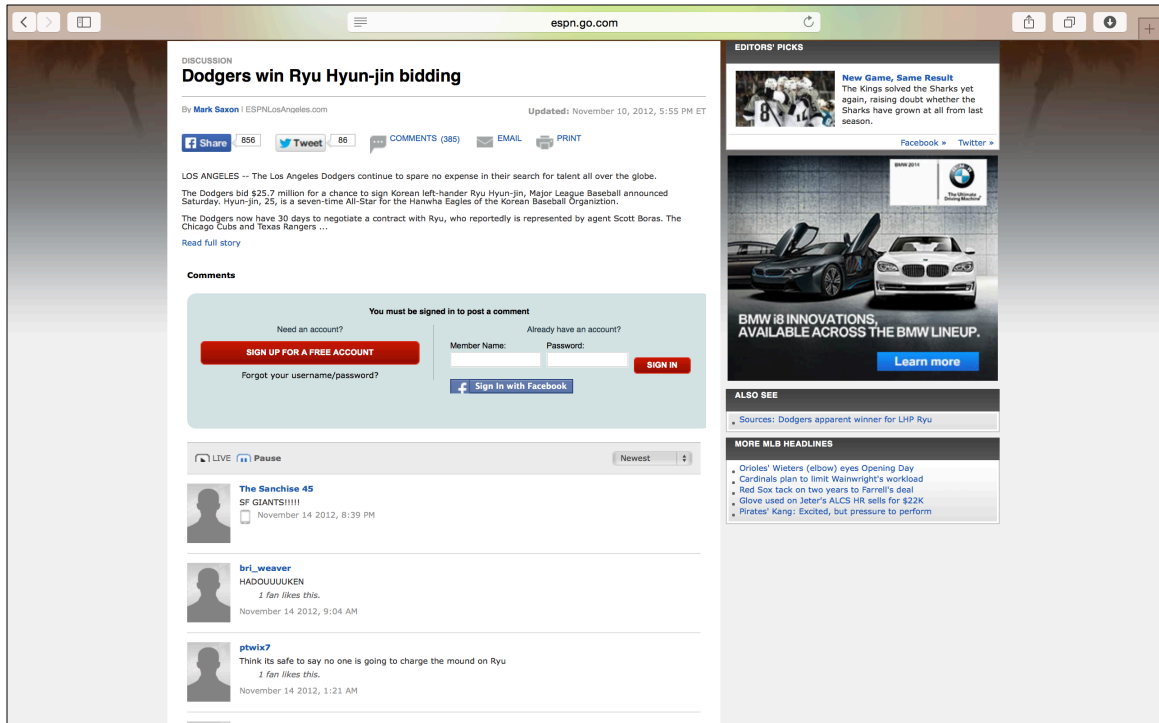


Figure 5. Captured Image of Reader Comments Section for Ryu Hyunjin’s Story in ESPN.com

Othering Masculinities: Racial/Ethnic Caricaturizing

Ryu and Street Fighter.

One of the discursive repertoires is caricaturized race and ethnicity. When Ryu Hyunjin was introduced as a new member of the LA Dodgers, the majority of commenters in ESPN.com was engaged in wordplay with his last name, *Ryu*. Below is a group of commenters related to racially coded jokes that were posted, especially about a popular video game—the *Street Fighter*²²:

²² *Ryu* is one of the Asian characters in the game.

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 1: HADOUUUUKEN²³ (1 fan likes this.)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 2: Shoryuken!!! (6 fans like this.)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 3: Dam Street Fighter, We need Luigi and Bowser from Mario Sluggers.

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 4: I hope ken gets a good look. Chun-li could provide some value as well.....

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 5: Disappointed there weren't 100 more Street Fighter jokes here. There needs to be more. (1 fan likes this.)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 6: so who got Ken Masters, Hadoken! (1 fan likes this.)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 7: Chun Li as the Dodgers Cheerleader. (1 fan likes this.)

Being obsessed with his last name, Ryu, the street fighter metaphor was repeatedly produced in the dialogue and also supported by other commenters through the “like(s)”. While his athletic prowess or professional career was ignored, the Asian character in the video game, *Ryu*, was identified with Ryu Hyunjin. Considering the character is Japanese avatar, furthermore, the Korean/human ethnicity was blurred or neglected within the overtly simplified racial category. In addition, a sexist remark was presented in the opinion by the “Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 7”, degrading *Chun-Li*—a Chinese female character in the game—as a cheerleader. Despite the implausible deployment, the fictional comments reduce the sporting sphere only for males and naturalize the male athleticism.

²³ The “shoryuken” or “hadouken” is his special attack skill.

Park Chanho and taekwondo kick.

Along the same line, Park Chanho's masculinity was also mocked by race and ethnicity—the two pervasive forms of discursive practice in the readers' comments.

Following the news of Park Chanho's retirement, commenters in the ESPN.com recalled the incident between Park Chanho and Tim Belcher in 1999:

Park_ESPN_Commenter 1: All I have to say is "The drop kick". (1 fan likes this.)

Park_ESPN_Commenter 2: Scissor kick!!!! Haha

Park_ESPN_Commenter 3: The kick was much more impressive. Liu Kang would have been proud.

Park_ESPN_Commenter 4: Chan Ho Foey after attempting to kick Tim Belcher.

Park_ESPN_Commenter 5: Shouldn't that be Tae Kwan Foey? ;p

Ridiculing Park's image through his actions on the mound, he is reduced to a broiler who is apart from sportsmanship. Mentioning Liu Kang, the Chinese character in another fighting game *Mortal Kombat*, similar to Ryu through Street Fighter, the commenter's misconception of Park's ethnicity became evident. Although taekwondo, a Korean cultural physical activity, was mentioned, it was intentionally utilized to participate in ridiculing his actions and further his Koreanness.

Hypersexualized black males and effeminate Korean males.

While the majority of racist comments were produced in the US-based media space degrading or blurring Asianness or Koreanness of the athletes, in Naver, several reader comments following the story of Ryu's entrance to the LA Dodgers sexualized black masculinity in the relationship between Ryu Hyunjin and Magic Johnson.

Specifically, the metaphor of phallus was prevalent based on the last name of Magic Johnson.

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 1: Look at the name. It's Johnson.

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 2: It sounds too sexy. (8 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 3: Magic penis!!! (7 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 4: Magic Johnson... It's not a Johnson but even a magic Johnson. Women will be mad at it. (11 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 5: I want to do it with Magic Johnson... I'm attracted to bigger. (13 agrees and 8 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 6: The black hyung (older brother) is the magic penis. (5 agrees and 2 disagrees)

Driven by an English slang *johnson* implying phallus, the co-owner Magic Johnson's subjectivity is caricaturized centered on his physicality. With the blackness of Johnson, the Korean term *hyung* that implies an older brother was used on purpose to racially mock Johnson. Considering the male superiorities that older brothers are supposed to possess in the Korean Confucian cultural contexts, the particular expression naturalized an assumption that black males have a big sized body. Being juxtaposed with Ryu Hyunjin, especially, Johnson's body size was exaggerated as below:

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 7: —,.—; The black hyung's build is awesome. (5 agrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 8: Look at the frame of the black hyung... Korean Ryu Hyunjin turned to a baby. (5 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 9: Standing next to the black hyung, Ryu Hyunjin looks like a little kid. He (Ryu) must be the biggest guy in his village. (7 agrees)

In these ways, the comments reconstructed the racialized masculinity hierarchy centered on two symbolic male bodies, one Asian/Korean and one African American. The number of “agree” verifies that it is not just only one individual’s opinion. As a grouped dialogue, it reflects the shared hegemonic ideas among the commenters. Seemingly, based on the discourses, Korean athletic bodies being symbolized by Ryu are located in the subordinated level in the gender structure compared to Magic Johnson while the black bodies hold the hegemonic male power. Given that the commenters’ conversation is centered on sexist discourses exaggerating the physicality owned by black males, however, the black maleness is rather reconstructed as exotic and abnormal identity. Johnson’s HIV-positive diagnosis was also added here: “Magic Johnson was infected with AIDS, right?” (Ryu_Naver_Commenter 10), “Magic Johnson is still alive with AIDS” (Ryu_Naver_Commenter 11), and “Ryu Hyunjin seemed nervous standing next to the AIDS patient” (Ryu_Naver_Commenter 12). Privileging heterosexuality and more specifically the heterosexual maleness of Ryu Hyunjin, in the pathological dialogue, commenters are engaged in defining black male bodies by Magic Johnson as more deviant subjects. In these ways, Korean/East-Asian and black masculinities are both questioned as problematic features: baby-like Ryu and fetishized Johnson. Here white males are consequently privileged as the norm for being human in the transnational context.

Regulating Bodies and the Masculinities: No Fat Korean Major Leaguer

A sport sphere is often defined as a male dominant area so that in most sports, being a male-bodied athlete is encouraged while being female is not. Here a muscular body type is naturalized as a symbol of male athleticism assuming that the physically challenging activities are engaged in forming the male imagery. Thus the hard-bodied athletic figure is closely connected with visual representations of masculinities (Joo, 2012). The assumed male hardness through sport was explicit in the readers' comments for the story of Ryu's joining the major league baseball through Naver (commenter 13 to 18) and ESPN.com (commenter 1 to 3). Although his body size was analogous to a "small baby" or a "little kid" compared to Magic Johnson, a number of commenters showed their concern about his *fat* body:

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 13: Why is he so fat? Did he gain weight on purpose? (1 agree and 5 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 14: Ryu-Ddoong is so cute like a Winnie the Pooh. (2 agrees and 3 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 15: He seems an Asian CC Sabathia. Do good work in the MLB. (1 agree and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 16: He is cute. Looks like a piggy bank. (3 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 17: The uniform do not look good...LOL...Lose weight. Park Chanho really looked awesome when he was young in the Dodgers (7 agrees and 3 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 18: Hyunjin, I give you sincere advice. Do not eat burgers more than five there even if it is really delicious. (30 agrees and 2 disagrees)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 1: Fat.....sounds like the next Babe Ruth (1 fan like this)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 2: Fat.....sounds like the next Hedeki Irabu (1 fan like this)

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 3: Fat? Fielder, sabathia, panda... can't be that bad. (4 fans like this)

Adding to Korean monster, *Ryu-Ddoong* is another Korean nickname of Ryu Hyunjin.

Combining his last name Ryu and *ddoong*—the Korean abbreviated language of *ddoong-ddoong* (똥 똥: fat), it indicates his fatness with a mocking implication. With 30

commenters agreeing, the narrative of “do not eat too much” by “Ryu_Naver_commenter 18” symbolically expresses the shared understanding of his corpulence among the public.

Although Ryu’s body size was captured many times in the public discourse space, his physicality was considered more as a problematic “fat” body being apart from a manly “muscular” body type. Thus Ryu was imaged as a Winnie the Pooh or even a piggy bank.

Adding to it, the frequently used adjective “cute” was engaged in reimagining his maleness as a demasculinized status. In a transnational context, in addition, several

commenters compared Ryu with other professional players who have distinctive physicalities. While Ryu Hyunjin was naturally compared with CC Sabathia, Prince

Fielder, Babe Ruth, or Hedeki Irabu, well-known players in the MLB with an obese body type, Park Chanho, the previous Korean player in the LA Dodgers, was relatively

idolized as an ideal male body. One commenter in Naver explicitly accentuated the “superior” maleness through Park’s looks:

One of the reasons why Park Chanho was a national hero is because he was more handsome than some other Western players...But Ryu Hyunjin is not so he is probably not going to earn that much popularity. During Park Chanho’s heyday, also, he was considered as one of the outstanding powerful pitcher holding top-level records including strikeout and hits. But Ryu Hyunjin will be a pitcher using technique only in the MLB. Anyhow, with these and those reasons, Ryu Hyunjin

will not be popular as much as Park Chanho was. (3 agrees and 11 disagrees)
(Ryu_Naver_Commenter 19)

In this way, Park Chanho's image was publicly constructed not only through the proper body type as a professional baseball player but also through his "good" looks. On the other hand, Ryu Hyunjin's corporal images were frequently portrayed as an abnormalized male body with deviant male attractiveness as below:

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 20: He is really ugly... Park Chanho, the handsome, was proud of South Korea. (3 agrees and 13 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 21: Ryu-ddoong, fighting! By the way I now see how handsome Park Chanho is. (3 agrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 22: I am glad that baseball is not played by the looks. Ryu-Ddoong is cute. (2 agrees and 2 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 23: He must have specially ordered the biggest baseball cap. (7 agrees and 1 disagree)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 24: Although he looks dumb like he has Down syndrome, but playing baseball well would suffice. (1 agree and 7 disagrees)

In these ways, the constructed discourses around Ryu Hyunjin's looks mostly tend to deride and ridicule his physicality, degrading his masculine subjectivities and thus defining which male body can be a national representative of South Korea.

Commodified Transnational Masculinities

The neoliberal nature of the global marketplace of sport functions as another mechanism to establish hierarchy relying on the power of capital. Adding to other privileged factors, capitalist power is a vital standard to define and construct hegemonic

masculinities. Considering the large sum in contract Choo Shinsoo's with the Texas Rangers, not surprisingly, the commenters were obsessed with the economic profit in most of the repertoires present in the dialogue. While several commenters on Naver celebrated the "success": "Wow! Look at the numbers. You are awesome." (30 agrees and 4 disagrees/Choo_Naver_Commenter 1); "That's great. Choo Shinsoo deserves it." (Choo_Naver_Commenter 2); and "It's a great success. Congratulations. I'm proud of you." (10 agrees and 1 disagree/Choo_Naver_Commenter 3), some others expressed envy and even comparative deprivation. They said:

"awesome.....envy.....envy.....and envy....." (23 agrees and 2 disagrees/Choo_Naver_Commenter 4) and "I'm depressed looking at Choo Shinsoo's annual salary on this Christmas day alone" (13 agrees and 3 disagrees/Choo_Naver_Commenter 5).

In the same view, a number of readers in the ESPN.com discussed whether Choo really deserves the \$130 million dollar-contract. Below is a group of commenters discussing the repertoire:

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 1: WOW. He is officially the most overpaid player in MLB right now! What a joke! If baseball had a salary cap, it's unlikely, with his batting line, that he would get more (or much more) than 10mm a year. Baseball and their contracts is such a joke. (6 fans like this)

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 2: Yeah, this guy isn't worth the money. Doesn't have a high batting average and the only thing going for him is his on base percentage. OPB goes he's completely worthless and also he's over 30. Really bad deal for any team in my opinion. This guy is

only worth \$14-\$15 million for about 4 years tops.
(15 fans like this)

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 3: He is so over rated. Take out his HBP stats, becomes very average. 20 stolen bases with 11 caught stealings, not a good ratio. A below average out fielder. I've watched him play a lot, so some of this may be opinion, but way over rated.

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 4: it's not a bad deal. He will age well. He gets on base a ton. For this rangers team that's huge. Prince needs guys in front of him. (14 fans like this)

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 5: 100 game winning team right here with arguably the best leadoff hitter in baseball (1 fan like this)

Choo_ESPN_Commenter 6: So many clueless fans in here talking bout Choo and not having a good enough average? Ummm .285 is considered VERY GOOD among MLB standards. Above .300 is outstanding, .270-.299 is considered very blvery good to excellent especially when you are a league leader in OB % which is what matter with a lead off hitter. Average , ANY team could care less about a lead off hitters BA if his OBP leads the league. NOT ONE TEAM would care cause it means nothin. The guy hit 21 hr in the lead off spot which is incredible... (2 fans like this)

The first three commenters questioned his athletic prowess regarding him as an overpaid player in the MLB. Specifically, the commenters claimed that the seven-year contract was not a good deal mentioning his aged body. Meanwhile, the last three rather insisted that it was a good deal highly appreciating Choo's athletic careers and the potentiality based on it. Regardless of which side is correct, Choo Shinsoo's identity was constructed as a value of commodity only in the discursive dialogue focusing on the neoliberal contexts of sport. In contrast to comments in the ESPN.com that explicitly talked about the race and ethnicity of Park Chanho and Ryu Hyunjin, here Choo Shinsoo's racial

identity was barely discussed. For two repertoires, however, his Koreanness/Asianness tended to be accentuated. First, he was often considered as a marketing strategy for Korean and Asian market expansion. Several commenters in the ESPN.com focused on his marketability: “yu+choo, rangers will be the most watched team in asia now, think of the marketing potential \$\$\$\$” (1 fan likes this / Choo_ESPN_Commenter 7), “gonna be a lot of rangers games on in korea next year” (1 fan likes this / Choo_ESPN_Commenter 8), and “you guys dont have any idea how much the rangers would get popular in korea” (Choo_ESPN_Commenter 9). Secondly, Choo Shinsoo’s Koreanness was also referred in a context of devaluing Korean/Asian male athleticism. “What in heaven's name are the Rangers paying nearly 20 mil for? In seven years, this guy will be back in South Korea playing street ball” (15 fans like this / Choo_ESPN_Commenter 10) and “Korean baseball players with large contracts haven't always worked out for the Rangers...” (1 fan likes this / Choo_ESPN_Commenter 11). The last comment, in particular, neglected South Korean baseball as a lower leveled sporting field compared to the US professional baseball league. In this way, the Koreanness is identified with inferior athleticism and also the Korean-born baseball player Choo Shinsoo is degenerated into an overestimated incompetent male athlete.

The relation with Scott Boras, Choo’s agent, is another theme stood apart from the discourses. To some commenters, the contract was explained not through Choo’s athletic prowess but through Boras’s acumen and ability: “Nice player but this is a joke of a contract. Good job Boras” (Choo_ESPN_Commenter 12), “I'm starting to believe that Scott Boras can actually turn water into wine” (Choo_ESPN_Commenter 13), “Scott

Boras has ruined baseball” (Choo_ESPN_Commenter 14), “...Still in all Boras just keeps getting richer and richer” (Choo_ESPN_Commenter 15). Positioning Choo Shinsoo as a “puppet” being controlled by the agent, even the status as a capitalist worker was challenged in that it is not considered as “earned” profit but as “given” ration. In this way, the Korean athlete’s masculinity becomes subordinated while the white guider is imagined as a privileged male holding neoliberal superiority in the intersected hierarchy of race and masculinity.

Multifaceted Androcentric Nationalism: At the Border of Korean Nationalism and Anti-Korean Nationalism

In this section, I particularly focus on the Korean and the Koreanness-related voices and then analyze the media discourses through nationalism. Among the commenters in the reader comments’ section of Naver.com, the nationalist dialogues can be categorized to three discursive repertoires: pride, gratitude, and contribution.

Three dimensions of Korean nationalism: pride, gratitude, and contribution.

In the first repertoire, commenters frequently idolized the three Korean players as national icon, sport hero, and Korean baseball legend. Here the individual success of the players is identified as a Korea’s victory, and then finally it is embraced as the commenters’ own achievements. Following the story of Park’s retirement, the reader comments in the Naver.com displayed how the commenters are engaged in the discursive production through the three repertoires.

Park_Naver_Commenter 1: He is the person making me watch the baseball. The day he was released from the four week military training and the day he hit the homerun keep popping up in my head. It was around 99~00. Ah, you were

really untouchable at that time. The power curve like a waterfall, rising pass ball, and the browbeating fastball to hitters remain a vivid memory. You threw the each ball with soul and enhanced national prestige of Korea. You are the legend no matter what the others say.

Park_Naver_Commenter 2: In the troubling times... Park Chanho was not just a good sport player overseas but a hero hugged the crushed dignity. Thank you for your effort! Hope I can keep looking at you doing your best within baseball (sphere). (6 agrees and 7 disagrees)

Park_Naver_Commenter 3: Thank you for your effort so far. Now please try to work hard for the younger (baseball) generation. (3 agrees and 8 disagrees)

While all of the dialogues shared Park's image as a national pride at large, commenter 1 more focused on the affinity between the personal and the Korean sport star, and commenter 2 developed it to the gratitude discourse. Commenter 3 also expanded the discourse of gratitude to a contribution discourse. In these ways, the discursive connection between pride, gratitude, and finally contribution solidifies the athletes' images as eternal Korean citizens who are expected to behave accordingly conforming with the expectations by the nation.

Individualized Korean nationalism.

Following the story of Ryu's entrance, also, a group of commenters particularly showed how they reflected their own life with Ryu Hyunjin and his play in the MLB.

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 23: Ryu Hyunjin – I'm so proud of you as the same South Korean. Don't hurt and play well so be the second Park Chanho~ I will never miss your game!!! (5 agrees and 8 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 24: Ahh.. I feel really great from the morning... I'm in bliss (with this news). It is going to be a vibrant day. (2 agrees and 2 disagrees)

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 25: I'm not getting any sleep due to this guy. LOL. So expected. Ryu-Ddoong, fighting! (33 agrees and 10 disagrees)

In particular, as the commenter 23 displayed, Ryu Hyunjin, a new Korean player in the LA Dodgers since Park Chanho, was frequently compared to Park within an individualized nationalist discourses: "From Korean express 'Park Chanho' to Korean express 'Ryu Hyunjin' ...I sincerely hope that he (Ryu) keeps the fame of Park Chanho!!!" (6 agrees and 4 disagrees / Ryu_Naver_Commenter 26), "As Chanho big brother became a national hope during the IMF period, hope Ryu Hyunjin becomes a national hope in this recent economic crisis" (5 agrees and 1 disagree / Ryu_Naver_Commenter 27). Under the repertoire, some others rather revealed their expectations to have a new national sport icon, not as a mere successor to Park Chanho: "Stop saying Park Chanho and show your Ryu Hyunjin level" (8 agrees and 4 disagrees // Ryu_Naver_Commenter 28), "Hope you be the first Ryu Hyunjin rather than the second Korean express of Park Chanho" (3 agrees and 1 disagree / Ryu_Naver_Commenter 29).

Establishing Korean nationalism with Anti-Japanese voices.

Another nationalist discourse practice from the comments is related to anti-Japanese discourse: "Well, he is reliable as the big physique which is different from the skinny Japanese players" (Ryu_Naver_Commenter 30), "Doing well in the international stage = doing better than Japanese" (Ryu_Naver_Commenter 31), "Sweep the board... do better than monkeys" (5 agrees and 1 disagree / Ryu_Naver_Commenter 32), "Do a

hundred and thousand times better than japs, Kuroda, Hiroki~!! Prove that he is not a great pitcher ^^ You are the strongest now” (3 agrees and 5 disagrees / Ryu_Naver_Commenter 33). In these ways, through setting up the old foe as a particular counterpart, the sport stars’ play turns to a specific mission, especially a national mission. Here the individual players from Japan are identified as the nation itself and the commenters in the Korean media reflecting the colonial memories reveal antagonism to the counterparts through ethnically racist expressions such as “monkeys” or “Japs”.

Diasporic nationalism: performing a Korean sports spokesperson.

Meanwhile, several commenters in the ESPN.com featured as a spokesperson for the Korean athletes. Against the dominantly undervalued athleticism of the three in the space, they refuted the negative evaluations. Below is a group of comments reflecting the spokesperson repertoire in the news story of Ryu in the ESPN.com:

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 4: FYI I've been living in Korea the past 18 years the quality of Korean baseball has gone up tremendously the past 10 years and players who go straight to the pros and light it up have become nearly extinct. Ryu is the exception. Led the league in wins, ERA, and K's his rookie year. His team, Hanhwa Eagles have been the worst team by far the past couple of years, so take that into account. Although he's had a few minor injuries the past 2 years, it probably has more to do with the fact that his team has been out of the race by April and the team was being careful. He still managed to pitch 182 innings in a 132 game season this year. He has a very smooth delivery and injury should not be too big of a concern.

Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 5: HEY PEOPLE. I WILL EXPLAIN THE TRUTH HERE. so read, please. Me a Korean living big chunk of my life in the States, the other chunk in Korea, I would have to say I know very much of baseball of

America and Korea. Simply put, RYU IS FOR REAL. I have watched him play in Korean Baseball League. There basically was no match. His fastball tops at 95, usually around 92~93. He does throw at 95 range when needed. and he is got the CONTROL with his fastball. He throws it right at the corner with pin point control. His biggest weapon is changeup with very good curve. Those who don't know, S Korea won the gold medal in Olympic. He totally blanked Cuban team, who is known to be the best among amateur players... So, no joke... believe in this guy. (10 fans like this)

The commenters above were not only defensive for Ryu but also tried to emphasize the internationally outstanding level of Korean professional baseball league. What is also interesting is that they started the dialogue with revealing their nationality and/or ethnicity as a Korean. Through accentuating their Koreanness or Korean-related identities, the commenters attempted to verify the authenticity of their claims and their right to make claims in the Western-dominated public space where the majority of the readers undervalued the athletic prowess and the following capital value of the Korean athletes.

The backlash: degrading Koreanness as Korean.

However, not all of the commenters who revealed their national identity as Korean highly valued the possibility of success of the players in the MLB: “Waste of money if you ask me... He's not worth this much. And I'm a Korean saying this... Too risky, a sub 3.00 ERA in KBL is meaningless. These are major league hitters, not KBL hitters...” (1 fan likes this / Ryu_ESPN_Commenter 6). Along the same line, some of the voices rather reflect anti-nationalist features despite the overflowing dialogues implying nationalist discourses in reader comments’ section. Following the news story of Ryu’s

entrance to the Dodgers in the Naver.com, a group of commenters below offered negative perspectives to the Korean baseball players in the MLB, defining the Korean players as *Chosun-in* (조선인: Chosun person).

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 34: Wow. The uniform never fits well to him. Lol. Don't be humiliated there, just play in South Korea~ Know your distance ~ (5 agrees and 26 disagrees).

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 35: Why do all of the Chosun people look like just this? Darvish, Kuroda, and Iwakuma are handsome (3 agrees and 20 disagrees).

Ryu_Naver_Commenter 36: Josenjins' ethnic feature: 1. The bubbled miserable ability, 2. Eat and run, 3. Ascribe to injury (1 agree and 17 disagrees).

The linguistic practice calling Koreans as Chosun-in (Chosun person) implies the colonial rule during the early 1900's in that the name of Korea was Chosun at that time. *Josenjin* is, additionally, a derogatory term that Japanese imperialists used to call Koreans during the colonial rule. With the storylines featuring inferior Koreans and Koreanness, in these ways, the addresses degrade the Koreans and the country to the status of colony. Accordingly, the symbolic Korean males are also descended to the subjugated position. Despite a large audiences disagreed with these dialogues, the anti-Korean national discourse is visible throughout the commenters' area.

To sum up, the transnational Korean players are constructed in a multi-faceted way through the negotiations of the Korean national discourses and anti-Korean national discourses in this unconstrained public space.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION: NEW FRAMES FOR SPORTING MASCULINITIES

This study explored how transnational Korean-born baseball players are discursively constructed in media representation, analyzing multi media sources including online newspapers and reader comments. Here diverse theoretical tools were applied to examine both US-based and South Korean-based data. Considering the theories, the key themes from the analyses, and also the characteristics by media genre, for this chapter, I envision a new frame to investigate transnational sporting masculinities. I first provide of a synthesized picture of transnational Korean sporting masculinities combining theories and thematic media discourses. Focusing on the links between distinctive thematic discourses with theories, I reformulate discourse sceneries as follows: masculinity vs. femininity, oversimplified Koreanness and over-accentuated Koreanness, the transnational racial structure, and multifaceted androcentric nationalism. Next I offer my arguments of sporting masculinities that emerged from the main research findings. Following the identified lessons, several limitations that became visible throughout this research experience are described with recommendations for a future study.

Envisioning New Framework for Korean Sporting Masculinities

In this section, I synthesize the identified thematic discourses on transnational Korean baseball players with scholarly theories and concepts. Based on the analytic

framework considering gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality, I illuminate the transnationally constructed multifaceted dimensions of Korean masculinities as represented in/through MLB players depiction in US and Korean media outlets.

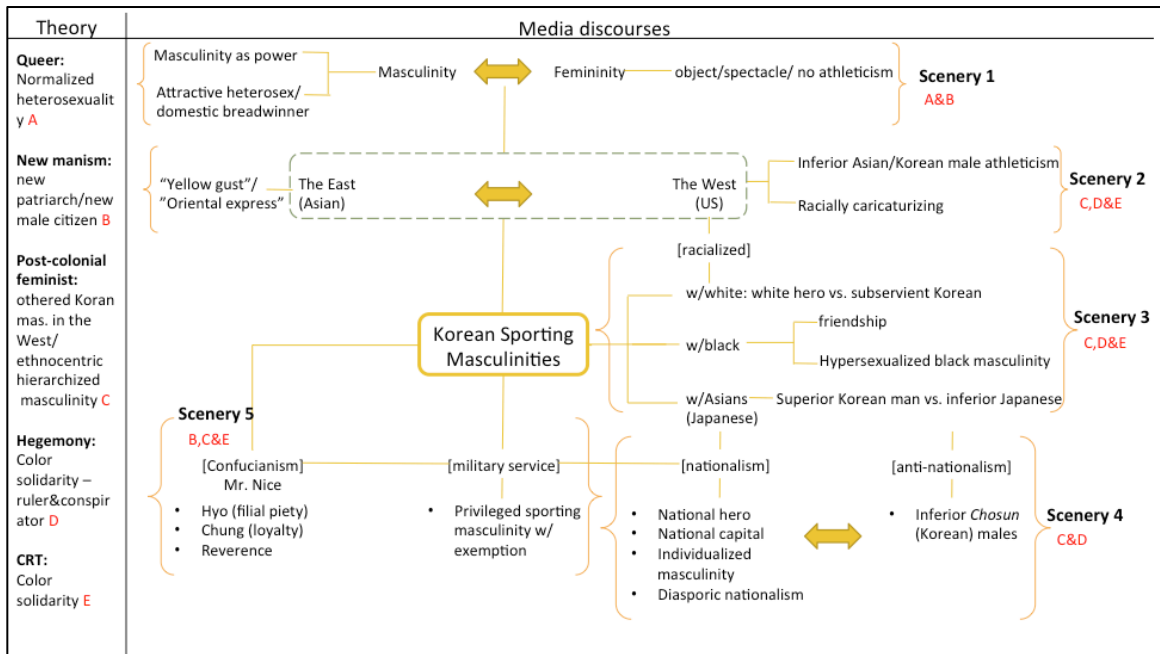


Figure 6. New Analytic Frame for Korean Sporting Masculinities

As the figure above shows, the theories are combined with the discourses in diverse ways. Focusing on the links between distinctive thematic discourses with theories, I discuss each reformulated discourse scenery to provide a synthesized understanding for transnational Korean masculinities. Here both online news articles/reader comments' section and US-based media/South Korean-based media are considered.

Scenery [1]: Masculinity vs. femininity.

Not surprisingly, female athletic bodies tend to be invisible or considered as the secondary or subordinate status. The anecdote between Park Chanho and his female cousin, Park Hyunsoon, KLPGA player, explicitly shows the inherent gender hierarchy in the media discourses, normalizing male sporting superiority while degrading the female athleticism (Messner, 1990). The story of Choo's wife also defines a Korean styled idolized woman. Through focusing on her image as a queen of assisting the husband, she is discursively solidified as an epitome of ideal wife. The logic that "the more a woman is domestically devoted, the more desirable she becomes" is also conspicuous in the quoted interview of Park Chanho mentioning his female type for the future wife: the one "who gives birth to babies well and takes good care of household chores" (CI, Aug. 26 1998). As exemplified, compulsory heteronormativity is still powerful through sport, especially mediated sport space (Birrell & McDonald, 2000). Adding to the devoted wife and mother narrative, women's appearance is also stood out from the media discourses. Illuminating Ha Wonmi, Choo's wife as a beautiful and younger-looking woman, women are simply reduced as an objectified spectacle (Trujillo, 1991). Adding to it, juxtaposed Choo's family orientation, as a soft patriarch model, also plays a crucial role in reinforcing the male status. Although newly performed masculinity or new manism has a potential to resist the rigid gender hierarchy, as Beynon (2002) argued, it functions as a new strategy to secure and expand male hegemony, rather than as a pro-feminist nurturer. Even though every aspect of Choo's life including the private wealth and athletic fame tends to be minimized to a family-oriented discourse, he never loses his privileged power

as a breadwinner for the rest of the family members. In these ways, the media discourses stereotypically standardize ideal male images and the female counterparts, and in the process, women are always identified as an auxiliary position.

Scenery [2] & [5]: Oversimplified Koreanness and over-accentuated Koreanness.

Let me recall the underlying assumption of postcolonialism that colonial period is still ongoing. Not as physical domination but as symbolic colonialism (Davis, 1997), Western power has an influence on the global weak through diverse cultural strategies. As the analysis of media texts in this study verified, one of the conspicuous strategies is othering, a marginalizing process (Ott & Mack, 2014). In so doing, the US-based media shape and define what Koreanness is and what their characteristics are (Said, 1978).

As the analysis verified, while the athletic prowess of the three is generally considered as an outstanding level in both US and South Korean online newspapers, the views of the majority from the reader comments' section of ESPN.com tend to degrade their athletic skills. Thus the discursively produced inferior athletic ability functions as a rationale of the claim that the three Koreans are overpaid by the MLB. In the reader comments' section, the dialogues among readers imply that not all of the male athletic bodies can be identified as the male power in spite of the transnational reputation.

With more offensive nuances, the Korean identity is oversimplified as Asians or falsely identified as other Asian ethnicities such as Chinese or Japanese. Despite the several voices attempting to recover their Koreanness, the blurred ethnicity in the public space shows that how a dominant discourse creates a powerless marginalized group and also how a common sense is constructed privileging certain voices (Gross, 2011). In

reporting Ryu Hyunjin's entrance to the LA Dodgers, for example, the reader comments' section was almost occupied by the Street Fighter jokes falsely racializing Hyunjin's national identity as Japanese. In reporting the fight between Park Chanho and Tim Belcher, in addition, the action of Park is racially mocked as taekwondo kick and his masculinity is questioned as "real men do not kick" (DP, Jun. 9 1999). In the process, the power of discourse degrades not only the masculine status of Korean males but also all of the Asian athletic males through the expanded generalization.

While the majority of the commenters in the ESPN.com simply generalize the three players as Asians reflecting negative nuance to interpret them, a number of discourses from Korean media strategically utilize the category of Asians for the purpose of manufacturing an excellent Korean male representative. The Asianness is often applied to reinforce their transnational status. That is, "the best among Asian baseball players" elevated their athletic superiority to the transnational level more than "the best among Korean baseball players". In the context, the favorable comments by the MLB on other Asians such as Japanese or Taiwanese are also considered as a positive sign to Korean players using the binding metaphor of yellow gust or the Oriental typhoon. Through uncritically embracing the western centered expressions such as yellow or the Orient, the Korean media coverage is complicit in the consent for the white hegemony (Gross, 2011).

While the oversimplified or blurred Koreanness is strategically used by the Korean media in order to accentuate the greatness of Korean baseball players as above, the hyper-visualized Koreanness is also highlighted through the Korean traditional values by Confucianism and the following cultural practices. As another discursive mechanism,

it is utilized to elevate global status of the three male players. As a good father, good son, good husband, and good Korean citizen as a national agent of capital, the newly constructed masculinities are secured and highlighted as a hegemonic Korean masculinity.

Scenery [3]: The transnational racial structure.

In the process of making transnational Korean male athletes, diversely formed racialization is also actively engaged. Drawing on critical race theory and hegemony theory, the media texts display the ways in which race and masculinity are differently and diversely intersected to construct a power hierarchy of transnational masculinity.

In the white-dominated sporting space of the MLB, white counterparts tend to be portrayed as “eternal idols” to the Korean players whereas non-white men of color are selectively juxtaposed with Korean players. For example, the teammates of Ryu Hyunjin in the Dodgers, Dominican-born Uribe and Cuban Puig are represented through the discourse of male comradeship. Through focusing on the cosmopolitan friendship network, the transnationality of Ryu Hyunjin is emphasized but it also plays a role in solidifying the unity only between the non-white players. While this relationship is favored embracing the dark skinned players as close friends of the Korean player, the portrayal of Magic Johnson with Ryu Hyunjin, the co-owner of the Dodgers, tends to be racially and sexually offensive. His blackness seems discursively produced as a superior masculinity, a basketball legend, but the excessive obsession to the black skin color by the Korean audiences rather simplifies his subjectivity as an exotic and barbaric male. The joke linking his last name *Johnson* with phallus and the pathological discourses that reflect his HIV positive diagnosis even more sexually marginalizes his male status. Even

though Ryu's Korean male athleticism is inferiorly constructed compared to Johnson's one, the exaggerated blackness of Johnson rather plays a role in normalizing the Korean sporting male bodies. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argued, hegemonic masculinity is subject to change according to circumstances.

Although postcolonialism is often applied to a study that scrutinizes the hegemonic west, the theory also provides a useful lens to take a look at a relationship between Korea and Japan, another geopolitical dichotomy which is contextualized by colonial history in the early 19th century. When Korean players are juxtaposed with the old foe, Japanese players, ethnicity of the Korean players is remarkably emphasized. Through comparing an individual Korean player with a Japanese player, the discourse is expanded to the national group of the players and further to the nation itself. That is, a victory of Korean pitcher against a Japanese hitter is equally identified as a victory of Korea against Japan. Reflecting the historical colonial relationship between two countries, the selective expansion or reduction of racialization is strategically contributed to manufacture the transnationally outstanding Korean players.

In the transnational racial map that features new imperialism, whiteness is preserved as an impregnable standing (Hirose & Kei-ho Pih, 2010). The normalized white masculinities and the white dominated sporting sphere did not engage in the competent relationships between non-white people of color. Thus the multi-directional discourse production on the non-white males is considered as an attempt to elect the second leader position in the male hierarchy. Through the intentional and/or unintentional

support, the white dominant group maintains the legitimacy while the non-white male groups are functioned as a subordinate status.

Scenery [4]: Multifaceted androcentric nationalism.

Focusing on the Korean voices, especially, the three Korean players are often idolized as a national icon, sport hero, and Korean baseball legend. In the Korean newspapers, Korean nativeness is narrated as the key for their outstanding play in MLB, and their private wealth is also re-interpreted within a discourse of a national agent of capital. Reflecting the postcolonial relationship between Korea and Japan, in particular, the androcentric nationalism is more emphasized when the Korean players are juxtaposed with Japanese players. Situating sport as a quasi-war to Koreans, Korean ethnocentric racist discourses against Japanese players are observed among the commenters in Naver.

Despite the dominant trans/nationalist discourses symbolizing the baseball players as a national icon with the outstanding athleticism, some commenters in Naver evaluated the athleticism of the Korean players as subordinate to the western male bodies. The sort of backlashed discourses against excessive patriotic narratives are assimilated with the perspectives of colonial imperialists and supported the legitimacy by the western hegemonic voice. Accordingly, the symbolic Korean males are descended to the subjugated position. The postcolonial theory also effectively illuminates diasporic nationalism in the media texts. Considering the transnational nuances, Korean voices function as a spokesperson for the Korean players in reader comments' section of ESPN.com. As the analyzed media texts verify, drawing upon a postcolonial perspective,

both transnational and local contexts are foregrounded so that the inherent cross-cultural nature around Korean masculinities is effectively unpacked.

Collapsing the Sceneries: Revealing Transnational Subjectivities

In this section, I offer my original arguments that emerged from this study pursuing new understandings of sporting masculinities. In what follows, I identify three major lessons that I earned from this study: (a) new understanding of hegemonic masculinity; (b) theorizing transnational through sport; and (c) reader comments as new public space; and discuss how my researcherly choice and process intervene on the studies of sporting masculinities in transnational contexts.

First, in a global era, the concept hegemonic masculinity is at times considered inadequate to describe the many “preferred” masculinities that transnational subjects are expected and allowed to perform. In 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt reviewed studies that applied the concept of hegemonic masculinity and then reformulated the concept in contemporary terms. In the reformulation process, the authors pointed out the changeability of gender hierarchies. They argued, “hegemonic masculinities therefore came into existence in *specific circumstances* [emphasis added] and were open to historical change” (p.832-833), resisting a usage of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed and essentialist model. Relating to the *specific circumstances*, I would like to emphasize the significance of *relationally* produced masculinities through a bit more deconstructive approach. Diversely racialized men and masculinities in transnational contexts from this study demonstrate this point well. For example, Korean sporting masculinities are constructed ambivalently with black males. Given the example of Ryu Hyunjin and Juan

Uribe, they are discursively produced through friendly color solidarity or racial magnetism (Chon-Smith, 2006). The emphasis on the “global” relationship of Ryu Hyunjin upholds his globally universal fame. However, when Ryu is juxtaposed with Magic Johnson, the co-owner of LA Dodgers, Johnson’s black corporeality is excessively emphasized in a hyper-sexualized context. As LaFrance and Rail (2000) argued, hypermasculine sexuality is always mediated by the blackness of the black athletes. Following the white supremacist fantasies of phallogendered black men (hooks, 1992; Rudolph, 2010; Douglas, 2014), the black masculinity is here defined as “postmodern savage” (LaFrance & Rail, 2000, p.90). Even though they are situated in the same sporting context, the hegemonic power is formulated differently according to who are situated and who look at the relation. As the media examples of Korean-black masculinities verified, therefore, what is important is to take a look at the multifaceted confluences of contemporary masculinities, focusing on the diverse trans/cultural factors and the power dynamics. This concept of relational hegemonic masculinity, thus, has a potential to resist a solidified Western-centered gender hierarchy.

Second, drawing on a postcolonial and transnational theory, the existing dichotomous center-periphery or top-down model is not valid to understand the formation of transnational subjectivities (Morrell & Swart, 2005). Although the macroscopic approach has a power to debunk the imperialistic ambitions of the West displaying the asymmetrical power relations between the East and the West (Said, 1978), the binary perspective may miss the constructed subjectivities at the micro-level such as ethnocentric relationships between South Korea and Japan. Differences are generated not

only between cultures but also within cultures so it is important to look at how masculinity is formulated here and there with multilateral viewpoints (Vasquez del Aguila, 2014). Not only that, there are diversely overlapped border domains between US and Korea. Transnatinality between two geographical regions displays myriad fusions so that it is crucial to note that the formulations of transnational subjectivities inevitably feature plurality and hybridity. In this respect, the dichotomous approach that demarcates the transnational contexts to the geographical regions should be carefully applied. Rather than featuring two particular geographical areas separately, for this study, I located the mediated athletic bodies in a multifaceted manner considering the diversely connected junctures. Although the territorially demarcated milieu and the generated cultural differences should not be neglected, in the new transnational mediascapes, I consider that the division by nation is becoming blurred. For example, it is not uncommon to see that the news articles from US media are re-reported by South Korean media and vice versa. Of course, it is still important to look at what stories are selected and how they are reproduced by each national media context since there can be underlying power ideologies affecting the new construction between two countries. Given the more frequent interchanges of the media contents between two countries based on the influence by the World Wide Web and the obscured representation of each original voice, it should be more careful to claim that the Korean-based media discourses only reflects Korean perspectives and US-based media discourses only produces US perspectives. For example, the Dong-A Ilbo published articles about Choo Shinsoo, titled “Reporter Anthony’s Story of Choo Shinsoo”, serially for 3 years from February 26 2011 to March

27 2014. Anthony Castrovine was introduced as a reporter in MLB.com who closely covers all of the games of the Indians where Choo belonged. In these articles, the voice is naturally assumed solely from Anthony, the US journalist. Considering that the texts are translated from English to Korean, however, it is not easy to distinguish the original voice. The merged narrative practice also brings about the importance of translation in a bilingual media study (Kim, 2013).

In terms of the reader comments' section, in addition, the majority of the commenters in the South Korean-based Naver.com can be assumed as a Korean since the dominant language is Korean which is mostly used by Koreans only. However, the found one English comment in the Naver.com implies that the dangerousness of the hasty judgment. Considering English as the universal language of the world and the global influences of ESPN.com, additionally, it becomes trickier to merely presume the commenters in the US-based ESPN.com as Americans only. Compared to the Naver.com, the ESPN.com has featured as a more multinational mediascapes including mixed identities. For these reasons, again, the mediated Korean sporting bodies are reconstructed by genre in this study considering the diversely connected junctures of race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality in the context of transnationalism. In sum, I claim scholars must consistently seek frameworks that properly encompass the inherent cross-cultural nature of transnationalism and the reproduced subjectivities through it.

Third, I reconsider the value of online reader comments' section for generating new public discourses and the methodological intervention of this study. In the structure of media production, although scripted news articles are considered as production area

while reader comments' section is defined as consumption area, as the analyses illuminate, the reader commenters are also engaged in the media production as another active producers through the unconstrained discursive communication. That is, the reading is not only a mere response to the news articles, but also another crucial area for manufacturing public discourse (Plymire, 2005; Ahn, 2011; Loke, 2011). In contrast to the strictly institutionalized media production by newspaper companies, in a substantially emancipated public domain, the participants share their unconstrained expression. Given the somewhat anonymous nature of the comments space, it features more often expressive of violent rhetoric and proposed actions than the writings by journalists. Based on the Internet mechanism of World Wide Web, the online reader comments' section generates an emancipated communication beyond the geographical limitations and the transnational accessibility embraces diverse public voices on the globe.

So the electronic nature of the space provides an important communication landscape to explore transnationally constructed subjectivities. Also, given that news articles have one-way directed media production, the reader comments' section can be defined as two-ways or even multi-ways communication. The diversely constructed threaded discourses for the comments play a crucial role in amplifying the public's voices. In the process, not surprisingly, power relationship is generated. Given the unconstrained nature of the reader comments' section, the legacies of imperialism and colonialism are "freely" taken up by the commenters. In the background, some voices obtain more supports while some others are neglected as less or not important opinions. For example, in the reader comments of ESPN.com following the news story of Ryu Hyunjin's sign

with the Dodgers, the Street Fighter game joke which was started by one person was dramatically amplified and finally dominated the comments' section more than 50 percentage. In the public space, thus, Ryu's image is mockingly simplified to one Asian avatar image, not even as an athletic body. And the solidified Asian race blurs both his Korean ethnicity and masculine image.

Nevertheless, I claim that the unconstrained public space has a potential to function as a resistant discursive power without the constraints of political correctness legitimizing the global hegemonic voice (Loke, 2011). A use of non-English in the transnational media space, Korean language for this study, can be considered as one of the attempts to potentiate the subjugated person or group drawing on the postcolonial mindset. In this way, relying on the inherent transnational nature, reader comments get at the more nuanced and lived reality of transnational subjectivities.

Limitation and Recommendation

Throughout the research process, I realized four limited dimensions of this media discourse study: image analysis, demographics of commenters, the threaded comments, and producers' perspectives. For the purpose of suggesting further directions, let me explain my reflection on the found limitations.

Firstly, the images in the newspapers were not analyzed, combining with the texts in this study, except one image that generated a number of comments following the Naver news story of Ryu Hyunjin's joining to the Dodgers. Compared to traditional paper-typed newspapers, one of the distinctive features of online newspapers is that it is more frequently combined with two-dimensional or three-dimensional sources such as

pictures, illustrations or videos. The images do not merely create supplements for the writing. As a purposive selection, it strongly reflects the inherent assumption of the author and the purpose of the writing. Thus, audiences are inevitably influenced by the selected images with the texts in readding the newspapers. For this study, however, I delimited the scope of the data as linguistic texts only in order to explore how the texts significantly contribute to construct public discourses through media. For a future study, however, a synthetic approach that looks at the media data combining images and linguistic texts will offer a new perspective to consider the changing nature of the media space engaging in a new inquiry.

The next reflection is about analyzing the reader comments' section. As a relatively recent research trend, the new space opened a new methodological challenge to me: collecting demographics and the authenticity. For this study, I did not collect demographic information of the commenters and also decided to keep the information of the selected commenters as confidential using numbers to cite them for the following reasons. One of the major reasons is that it was limited to ask for assent to use what they said in each website. The majority of readers in the Naver use created nicknames or closed ID so the personal information is left confidential. In terms of the ESPN.com, although the most of the commenters used their Facebook accounts which are linked to their original Facebook page, the scope of disclosing the personal information was different person to person. It was also connected to the authenticity issue of the commenters' identification. With name, email address, and birthday only, it is quick and

simple to create a Facebook account. That is, it is possible to create a Facebook account not necessarily for the user, instead represent somebody else through it.

This is not only confined to the Facebook and the linked ESPN.com but a number of social network spaces share a similar mechanism. Considering the nature of the cyber space, some may argue that it is not even available to attempt to identify “who they are” through observation only. But given that the demographics of the online participants can become another significant pillar to analyze hegemonic relationships inherent in the media data, it should not be neglected as a merely inaccessible area in media research. In this context, it is vital for scholars to think about how to deal with and secure the authenticity of the participants and the following trustworthiness of the studies without violating research ethics.

Further, in this study, the interactive relation between the original posting and the threaded comments was not analyzed systematically. Also, the analysis on the marks indicating agreement or disagreement was not conducted. Although the meanings of like/agreement or disagreement were intermittently included to the analysis of the comments, the intertwined relationship between them and the multiplicities were not considered as an in-depth analysis. As I claimed above, this new media discourse space should be investigated through the attempts of diverse new methodologies and theories so that it will be getting clear about what realities this electronic environment reflects.

In addition, given that the media discourses are produced in the interrelational contexts of production, the text itself, and consumption, this study’s analysis focused more on the produced texts and consumption rather than the producers’ perspectives. The

producers' perspectives can play a crucial role in the process of discourse production, illuminating the dimension of discourse practice. By inquiring about the institutional characteristics, for instance, it is possible to look at how the producers contribute to shape the media discourses of masculinity where diverse sociocultural ideologies interact. For a follow-up study, in this context, mixed research methods such as survey or interviews can be adopted to examine the demographics and the viewpoints of the producers.

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