The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is perhaps the most popular tourist attraction for visitors to south Korea, but south Koreans are themselves barred from the area. The DMZ draws hundreds of thousands of tourists each year, the vast majority from the United States and Japan, including major American political figures and celebrities (e.g., in 1989 the list of visitors included then Vice President Dan Quayle and the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders). Much of what is in the DMZ has been left untouched since the armistice in 1953; thus, in addition to expansive military bases, the visitor sees decaying buildings, roads, locomotives, and farmland. As a tour destination, the DMZ has become a kind of "living museum" of the Cold War (Cumings 1992) that, quite explicitly, represents the north Korean state as an embodiment of evil ("the real enemy," as one American military officer expressed it to me), and the north Korean people as automatons who blindly follow the cult of "Kimilsungism." The DMZ is, like many ruins, a fragment that has come to stand for a particular totalizing discourse on national division. It is here in the DMZ, rather than anywhere else in Korea, that tourists expect to hear the complete story of Korea's tragic division. And, it is here that the differences between the north and south are forcefully and explicitly represented by the United States military and the United Nations Command.

The DMZ stands as an important exhibition for critical analysis because its focus on difference (the divided nation) rather than unity (the Korean nation) appears to oppose the prevailing tendency in south Korean discourse on north Korea, which attempts to minimize difference in order to emphasize unity. Over the past forty years, since the Korean War and partition, the two Koreas have indeed developed different political, economic, and social systems. Yet, both the north and south Korean people and governments are dedicated to the belief that they are a single nation that must be reunified. Despite the many differences between the two, Koreans commonly state that Koreans are one people, "one race" (kat'ün tongp'o). Every south Korean presidential administration has supported reunification as a sacred goal, south Korean churches have reunification prayer circles that run unbroken twenty-four hours a day, and the north Korean government has said that its people are willing to die in another civil war for the sake of unification.

In a post-Cold War global society, in which the various nations of the world are increasingly interconnected, politically and economically, the split between north and south Korea seems an anomaly. Little is known about how this remarkable rift, and a persistent vision and hope for unity, are written into the consciousness of ordinary citizens—in part because there are few places in south Korea, other than the DMZ, where the north is explicitly and publicly represented.

Although visits to the DMZ are usually permitted only to non-Korean citizens and the Korean military stationed there, south Koreans are well aware of images that are widely available in the media and in books. Certainly, the thousands of Korean military personnel who serve in the DMZ understand its purpose, and all Koreans are acutely conscious that the DMZ marks the border between north and south. Because the ordinary citizen has no access to the DMZ, and no communications whatsoever with the north (including letters, telephones, telegrams, radio, and television), south Koreans are all the more receptive to propaganda and to the Cold War discourse framed by the military at the DMZ. In this situation, the DMZ, along with the absence of south Korean
public representations of the north, threatens to alienate Koreans from their national history, and from the reunification process, and to usurp their power to represent themselves.

The DMZ poses a challenging classificatory problem in the emerging anthropological literature on museum exhibitions (Karp and Lavine 1991) and, more specifically, “living museums” (Gable and Handler 1993; Kratz and Karp 1993). As a museum, the DMZ is difficult to classify because it has been constructed by foreigners for foreigners rather than for citizens, and because it exhibits the nation and national division solely by the detour of the Other. The DMZ also defies the conventional temporal character of national museum representation. Steiner (this issue) has noted that national museums fall roughly into two types. The first, forward-looking, projects an image of a technologically advanced future (for example, the National Air and Space Museum, or, in Korea, the Taejon Exposition); the second, backward-looking, projects an image of a glorified past (for example, the many national museums located at ancient palaces in Korea). The DMZ defies such a classification because it seems to be an anti-national, rather than national museum. National museums exist because nations exist; the DMZ exists because the nation no longer exists. It looks neither to a Golden Age (unless one harbors a nostalgia for the Cold War) nor to a bright future, but rather to an ongoing tension between a series of oppositions, between “Kimilsungism” and the free world, between communism and democracy, whose resolutions lie only in their extinction. What we can say with certainty is that the DMZ could not exist without the concept of the nation, or more accurately, the divided nation.

As a “living museum” the DMZ’s representation of the “real” justifies national division—and, therefore, the continued existence of the DMZ—by presenting tourists with those aspects of nations and states that are seldom explicitly exhibited in national museums. The “real” Korea at the DMZ is not the idyllic past, or the “distinctive flavor” of another culture, but fear, risk, danger, power, aggression, and enemies. Many living museums, from colonial Williamsburg in the United States (Gable and Handler 1993) to the Korean Folk Village (just outside Seoul in Kyönggi-do), highlight the pleasures of national histories and citizenship, and the DMZ is no exception. But the DMZ reinforces national identity by the negative. The pleasure of the tour lies in its reminder that visitors are not north Korean or south Korean, and in its implicit acknowledgement and legitimation of the powers under which the visitors live and which protect them from the evils of other countries. The DMZ links war and patriotism, evil and good, violence and nationalism. It leads us to conclude that this exhibition, like many exhibitions of “other” countries (see Kratz and Karp 1993:36), tells us more about the visitors than about the visited.

One final difference to ponder: whereas the Walt Disney Company, and other creators of exhibitions and living museums, acknowledge that their museums are representations (Wines 1994), the DMZ is presented as “reality” where visitors can see the “real enemy.” The appeal of “reality” is so great that when Disney recently proposed an American history theme park in northern Virginia, the idea was quickly criticized as synthetic history, a fantasyland of representations. Robert Stern, an architect who sits on the board of the Walt Disney Company, defended the park, saying:

You go to see where your congressman and senator do their work, and in that sense your trip is an experience of the actualities of government. . . . But you also spend time looking at monuments which of course are representations. Then you go to museums in which you see real things—paintings, sculptures—but they’re not just for themselves but as representations of the power and might and imagination and whatever of American culture. (Quoted in Wines 1994:24)

Stern is only half right. A more important question is whether American visitors to museums and living museums are prepared to acknowledge that the concept “reality,” as one finds it in the DMZ, is itself a representation.

The state and the people

Choi Jang Jip writes that immediately following national division in 1953, Korean nationalism “became transformed into a statism that privileged anti-communism over unification” (1993:23). Until recently, national security laws and anti-communist statutes in south Korea inhibited free speech (and press) about the north; south Korean governments bolstered their power by promoting a Cold War discourse that vilified the north as the enemy and thus justified a strong authoritarian state that censored the flow of information to its citizens. In part as a result of south Korean government propaganda, the Korean language literature on national division was influ-
enced by the anti-communist notion that the state is the sole independent variable in determining north Korean history. In south Korea, any suggestion that it is the "people" of north Korea who create differences between north and south might be considered an anti-national act because it legitimates the north as a distinct and separate country. Why talk about the "north Koreans," or exhibit them as a separate people, when they and south Koreans are culturally one and the same? Political scientist Glenn Paige thus accepts that Korea was divided into two equally "matched" test groups that were then "subjected to different kinds of political stimuli... because of its high degree of social homogeneity, [Korea] offers the social scientist an instance of quasi-experimental conditions on a vast scale rarely observable outside the experimental laboratory" (1970:152). The split between the people and the state has made it possible for south Koreans to develop a discourse about the north that attributes agency and power only to the state and explains differences between the people of the north and south as products of one man, Kim II Sung. South Koreans have been able to emphasize the unity of the people by stressing the differences between the states. As a result, people have been virtually erased from south Korean discourse on the north, and the United States military and United Nations Command at the DMZ have become a central vehicle through which the media gets information on north Korea. For this reason, nearly all images of the north that appear in the south Korean media fit well into the Cold War discourse about the evils of the north Korean state.

Media critics in the more liberal Korean newspapers complain that, even today, when one occasionally hears something about north Korean people, it almost always comes from defectors who are unequivocally anti-north and wish to publicize their loyalty to the south Korean state. These defectors perpetuate the view that north Korean ideas and behavior are wholly determined by the actions and ideology of the Kim II Sung state (Yong Muk Choi 1993:9). One famous example of the synecdoche in which north Korea is collapsed into the state is offered by President Roh Tae Woo's decision, in April 1989, to pardon Kim Hyun Hee, the north Korean woman terrorist who was convicted of planting the bomb that, in 1987, killed 115 passengers of Korean Air Lines flight 858. Roh said that she was an innocent victim of a state that brainwashed its people, and that responsibility rested with Kim II sung and Kim Jong il (see Hyun Hee Kim 1993:173).

The people of north Korea are also absent from south Korean fiction. Novels, poems, and short stories that fall under the category pundan munhak (division literature) do not explicitly represent north Korea or the people of north Korea, but rather dwell on the tragic consequences of division for south Korean life. The absence of images and exhibits on the north and the Korean war is remarkable for a country whose "paramount goal" (chisang kwachae) is the reunification (t'ong-il) of the nation. Nations often trace their histories and ideals persuasively through museums, exhibits, ruins, and sites of pilgrimage and festival that contain the fragments of past tragedies. But in south Korea, visitors do not see any bombed or burned buildings, and except for some photographs, museums show few visible fragments of the Korean War. Indeed, the south Korean government opened an exhibit specifically on the Korean War only in June 1994, as part of a large museum devoted generally to the long history of military conflicts that involved Korea within or outside the peninsula. In 1989, then President Roh Tae Woo had attempted to pass through congress a plan to build a large museum to the Korean War in Itaewon, but was temporarily prevented by an outpouring of public opinion against its construction, expressed in various media, especially the more liberal newspapers and journals. A museum with a section devoted to the Korean War was eventually approved, and completed on June 10, 1994, but the project is still a very contentious issue.

Most Koreans are ashamed of their civil war and national division, and this shame extends to such things as north Korean terrorism and human rights violations. They still feel that, for all the differences that have come about over the past forty years, north Koreans and south Koreans are both Koreans—one people, one race (kat'ün tongp'o, han kyorae). This shame was evident in the public reaction to the proposed Korean War Memorial, which people felt would demean the Korean heritage by glorifying war and the military. Moreover, nearly all south Koreans think of their country of citizenship not as a nation but only as one state (perhaps the only legitimate one) in a nation that is still one. Division is thus an aberration of more than "half of ten thousand years" (pan man nyŏn) of unity, as well as a non-Korean, imperialist, Cold War construction. Many Koreans would look upon any exhibition of the processes and consequences of national division as an acknowledgment that the division is final. And, because ruins invoke the past, any display or memorializing of ruins would
transform what many feel is only a temporary division into a permanent one. In a sense that would be true, for in fact north and south Korean have not officially ended their civil war, but only continue to recognize a 1953 armistice agreement to withdraw their military forces behind a Demilitarized Zone. As Jonathan Boyarin puts it, in another context, “this past which is not yet mastered is not over” (1994:33).

For Koreans, the past is still happening, and division is not an event that once happened, but is an ongoing and creative process of construction. Yet, in a significant way, the DMZ is implicated in that process as an apparatus of production whose representational claims are powerfully made to hundreds of thousands of tourists each year at the border between north and south.

“The scariest place on earth”

The distance between one place and another often depends on the ability to move between them. For most south Koreans, north Korea seems far away even though it is only seventy kilometers from Seoul. A visit to the DMZ corrects that impression. When, in 1993, President Bill Clinton referred to the DMZ as “the scariest place on earth” (Korea Herald, July 11, 1993, sec. 3:1), he was perhaps referring to the thousands of north Korean troops poised only one-and-a-half hours by car or, as Koreans sometimes say, by tank, from Seoul. The foreigners who go to the DMZ, and the many Koreans who travel to its entrance, and who are well versed in the geography of Korea, are usually astonished by the proximity of the DMZ to downtown Seoul. The proximity evokes fear, and this adds to the excitement of the tour and justifies the high prices (U.S. $55.00) and the long waiting-lists tourists must endure in order to go to the DMZ. As travelers take the short trip from Seoul, they pass under bridges rigged to explode and block the road in the event of an invasion by the north. Tour bus operators, reading a script provided by the state-run Korea Travel Bureau, remind them that, without the blockades, north Korean tanks could sweep into Seoul in a flash. As one nears Panmunjom, just five kilometers south of the 38th parallel, the buildings of Seoul’s outskirts give way to vast stretches of land, and the story of Korea’s division takes on a deadly serious tone.

The narrative of Korean history recited by tour leaders effectively groups north Korea with all previous invaders of Korea. North Korea appears as the final invader, following some nine hundred previous invasions led by the Chinese, Japanese, and others. North Koreans started the Korean War, we are told, killing three million people and destroying Korea’s autonomy and integrity as a nation. We are reminded that 2.2 million people (including several thousand Koreans) died in nine years of the Vietnam War, whereas three million people (mostly Koreans) lost their lives in just three years of the Korean War. Since the armistice, the narrator goes on to explain, north Koreans have continued to murder Koreans from north and south, including seventeen south Korean ministers and government officials as the result of a north Korean bomb planted in Rangoon in 1983, and 115 civilians killed in the 1987 terrorist bombing of Korean Air Lines flight 858. At the end of the litany of terrorist acts and human rights abuses committed by the north Korean government, the narrator reports that more than twenty-five percent of Seoul residents are wŏlnam-min (literally “people who came to the south”), who must see their relatives again, and that Korea will be reunified, no matter how long it takes or what sacrifices must be endured.

The DMZ extends far to the east and west of Panmunjom, where foreign tourists enter the zone. Korean citizens are prohibited from entering the DMZ (unless they obtain a special government pass that is seldom issued for fear that visitors will defect) and travel instead to Paju, where they can look into the DMZ across the Imjin River. The DMZ is 240 kilometers long and four kilometers wide, divided in half by the military demarcation line. Ironically, the area labeled “demilitarized” is, in fact, inhabited by a large number of military personnel and weapons. Panmunjom, also called the United Nations Command Security Force—Joint Security Area (UNCSF-JSA), contains expansive military bases, with hundreds of personnel from twenty nations, about sixty percent of whom are Korean soldiers. Military analysts believe that most of the military forces and equipment on south and north Korean soil—some 5,000 tanks, 1,200 jet fighters, and 1.7 million soldiers, north and south combined—are located near or along the DMZ (U.S. Department of Defense 1990; Byoung-Lo Philo Kim 1992:157). The soldiers stationed in the JSA are reputed to be the toughest of all Korean and American military, having served in specialty sections such as Delta Force and Ranger Units. Soldiers in the Quick Reaction Force, stationed closest to the truce line, are said to sleep in their fatigues and boots, and eat evening meals under infrared light so that their eyes will need no readjustment in the event of a north Korean attack. More than 30,000 U.S. military personnel are based throughout the rest of south Korea.
With the exception of the JSA and two small villages, Taesong-dong south of the military demarcation line, and Kijong-dong, north of the line, the DMZ and its immediate surrounding area are unoccupied. About forty-seven families whose parents and grandparents owned land in the DMZ before the Korean War live in Taesong-dong (called Freedom Village by the JSA staff) and are permitted to enter the zone to cultivate their farms of rice and ginseng. The Korean government has placed some special restrictions on Taesong-dong residents: they must return to their town at sundown, where they have an 11:00 p.m. curfew; only those people who live in Taesong-dong for 240 or more nights per year are permitted to continue living there; and women from Taesong-dong who marry men from outside the village are prohibited from bringing their husbands there, though men who marry outside the village may bring their wives.

According to JSA staff, although there are fifteen to twenty workers who travel daily to do maintenance work in Kijong-dong, no one actually lives in its many two-, three-, and four-story buildings. The JSA staff refer to the village as Propaganda Village because, until Kim II Sung's death in July 1994, there was a loudspeaker atop a large tower in the center of the village, which, after sunset, broadcast speeches by and about Kim II Sung. Because there are few people in the DMZ, it has become a sanctuary for endangered species, like the Manchurian crane and other rare birds.

Panmunjŏm is divided by the military demarcation line. The north Korean government building, P'ungmugak, stands on one side of the line; on the other side is the south Korean Freedom House, which serves both as a lookout post for tourists and as the forward administrative offices of the Republic of Korea's Red Cross. Between the two buildings are several conference houses where negotiations were conducted between north and south Korea, and between north Korea and the United Nations Command; they are now frequently used for daily meetings of the joint observer team. The truce line runs through the center of each house, where conference tables are placed. Microphones are placed in the center of each conference table, and the microphone wires run directly along the truce line.

**Division and the politics of fear and risk**

Before touring the conference houses, Korean tour guides, who are not allowed into the DMZ, are replaced by American military officers who lead the tours and distribute waivers that must be signed by all tourists before entering the DMZ. This waiver prohibits them from litigation in the event that they are wounded or killed in Panmunjŏm. The document, called "Visitors Declaration" (UNC REG 551-5), is long and contains passages that clearly express the danger and risks of the DMZ:

The visit to the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom will entail entry into a hostile area and possibility of injury or death as a direct result of enemy action. . . . Although incidents are not anticipated, the United Nations Command, the United States of America, and the Republic of Korea, cannot guarantee the safety of visitors and may not be held accountable in the event of a hostile act. . . . Fraternization, including speaking or any association with personnel from the Korean People's Army/Chinese People's Volunteers (KPA/CPV) side, is strictly prohibited . . . . Visitors will not point, make gestures, or expressions which could be used by the North Korean side as propaganda material against the United Nations Command. . . . If any incidents occur, remain calm, and follow instructions issued by security personnel.

All visitors are then shuttled into a hall for a thirty-minute lecture on the history of the Demilitarized Zone, where they are again told about the history of north Korea's aggression. The lectures, standardized for all tourists, trace the general political history of East Asia and the Korean War, but the main emphasis is on stories of north Korea's brutality and aggression: the Panmunjŏm axe murder of 1976, the shooting death of PFC Chang Myung Ki by north Koreans when he tried to help a Soviet defector cross to the south in 1984, the "unlawful" crossing of the border by a female south Korean student, Im Su Kyung, and the discovery of four tunnels constructed by the north Koreans between 1974 and 1989. Many of the words and phrases used are provocative, such as "no man's land," "the brainwashed and aggressive north Koreans," and "the enemy." This sort of language is meant to alarm visitors and heighten the entertainment value of Panmunjŏm; it is similar to the language used in published tour guides and articles on travel to Korea. For example, a travel article published in *Modern Maturity*, the main organ of the American Association for Retired Persons, starts: "The Korean DMZ has its allure—and its chills—for risk-taking tourists out to experience a 'tingle of reality'" (Barnard 1989:63).

After the lecture on one tour, we were taken to a bridge that connects the two sides of the DMZ, called by the JSA the "Bridge of No Return." It has served as
a primary entryway (or exit) for former prisoners of war, political prisoners, and defectors in various United Nations transfers, such as Operation Big Switch and Operation Comeback. Looking out from the bridge across the DMZ and toward the hills and mountains of north Korea, tourists witness one aspect of the opposition between north and south: the symbolic violence of dueling representation. From the south Korean side, tourists can see large white wooden Korean characters facing the posts of Korean and United Nations military personnel. The slogans read: panmikuguk ("Anti-Americanism will save the nation!"), namchosŏn-ŭn mikut shikminji ("The south is an American colony!"), and ryŏnbangkuk-ka ch'angsol ("Build a confederation!"). Tourists are not told that south Koreans also taunt the north. Bruce Cumings, who has seen the DMZ from the side of the north, tells of a south Korean billboard, placed in view of the north Korean military, depicting a half-clad woman standing next to a new Hyundai automobile (1992:226).

The power of the north-south division is so strong, and the role of the cardinal directions to constitute notions of difference in the "geographic imagination" is so taken for granted (Duncan and Ley 1993:13), that, as one looks out from the bridge, or from any point in the DMZ, the impression is always that one is looking north. Although, just to the east of the bridge, the truce line running east-west takes a more than ninety-degree turn to the south as it proceeds through P'anmunjom's conference houses, visitors perceive that eastern portion of the DMZ to be north. The gaze to the north is, perhaps, meant to empower and delight viewers because they can feel secure while looking into a forbidden place. But empowerment in the DMZ is certainly illusory. I am reminded here of Louis Marin's essay on the view from atop the Sears Tower of Chicago (1993:400-2), in which he remarks that, while the tower leads the spectator to assume a dominating position from which he can cast a collecting and totalizing gaze, he is constrained to see the city only from the cardinal directions, and to see the tower itself as constituted only by an above and a below. In the imaginary mastery, or panopticon, of the observation deck, the spectator remains the object of another gaze. The tourist at the DMZ comes to believe that he is the agent of the gaze, that he is always looking north, and that there is no one on the other side looking back. As in many societies, the dominant want to believe that they can see others but that the others cannot see them (see hooks 1992:340).

Back at the center of P'anmunjom, the officer shatters that vision and by doing so actually creates the desire to escape the gaze. On one tour, he led us to the central conference house and pointed to the truce line, about fifteen feet in front of him, and said, "There are north Koreans looking at you now." As the viewers now realized they were also the viewed, the officer continued: "You cross that line and there's nothing I can do for you. You'll have to face them. You come here at your own risk. You cross that line and you're gone." After the tour, at a lunch at Camp Boniface, the United Nations base camp in the DMZ, I was seated with two Italian priests who reflected on the soldier's words and remarked on how easy it would be to defect (escape?) to the north. Remarkably, we discovered that we had friends in common, Italian priests I had met while doing fieldwork in central Africa. One priest referred to our friends still living in the Ituri forest by saying that their work as missionaries is all about going into isolated and distant places where others refuse to go. Why not go to north Korea? We all agreed that the tour leader had at once both threatened us not to go to north Korea, and dared us to do so. If we stepped across the line, we did so at our own risk.

Our "own risk"? The phrase conveys an important message about the power of the military, and the power of borders, over citizens. It exerts the soldier's authority, and that of the establishment he represents, by defining its parameters. We are encouraged to acknowledge the dangers of north Korea, and the risks involved in crossing borders, and especially to appreciate the powers that currently protect us. But to assert the possibilities of the soldier's power to protect is also to assert its limits. By assuming that we could step over, the soldier recognizes the power of the individual to transgress the boundary, clearly placing responsibility on us (You cross that line. You'll have to face them. You come here). Once we crossed over, however, we would find ourselves in another realm of state power where our bodies would no longer be protected. Entering into a realm in which we would be "gone" means more than a national death; it means exchanging a familiar form of control over our bodies for one that is completely unknown. And, it is unknown for the very reason that the state has the power to bar communications between people, states, and nations: the north is like a black hole, a place where one could disappear forever.

Part of the DMZ's appeal lies in its mixture of fear and the mastery of fear, like a frightening amusement.
What is the risk of coming to the DMZ? The chief risk, as articulated by the American tour guide, is that someone will "cross over." Thus, the risk lies not in fear of being shot or abducted but in the fantasy and desire to cross over, to see what lies behind the line, and to witness the consequences. The excitement of traveling to the DMZ is achieved through the dual act of fantasizing about, and restraining oneself from, defection. The pleasure of the fantasy of defection satisfies the desire to test the limits of freedom and military authority; the act of not defecting is pleasurable to the extent that one exercises mastery over temptation. In both confrontations, the tourist has the pleasure of exercising resistance—against authority in one case, and against desire in the other.

Fear is perhaps most explicitly created by the military tour guides at the tunnels. Tours given in 1993 would normally have led to the tunnels, where a thirty-man Tunnel Neutralization Team currently employs seismic equipment to determine if the north Koreans are continuing to dig and blast. Unfortunately, for reasons I was not able to discover, the tunnels were closed during my visits. So far, four tunnels have been discovered, in 1974, 1975, 1978, and 1989. The U.S. military estimates that tunnels two, three, and four were wide enough to deploy 30,000 soldiers per hour (Breen 1993:7). Although we are told that no explosions have been detected in recent years, even the absence of explosion creates fear. Does this absence mean that the north Koreans have stopped tunneling, or is all the tunneling complete? In a symbolic gesture, one of the tour guides made a serpentine gesture with his right hand, suggesting that the north Koreans are not just automatons blindly participating in the cult of Kim II Sung but are, like vermin in our homes, invisible intruders. The north Koreans could be under our feet at that very moment.

The tour of the DMZ ends with a visit to the gift shop, where tourists can buy golf balls imprinted with the word "Panmunjom," sunglasses, hats, T-shirts printed with the JSA-UN insignia and the U.S. military slogan "In Front of Them All," and nearly anything else one might find at a duty-free store. If there is solemnity here, it is hard to find, for in this Disney-like landscape, the DMZ appears to capitalize on the entertainment value of the suffering of the Korean people. Travel writers have rightly expressed their confusion at the celebratory tone of the DMZ tour (Becker 1989; Lee 1992; Potts 1992; Shapiro 1990).

At the DMZ, the atrocities and tragedies of the Korean War seem forgotten, but it is more likely that they are simply not known. Most visitors have little conception of what Cumings (1992) has called the "Unknown War," and even those who participated in the Korean War, or any war for that matter, may suffer an amnesia of sorts, or a selective memory that focuses on the machinery of war rather than on its evident consequences.

Conclusion

The DMZ patterns national division through a series of interrelated oppositions. At the DMZ, the oppositions are quite explicitly of a Cold War character, offering a critique of totalitarianism so general and totalizing that it might just as well be directed at Stalin or Hitler. Like any museum, the DMZ chooses its representational forms to make particular statements about themselves and "Others" by selectively drawing into its fold those representations that can be fitted into a preconceived ideology. Visitors to the DMZ need not fear that the Cold War, and the opposition between communism and democracy, have ended; the DMZ is testimony to its continued existence. North Korea becomes one of the last forbidden places, one of the last vestiges of communism. The DMZ permits visitors to glimpse the north, to reenter the Cold War and feel its excitement. If visitors were allowed to go to north Korea, the DMZ would have little appeal. As Ann Anagnost says of exhibitions, "the mode of display which reveals while it veils and withholds manufactures desire" (1993:591). Desire at the DMZ emerges partly from the tension between the visible and the invisible, but partly also from the dangers associated with the invisible. It involves the notion of what geographer Stacy Warren calls a "landscape of leisure," in which the elements of fantasy serve as "conduits for examining from a 'safe' perspective the real social conditions that appear in fantastical guise" (1993:181). In creating and fulfilling desire, the DMZ provides all the pleasures of risk, fear, and safety that one might find in an amusement park. 11

One must remember that it is the American military, not the Korean people (or even the Korean military), that represents Korean history to foreign visitors, a good many of whom are presidents, vice presidents, secretaries of state, senators, and congressmen—people who shape and implement foreign policies that effect directly the present and future of Korean history. The DMZ enacts the Cold War as a form of entertainment that, through a series of related
oppositions, evokes the pleasures of Western hegemony and threatens to undermine Korean efforts toward an autonomous subjecthood, and perhaps also reunification, the "paramount goal" (chisang kwachae) of all Koreans. In many ways it is in the interests of the DMZ, as an entertainment industry, and as an employer of thousands of military, to preserve itself: after all, 30,000 to 40,000 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Korea at a time when governments throughout the world are dramatically reducing the size of their military and their funding of the defense industry. We cannot expect that the United States military will promote peace and unification in Korea without some ambivalence. Also, of course, the DMZ is a good source of income for the Korean government whose official travel bureau has the monopoly on the DMZ tours. We can only guess how many tourists come to Korea, and spend their money on hotels, food, and souvenirs, primarily because they want to visit the DMZ.

It might be argued that the DMZ and its discourse on difference will disappear after reunification, since the DMZ is, as I suggested earlier, an anti-national museum—i.e., it exists because the nation is not whole, and it should disappear after reunification. Yet the DMZ may persist as the imagined border between good and evil. One Korean political scientist has proposed that the DMZ (the space of which amounts to about one half of one percent of the territory of north and south Korea combined) be developed into an "ecological balance zone" or "global park" (Ha 1993:426), an unpolluted sanctuary that can serve as a "global park" (Ha 1993: 426), an unpolluted sanctuary that can serve as a model of environmental protection for the rest of the world. And Kwak Young Hoon, an architect who has received the endorsement of Yi Hong Koo, Prime Minister and former Minister of Unification, has proposed an elaborate "Unipeace City" (Clifford 1990:32) consisting of a conurbation of four towns—two to the south of the DMZ, one to the north, and one between the DMZ and the Imjin River, near what is now P'anmunjom. One Korean executive advocated a theme park, with trains and rides reminiscent of Disneyland. In the end, the DMZ may prove that nothing can truly be destroyed unless its ruins are destroyed too.

Notes

1. Research in Korea during 1993 was supported by a grant from the Social Science Research Council/American Council of Learned Societies Joint Committee on Korean Studies.

2. To avoid the implication or assumption that the two Koreas are separate and legitimate nations, I use the lower case to write the words "north" and "south."

3. I do not know the history of how the DMZ became a tourist attraction, and, so far as I am aware, no published materials in the United States or south Korea detail that history.

4. Scholars are beginning to recognize that the separation between state and society is a local model to be explained rather than simply appropriated at face value as a valid analytical distinction (see Koo 1993).

5. Korean fiction seldom contains imaginative or speculative representations of north Koreans. Two notable exceptions are Yi Ho Ch'ol's "P'anmunjom" (1988/1961) and Choi Il Nam's "KumKil kwa Malgii" (1969). A very recent multi-volume novel, Kim Il Sung, by Yi Han Koo, which I have not yet seen, apparently includes some fictional accounts of everyday life in north Korea. In the past few years, however, carefully selected radio and television broadcasts from north Korea have been aired in south Korea ("NamPukki ch'ang" (North-South Window) and "T'ongil ch'onmangdae," (Observatory of Unification) giving south Koreans a chance to glimpse some of the official images of north Korean citizens crafted by north Korea's state-run media. North Korean defectors appear on radio and television to answer questions about north Korea (for example, the MBC radio program "Nam kwa Puk" (south and north) hosted by Kim Yong; the show had a large audience but it was unexpectedly canceled early in 1994.

6. Victims of the Korean War are remembered on Memorial Day (Hyŏnch'ung-il, June 6) when many Koreans pay their respects at the national cemetery, Tongchak-dong kuknip myoji. In addition, students have begun in recent years to eat a ritual meal, 6.25 imshik mōkki, on the anniversary of the start of the war, consisting of grains, kkongboripap and kaeddok, that are usually eaten only in periods of severe food shortage.

7. Since the 1992 election of a new president, Kim Young Sam, democratization in south Korea has led to a greater diversity in public images of the north. One example is the exhibition mounted by a Seoul department store in July 1993, the first of its kind, called Pukhan Saenghwal (North Korean Lifestyle) in which some 2,000 north Korean everyday objects, such as household goods, batteries, jewelry, toys, and clothing, were displayed. More than 200,000 Koreans attended the exhibit within three weeks of its opening (Grinker 1995).


9. There is an extensive literature on the subject of risk and risk recreation participation in the disciplines of psychology, social psychology, and leisure studies that use quantitative measures to determine the relationships between concepts such as "risk," "engagement," and "motivation." See, for example, Ewert 1994; McIntyre 1992; and Ewert and Hollenhorst 1989. These studies, however, are beyond the scope of this essay.

10. Visitors to north Korea, and defectors to south Korea frequently refer to the "darkness" of the "northern side"; see, example, Shin Sang Ok's (1988) Chokuk-ân chêmâri (My Country Far Beyond those Skies).

11. Yi ho Ch'ol (1988 [1961]), in a short story entitled "P'anmunjom," represents P'anmunjom by the metaphor...
of an infection that is resistant to forms of treatment; its owner decides to ignore the infection, but then later, as the infection grows larger, exhibits it as a fascinating anomaly: "... This infection came to carry its absolute maximum weight as days passed, and even became a tourist attraction." In a series of other passages, Yi points out that, 꽃, the final syllable of the word P'anmunjom, can be taken to mean "store," or "market," thus suggesting that P'anmunjom is a commercial enterprise.

12. See Chung-Moo Choi (1993) for a persuasive argument that colonial and neocolonial powers have alienated Koreans from their own history and usurped their power to represent themselves.

13. Fortified areas along the shore would be turned into beach resorts, and the cities, surrounded by parks and forest, would become models of the harmonious integration of architecture and ecology. Some of my informants thought the DMZ should be nationalized in a unified Korea to prevent competition and litigation among people who make land claims.

14. Interestingly, similar ideas have been proposed in Germany, where, as one example, an entrepreneur named Frank Georgi has received financial backing for an East German theme park. Visitors would have to remain in the park for a full day and would be prevented from leaving by a high wall. Restaurants would have poor food, the waiters would be surly, and the only rental cars available would be Trevantes and Volgas. People who worked for the park would circulate to find unhappy visitors who wanted to leave early, and would help them escape. If caught, visitors would be imprisoned for up to two hours (Newman 1994: 33; National Public Radio, "Morning Edition," November 16, 1994).

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