

The Argus

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Since 1954

The Growing Influence of AI in the Film Industry
AI as a Catalyst for Human Creativity
Refining Technology and Increasing Efficiency



Actors Returning to Their Youth Through AI

The Broader World of Cinema Beyond the Barriers of AI

The Argus

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- *Editorial Consultants* Kim Su-yeon (IS-4)
Lee Jue-hyun (IEL-4)
Nam Gyeong-eun (G-4)
- *Illustrator* Choi Soohyeon

107, Imun-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, Korea
(Postal Code 02450)

Tel: (02) 2173-2508 Fax: 2173-2509

81, Oedae-ro, Mohyeon-eup, Cheoin-gu, Yongin,
Gyeonggi Province, Korea (Postal Code 17035)

Tel: (031) 330-4113

Printed by HONG DESIGN | Tel: 464-5167 Fax: 464-5168

Editorial

Unveiling New Horizons

A few years ago, AI felt like a movie or like a huge innovation, but now it is making its way into many fields and into our lives. In everyday life, people use AI to help them with tasks. It can draw pictures, make cover videos of songs no one has ever sung, and even bring the elderly back to their youth. Some say it makes the world better, some say it is creepy or feel hostility toward it, and some still feel wary about the many uses of AI. In a world where new technologies are being developed every day, how should we react? How should we accept the unfamiliar and unknown?

This December issue examines conflict and coexistence, big and small. Some people feel discomfited or repulsed by the idea of AI creating art. AI is capable of writing movie scenarios, creating various backgrounds with just an LED wall, and even de-aging people's images. If we look at AI as a partner instead of being wary of it for no reason, we can expand the world of art that can be experienced. However, humans can be fearful and have hostility toward things and groups that are different from themselves.

Some people do not understand cultures that are different from their own and have prejudices. When remaking a foreign drama, it is not just about translating the language; it is about reinterpreting it to reflect the culture of the original country. If we can broaden our perspective a little bit and see their culture as "different" rather than "wrong," we can immerse ourselves in various works and enjoy them. There are surface reasons for someone's anti-immigrant sentiment, such as country characteristics and social events, as well as neuroscientific reasons. Why not try to understand the reasons behind these sentiments and find ways to coexist with immigrants instead of just hating them?

Sometimes the purpose of a conflict is unclear and someone else is hurt by it, and because it seems irrelevant to us, we may choose to ignore the victims. We must ask ourselves if we are not responsible for the conflict and remember the basic principle that everyone should have human rights. In the world today, we often see dramas dealing with conflicts, both large and small, caused by economic inequality and excessive competition. The world can become a better place if we face the deep inequality issues head-on instead of ignoring them.

Moving toward understanding, care, and coexistence amidst differences and conflicts can open up possibilities for a new society. Maybe our small efforts and attention to detail will make it possible to experience a new world, a better world.

By Kim Yi-eun
Editor-in-Chief

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>> *AI Mrs. Suro* (2023) is the first-ever Korean short film created using AI. On December 6, 2024, the 1st Busan International Artificial Intelligence Film Festival will take place. As such, the influence of AI in the film industry is gradually expanding, creating a new paradigm for cinema. Currently, AI is being utilized in various ways throughout the film production process, not only in editing but also in scriptwriting, screening, and other stages of filmmaking. Therefore, it is important to follow the trends and applicability of AI in the film industry. AI has the potential to bring about significant innovation in the film industry. Let's break down the barriers to AI and step into the new world of AI cinema.

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A Chapter in The Argus

HUFS Restructures Minerva College for Open Major Division

Effective the 2025 academic year, Minerva College will be restructured as the College of Minerva. This change, as outlined in the bylaw revisions announced on Oct. 30, 2024, positions the College of Minerva as the governing body for the open major divisions on both campuses.

In February 2022, HUFS introduced a open major division recruitment plan. This decision was influenced by the Ministry of Education (MOE)'s "University Innovation Support Project" announced earlier that year. The MOE has defined two types of open major divisions: Type 1, where students can freely choose any major within the university, and Type 2, where students can freely choose any major within a specific college or school. Universities that allocate at least 10 percent of their total enrollment to Type 1 and a combined 25 percent to both Type 1 and Type 2 will receive maximum bonus points for funding.

To meet these criteria, HUFS will expand its existing open major division at the Global Campus to 321 students by recruiting additional students from both campuses. Consequently, all departments, except for small-scale departments such as the Department of Mongolian, Division of Language and Trade, Korean as a Foreign Language, departments with capacity constraints such as the College of Education, and AI Convergence University, will contribute 6.5 percent of their enrollment to the open major division. Additionally, all colleges, except for the College of Business Administration, will contribute 20 percent of their enrollment to the unified admissions. Kim Yun Soo, strategic planning team leader, stated that "the establishment of the College of Minerva is designed to enhance the professional management of enrollment expansion in open major divisions in both campuses." This transformation is expected to fully prepare HUFS for the expansion of open major divisions on both campuses. 



▲ HUFS Minerva College becomes College of Minerva, managing the open major division from 2025.

©HUFS Minerva College


By Kim Si-yon

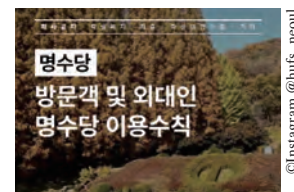
siyonkim@hufs.ac.kr

Tourist Surge at Myeongsoodang Disrupts Students

With the recent increase in campus visitors at the Myeongsoodang, a reservoir in HUFS Global Campus, HUFS students are facing difficulties in using their campus comfortably. The increase in visitors is due to the viral spread of Myeongsoodang's beautiful scenery on social media. Complaints have been steadily raised regarding issues with external tourist access, facility damage, and campus cleanliness.

In response, the HUFS Global Campus 45th General Student Council, Neoul, sent a request to the Office of Administration Support on Nov. 12, 2024, calling for strict parking enforcement, enhanced campus cleanliness, and improvement measures. Neoul also sent an official document requesting a meeting to discuss these issues. The document includes recommendations such as displaying banners promoting pet etiquette, posting notices to restrict littering and entry to campus buildings, setting up safety warnings for Myeongsoodang, and reinstalling signposts around the reservoir.

The surge of tourists at Myeongsoodang has caused considerable inconvenience to students. Nam Ji-soo, a sophomore studying Romanian, said, "Most of the visitors to Myeongsoodang come by car, which has led to a lack of effective traffic control on campus, making it difficult to get around." About this problem, Neoul said, "Currently, practical measures such as etiquette reminder banners and strict enforcement have been implemented with the cooperation of the Office of Administration Support." Additionally, for a permanent solution, Neoul said, "We are planning to establish clear usage rules for Myeongsoodang, enforce strict regulations on roadside parking, and launch a nudge design-based waste separation and collection project." 



©Instagram @hufs_neoul

▲ Students can check the detailed information and updates to the increase in visitors at Myeongsoodang on Neoul's Instagram account.

By Park Se-eun

tasilver@hufs.ac.kr

The 58th GSC YeoWoon, Library Collaborate on Ongoing Improvements to Study Environment

The 58th General Student Council (GSC), YeoWoon, is in discussions with the Seoul Campus Library to introduce a trial seating system featuring new chairs in the reading rooms. These initiatives are part of a larger project to improve the library's study environment. Other efforts include promoting recycling and providing a cleaning station for tumblers, which began in late October.

Previously, the library lobby was closed on Sundays, and only the 1st and 5th reading rooms were available for 24 hours during exam periods. However, since the start of the fall semester, YeoWoon successfully negotiated with the library to open the lobby on Sundays and for it to operate the Imunilgongchil cafe. As a result, students are allowed 24-hour access to all five reading rooms during the three-week exam period. On the other hand, the implementation of the trial seating system has faced an unexpected setback due to the library's sudden rejection. As a result, the smooth progression of the project has been hindered. YeoWoon plans to request another meeting to resolve the issue and finalize discussions, after which the trial seating system will be implemented in its most optimal form. New chairs were also purchased for a trial seating system, which was implemented in late November after further discussions with the library. The trial seating system is designed to allow students to try out the chairs in advance to gauge their preferences.

Finally, as part of the "Nudge Project," steps are being taken to address trash issues in the library, including adding trash cans in restrooms and providing tumbler cleaning in the Imunilgongchil cafe. Sim Min-Sung, a freshman studying economics, commented that "Separate bins for paper trash and drink containers in the restroom have helped improve recycling efforts." 📸

By Kwon Yu-jin

creamjin0310@hufs.ac.kr

HUFS CDC Providing Career Stress Counseling

The Career Development Center (CDC) at HUFS Global Campus is currently offering students the Career Stress Counseling Program, which is always available to those on a mandatory leave of absence and graduates during the fall semester and winter vacation. This particular program provides students with opportunities to discuss their career and job-seeking challenges with an assigned counselor.

Students can apply for the counseling program via the HUFSAbility website. To do so, students should go to the "Integrated Counseling" section, select "Apply for Counseling," and then choose the "Career and Employment Counseling" option. From the list of available programs, find "Career Stress Counseling (Global)" and click on the schedule inquiry window on the far right side to choose a date, time, and session-type for either offline or online counseling. In-person sessions are held in Room 202 of the Centennial Complex at the HUFS Global Campus, while online sessions are conducted via Webex or Google Meet. Counseling is held in a one-on-one format, with each session lasting 50 minutes. Counseling covers topics ranging from career exploration, stress management, interview anxiety, to workplace adaptation, using assessments such as the "STRONG Interest Inventory" and "MBTI."

The primary goal is to help students gain self-understanding, make informed career decisions, create career plans, and increase motivation for career action. According to Heo Hye-won, the counselor in charge of the program, "Students can sign up for Career Stress Counseling up to 15 times per semester, and if students apply for Career Stress Counseling (Seoul), counseling sessions will be conducted by a different consultant. Although the campuses are separate, students from both campuses are eligible to apply." 📸

By Jang Ye-ryn

jangyerin@hufs.ac.kr



: Uniting Cultures Through Human Solidarity

By Park Se-eun

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

December 20 is International Human Solidarity Day, a commemorative day proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on December 22, 2005. The UN designated this day to emphasize solidarity as a cornerstone of relationships among people in the 21st century and as a universal value. International Human Solidarity Day celebrates the global commitment to respecting differences and collaborating toward shared goals, highlighting the importance of solidarity among nations and peoples for achieving peace and a sustainable future for humanity. To delve into how such abstract values can be realized in practice, The Argus interviewed members of AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales) in HUFS to highlight how they promote the value of solidarity through global leadership and fosters active engagement with the international community.



[Before Reading] AIESEC

AIESEC is the world's largest student-run organization, with a vision of "world peace" and the "realization of human potential." It is also the only international student leadership association that has an official partnership with the UN. In South Korea (hereafter Korea), AIESEC operates branches at 14 universities, including HUFS. Each branch conducts overseas exchange projects based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN. AIESEC aims to cultivate practical work skills and deepen participants' understanding of diverse cultures, helping young individuals grow into global leaders who will shape the future.



AIESEC: Its Beginning

The Argus: Hello, AIESEC in HUFS. Please introduce yourselves to the readers of The Argus.

Kwak Do-won (Kwak): Hello, I am Kwak Do-won, the Local Committee President (LCP) of AIESEC in HUFS.

Lim Da-hee (Lim): I am Lim Da-hee, the Local Committee Vice President (LCVP) in charge of both the MKT (Marketing) and F (Finance) departments for AIESEC in HUFS.

The Argus: Please introduce AIESEC and the AIESEC in HUFS.

AIESEC: AIESEC was established after World War II with the goal of achieving world peace. Initially starting as a small regional initiative, it has since grown into a global organization operating across the world. AIESEC in HUFS is one of the founding branches of AIESEC in Korea, boasting a long history. AIESEC in HUFS operates through an interconnected structure of various departments. The iGV (incoming Global Volunteer) and oGX (outgoing Global Exchange) departments

manage international exchange programs. oGX focuses on connecting Korean students with overseas programs, while iGV facilitates the reverse process by linking international students with volunteer programs in Korea. The BD (Business Development) department serves as the external cooperation team, securing sponsorships from companies to support projects and fostering collaboration between the LC (Local Committee) and external partners. Beyond these departments, the TM (Talent Management) team oversees member development, the MKT team handles promotional strategies, and the F team is responsible for financial management.

The Argus: What led you to join AIESEC? Also, what are the goals or values you aim to achieve through your AIESEC activities?

Kwak: When I applied to AIESEC, I had a strong desire to work with an organization related to the UN. The main goals AIESEC is currently working toward are world peace and the realization of human potential. When I first joined, the terms “world peace” and “realization of human potential” felt vague to me, so my current goal is to work on making these values more concrete and achievable.

Lim: I remember being drawn to AIESEC after seeing the promotional posters highlighting “practical experience” and the “UN” association. At the time of my application, I was not entirely sure what I wanted to do, so I thought that being part of an organization with various departments would allow me to experience a wide range of career exploration. Since AIESEC involves a lot of interaction with international members, I also hoped to improve my language skills and experience cultural exchanges.



AIESEC: A Bridge Between Cultures

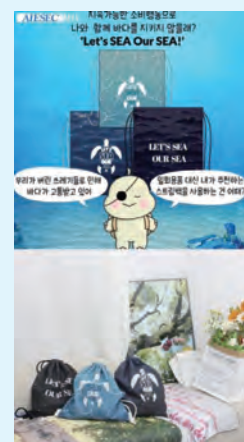
The Argus: What distinguishes AIESEC in HUFS from other universities? Are there any features specific to HUFS?

AIESEC: As AIESEC in HUFS has a deep-rooted history, many alumni continue to support our branch, contributing to its tradition. A unique feature of AIESEC in HUFS is its overseas volunteer programs, which are aimed at current students. Since HUFS has many students in the language departments, there tends to be a higher interest in overseas volunteering. To engage these students, we send official notices to relevant departments to recruit participants for overseas volunteer programs. Unlike other AIESEC branches, which often focus on countries like

China and Japan for volunteer projects, AIESEC in HUFS also coordinates overseas programs in countries that may be less familiar, such as Romania, due to the diverse range of language majors offered at our university.

The Argus: What are the criteria AIESEC uses when selecting the themes for its activities, such as the “Let’s Sea, Our Sea” 2024 string bag crowdfunding project?

AIESEC: When selecting the themes for its activities, AIESEC strives to focus on values that align with the UN’s principles and that can benefit the global community. As AIESEC is an organization under the UN, our main goal is to realize the UN’s SDGs in a more concrete way. Therefore, when planning a project, we select one of the SDGs and establish more specific, achievable goals to guide our activities. “Let’s Sea, Our Sea” 2024 string bag crowdfunding project is a campaign where we sell string bags to raise funds for marine ecosystem preservation. We chose marine ecosystem preservation because, although it may seem like a goal distant from our daily lives, we wanted to use this opportunity to make it a reality. While it may take the form of a crowdfunding initiative, the core focus of the project is still aligned with the UN’s value of ecosystem conservation.



▲ AIESEC is carrying out the “Let’s Sea, Our Sea” 2024 string bag crowdfunding project for marine ecosystem preservation.

The Argus: What is the ultimate goal AIESEC aims to achieve through its international exchange programs?

AIESEC: The ultimate goals AIESEC aims to achieve through its international exchange programs is to foster world peace and human potential through leadership. To do this, we endeavor to provide youth with activities that align with these values by facilitating cultural exchange programs that offer such experiences. Most of our programs are focused on educational volunteering, with cultural exchange serving as a secondary goal within those initiatives.



▲ AIESEC communicates with people from different cultural backgrounds through international exchange programs.



The Argus: What has been your most memorable time with AIESEC, and have you experienced any challenges during AIESEC activities?

Kwak: One of the most memorable moments for me was starting my term as the LCP in February this year. As the LCP, I had numerous opportunities to engage with AIESEC in Korea, which allowed me to gain experiences that are not easily accessible for a typical university student. I held meetings with AIESEC in Korea twice a month in English, which was a great opportunity to improve my communication skills. Leading AIESEC also contributed to my personal growth. During my exchanges with foreign members, I noticed cultural differences between Koreans and people from other countries. While Koreans have a “fast-paced” culture, foreigners tend to be more relaxed, which sometimes caused delays in communication. However, the opportunity to interact with different cultures through AIESEC was truly rewarding!

Lim: One of the most memorable activities for me was the National Leadership Development Conference, where we met with members from other universities twice a year for a conference and camp. The biggest advantage of this event was the chance to connect and exchange ideas with students from other universities. International students also participated in the conference, which gave me a direct experience of cultural exchange. Another aspect that stood out to me was how AIESEC’s values are somewhat abstract, making it challenging to realize them. However, through communication and the sharing of ideas, I was able to connect with other students who were also struggling with or striving to make these values a reality, which was very inspiring.

The Argus: Have you ever felt the power or importance of international solidarity through your interactions with global citizens in AIESEC?

Kwak: When I first joined AIESEC, the idea of world peace felt somewhat abstract to me. However, through AIESEC, my perception of other countries improved, and I began to realize


that if we take small, practical actions, world peace could be within reach. For example, an AIESEC member reconnected with a French friend they had bonded with through the buddy program while studying in France as an exchange student. This experience helped me understand that AIESEC’s international exchange activities are not just temporary meetings but opportunities to form lasting international networks. Through these sustained connections, I came to see that international solidarity is not a distant goal but something that can be achieved.

Lim: Through my involvement in AIESEC, I have met many people who are genuinely committed to the UN’s SDGs or who are using AIESEC as a stepping stone to pursue their dreams of joining international organizations or to bring peace to the world. I truly feel that the activities we are doing have meaning. Moreover, since AIESEC has a global presence, I had many opportunities to engage with local members of AIESEC when I went abroad as an exchange student, which further emphasized the importance of global solidarity.

The Argus: Lastly, could you share a word for those Argus readers who hope for global solidarity?

Kwak: One thing I have realized through my AIESEC experience is that when we think of international solidarity, the concept often seems vague and hard to grasp. However, I want to emphasize that it is not as unclear as it may seem. In fact, even through small activities, moments of international solidarity occur often, and connections with people worldwide can be made. Thus, rather than thinking of it as an abstract concept, I want to stress that even small actions can contribute to global solidarity.

Lim: It is easy to think of global solidarity as something far removed and abstract, but I encourage you to try taking small steps to put it into practice. I used to believe that actions like these would not be noticed by others or have much impact. But through my AIESEC activities, I started realizing that even small efforts toward solidarity can be meaningful which made me feel a sense of pride and fulfillment. It is okay to take the first step in your own way, no matter how seemingly insignificant.

“Leave no one behind.” This is the core slogan of the UN’s SDGs. AIESEC, based on the values promoted by the UN, builds international networks and solidarity through individual responsibility as global citizens. Through AIESEC activities, youth experiences the significance and strength of international solidarity in small exchanges and everyday encounters. The beginning of minor actions, will enable everyone to to build solidarity and fulfill shared responsibility as global citizens. 

tasxilver@hufs.ac.kr

Beyond Imagination: How AI Is Crafting Tomorrow's Cinema

By Park Se-eun

Staff Reporter of Culture Section

On December 6, 2024, the 1st Busan International Artificial Intelligence Film Festival was held. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the film production process has been increasing, and AI-generated works are receiving growing attention. The world's first AI-made film is *AI Mrs. Suro* (2023), a 25-minute short film from South Korea. *AI Mrs. Suro* used generative AI tools throughout the entire production process, from scriptwriting to post-editing, and was completed in just one month using three laptops. AI technology, once used only in specific aspects of filmmaking, is now involved in the entire production process, revolutionizing the film industry. This innovation sparks discussions about the role of humans in creation and expands the possibilities of artistic expression, making it a crucial issue for both industry professionals and audiences alike to understand the changes. The Argus seeks to highlight the broader paradigm shift that the film industry will undergo as AI is integrated into the production process.

1. Can AI Create?

Phenomenon 1 AI-Written Movie Script

The idea that creativity belongs solely to humans was shattered by the American film *Sunspring* (2016). *Sunspring* was the first film ever made with a script written by AI. It was submitted to the 48-hour film challenge at the Sci-Fi-London (SFL), London International Festival of Science Fiction and Film in April 2016. The film, set in a futuristic space station, revolves around three characters H, H2, and C. The plot seems to imply maybe a love triangle, but the ambiguity of the term "maybe a love triangle" comes from the fact that the script was written by Benjamin, one of OpenAI's early language models.* As such, the true intentions behind the relationships among the three characters remain unclear. At the beginning of the film, the three characters engage in a conversation when suddenly,



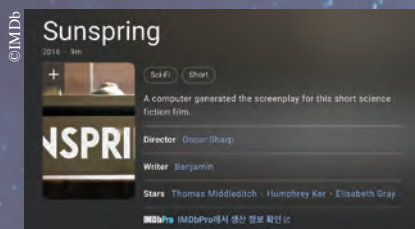
▲ In *Sunspring*, the character H2 spits out an eyeball while talking.

H2 spits out an eyeball and casually continues talking. In another scene, H abruptly declares, "I am watching the singular point of the universe," a line that seems entirely out of place within the context of the scene. The dialogue and setting in *Sunspring* often come across as illogical or ambiguous. The characters' exchanges sound like they are having completely different conversations, and instead of emotional progression or logical conversation, the film feels like an exchange of

disjointed statements. These characteristics reveal that while AI can combine sentences based on data, it still lacks the ability to fully handle the complex emotional flow or dramatic structure of human interactions.

* Language Model: A statistical model trained to generate the most suitable output based on inputs like natural language

Cause 1 AI Stimulating Human Creativity



▲ The writer of *Sunspring* is officially credited as Benjamin.

Benjamin, the AI that wrote the script for *Sunspring*, was created using a type of algorithm known as a recurrent neural network, which mimics the neurons in the human brain and learns specific goals through repetitive learning. When given data from which to learn, it adapts on its own. Benjamin was fed dozens of science fiction movie scripts from the 1980s and 1990s that were available online by its creator, American computer scientist Ross Goodwin. When AI writes a script, it often results in awkward or disjointed sequences compared to logical human thought. Despite this limitation, AI has gained attention as a new creator of scripts. This is because it offers viewers a unique experience and helps creators come up with new ideas for scripts. According to the paper “A Study on Creation of AI Cinema as a Phenomenon” (2022), by Lee Seong-yup, a researcher of The Contemporary Cinema Research Institute at Hanyang University, AI’s creativity lies in how it adds new sensory elements and unpredictable factors to specific scenes, creating a unique atmosphere. This allows the film to offer a new narrative experience that is hard to find in films made by humans, with nonlinear structures and original character expressions. Looking at audience reviews of *Sunspring*, one comment noted, “This movie feels like what a person’s dream would be like if you were to somehow project it for other people to see.”

People are always looking for something new, and this film aims to stimulate curiosity about the “unintelligible.” The director and production team wanted viewers to see the AI-created film as more than just a technology demonstration, but as something that could inspire thought about AI’s potential to stimulate human artistic sensitivity. The illogical emotional flow, previously seen as a limitation of AI creations, was used

to spark groundbreaking ideas. The director incorporated their interpretation into the AI-written script and used various filmmaking techniques to transform scenes that felt like an unconscious flow into a conscious one. As a result, what seemed meaningless in the script was transformed into something meaningful. According to the paper “A Study on AI-Human Coordinated Producing Cinema - Focusing on the Analysis of *Sunspring*” (2022), by Kim Jeong-han, a professor of Major of Contemporary Art at Seoul Women’s University, *Sunspring* showed that AI could be independently creative, proving that AI has the potential to be a new artistic force. Ultimately, *Sunspring* made it to the top 10 films at the SFL, showcasing the possibility of AI-driven script creation.

Prospect 1 The Shrinking Distance Between AI and Humans

When the public watches AI-created works, they often feel that something about them is unnatural. According to the paper “The Sense of Agency in the Use of AI by Filmmakers: The Scenario Planning Stage in Pre-production” (2024) by students Kim Ha-yeon, An Ye-in, Baek Byung-soo and professor Kim Dong-whan of the Graduate School of Communication and Arts at Yonsei University, the public tends to view AI-created works as lacking value as art because they do not involve the human struggle and anguish typically associated with the creative process. As a result, once people realize that a work was created by AI, they often develop negative feelings toward it. Though AI neural networks like Benjamin started by mimicking the human brain, they produced creations that transcended typical human thought. The unfamiliar results generated by Benjamin stimulated the unconscious mind of the audience, which they might have otherwise overlooked. This suggests that the use of AI in cinema, far from being purely negative, could significantly contribute to the endless potential development of film. Therefore, AI-created films will need to find ways to reduce the audience’s discomfort and negative reactions toward unfamiliarity. Ji-young Kang, a professor of Division of Communication and Media at Ewha Womans University said, “It is important to clearly explain to the audience how AI is used in the creative process and how much it contributes. For example, AI-generated images or characters should be clearly marked as distinct from those directly created by human creators, providing transparency.” This approach would help the audience better understand the role of AI and increase trust in the creative process.

2. Refined Scenes, Reduced Costs

Phenomenon 2 Actors Performing Against Virtual Backgrounds



▲ By using an LED wall, as seen in *The Mandalorian*, backgrounds can be rendered to look incredibly realistic.

In *The Mandalorian* (2020), the protagonist, Din Djarin, stands before a door emitting green laser beams in a space environment. This is a virtual world that does not exist. Would you believe that this scene was shot without the use of post-production computer-generated imagery (CGI)? Remarkably, the vibrant background was created

without CGI by using generative AI in virtual production (VP). This technique was used for other scenes in the series, including depicting an icy, snow-covered planet in Season 1, Episode 1, and a desert and canyon landscape in Episode 2. AI was employed to create these alien landscapes in a virtual environment. In these scenes, VP's typical real-time image compositing method was used, merging virtual environments with the actors' performances. The actors mentioned that they felt as though they were on a distant planet, surrounded by orange-hued canyons, with the environment stretching from the ground to the sky.

Cause 2 Reducing Time and Costs in Film Production

While *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (2019) used a production budget of US\$200 million for a single film, *The Mandalorian*, a series with eight episodes, was created with a budget of US\$120 million. This demonstrates how AI has significantly reduced time and costs in both production and post-production processes. The main technology used in *The Mandalorian* is VP, which projects three-dimensional (3D) backgrounds onto light emitting diode (LED) walls, allowing scenes and actors to be filmed simultaneously. VP technology was used to generate virtual backgrounds in real time, with actors performing in front of them. The technology involves real-time rendering with Unreal Engine, a 3D computer graphics game engine, projected onto surrounding LED screens. Unlike traditional green screen

technology, VP eliminates the need for post-production work, allowing reflections to occur naturally on set. Additionally, by immediately syncing with the actual camera, the technology allows actors' movements to be data-tracked, enabling virtual characters to interact with real-time footage during filming. The idea behind this process is to use existing motion capture technology, attach a tracker to the camera being used for the shoot, and synchronize it with a virtual camera in Unreal Engine. In this way, as the real camera moves, the camera in Unreal Engine mimics the movement, ensuring that the virtual environment and live-action footage stay in sync.

Around 40 percent of the virtual environments in *The Mandalorian* were created using VP methods, replacing traditional green screens with LED screens. This innovation allowed actors to perform in a more immersive environment, reducing the need for post-production editing to insert backgrounds. According to the paper, "Virtual Production and Intensified Visual Effects: Focusing on the Case Analysis of *The Mandalorian*" series (2022) by Lee Do-hoon, a associate researcher of Chung-Ang University Industry Academic Cooperation Foundation, the use of LED walls in *The Mandalorian* made post-production processes more efficient. For instance, Din Djarin's armor reflects light and surrounding environments. In traditional green-screen shooting, extra work was required to remove green reflections from the armor. However, since the LED walls serve as a light source themselves, they not only saved time in post-production but also allowed the reflections in the armor to become a visual effect in the scene. Furthermore, the use of AI-tracking technology and LED walls during filming meant that virtual backgrounds and characters no longer needed to be created in post-production. VP technologies enable real-time generation of virtual environments, cutting down the overall filming time by approximately 30 percent. These advancements provide directors and production teams with more efficient ways to work, enhancing creative possibilities.



▲ The filming process of *The Mandalorian* incorporates AI technologies, such as LED walls.

Prospect 2 The Democratization of Art

Despite the higher production costs associated with films compared to television content, filmmakers often face challenges in securing funding. AI technology, however, provides significant advantages to filmmakers with limited budgets. In the past, physical set construction was a costly and time-consuming process, which restricted directors' ability to bring their visions to life due to technical limitations. Today, with AI and virtual reality technologies, directors can change or adjust backgrounds during filming, allowing for more creative experimentation and faster realization of their vision. This technology enables filmmakers to experiment with various visual effects in real time, making the film production process more efficient, cost-effective, and creatively expansive. According to an interview with *The Chosun Daily* in June 2024, Kwon Han-seul, a director of the film *One More Pumpkin* (2023), which won the grand prize at the first Dubai International AI Film Festival, faced significant resistance when he sought funding for a fantasy series, as producers doubted his ability as a newcomer. Determined, Director Kwon began learning AI technology and produced a three-minute film in just five days with no outlay, apart from the cost of electricity. This example demonstrates how AI can break down the barriers of capital and networking, making it possible for anyone to pursue their filmmaking dreams. AI is transforming filmmaking from a field dependent on substantial financial resources into one that is accessible to anyone with creativity and ambition, thus democratizing art and offering opportunities to all.

3. AI Approaching Natural Realism

Phenomenon 3 Reviving Youthful Facades



▲ In *The Irishman*, the face of Al Pacino, who plays the protagonist, is de-aged using AI technology.

Martin Scorsese's film *The Irishman* (2019) delves into the lives of Mafia figures Frank Sheeran, Russell Bufalino, and Jimmy Hoffa, spanning several decades.

One of the most groundbreaking aspects of the film is its

portrayal of the aging process through advanced de-aging technology. The actors—Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci, and Al Pacino—each portray their characters across different ages, from youth to old age. De Niro, at 76, plays Frank Sheeran at various points in his life, from his 20s to his 80s. This portrayal is made possible by AI-driven de-aging techniques that seamlessly transform the actors into younger versions of themselves throughout the film. Before the widespread use of AI, scenes like these would typically require young actors to play the younger versions of older characters. In *The Irishman*, however, the same actors performed throughout the film, with AI-powered de-aging ensuring that their younger versions looked natural and consistent across different time periods. Unlike earlier de-aging technologies, which relied on computer graphics (CG) to smooth out wrinkles and refine features, modern AI technology goes a step further. It analyzes the actors' current performances and integrates data from their younger roles to recreate a youthful appearance that retains the essence of their present-day expressions and movements.

Cause 3 The Precision of Technological Advancements

In the past, when older actors portrayed younger characters, they often wore wigs, makeup, and symbolic costumes, such as school uniforms, to suggest youthfulness.



▲ In *Iron Man 3*, the de-aged face of Robert Downey Jr., who plays Iron Man, appears unnatural.

Alternatively, child

actors would be hired to play younger versions of adult characters. However, with the advent of CGI technology, this method was transformed. In *X-Men: The Last Stand* (2006), CGI was used to de-age actors Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen, allowing them to portray their younger selves as Professor X and Magneto. Special effects teams smoothed out wrinkles and adjusted skin tones using CGI techniques. This early form of de-aging, which focused mainly on cosmetic adjustments, marked the beginning of the evolution toward more advanced AI-driven de-aging. Subsequent films, such as *Tron: Legacy* (2010), showcased further advancements, with Jeff Bridges' younger depiction being created through motion capture and CGI. While this represented a major technological leap, it was still apparent to audiences that the young faces were digitally constructed. In *Iron Man 3* (2013),

a more refined digital CG technique was employed to recreate Robert Downey Jr.'s youthful appearance. The adjustments were more detailed, refining wrinkles and skin tone, which led to a positive reception, though some viewers still felt a disconnection due to the digital quality of the faces. These earlier attempts highlighted the challenges of achieving a truly natural and seamless de-aging effect, particularly with the differences in texture and subtle facial expressions between actual footage and digital manipulation.

The breakthrough came with *The Irishman*, where AI and CGI were integrated to create a more sophisticated form of de-aging. Through AI, actors' faces were analyzed to replicate the nuanced expressions of their younger selves without the need for special markers or devices. This process allowed for a more natural and consistent depiction of aging, surpassing the limitations of traditional CGI. AI-based de-aging, powered by deep learning models, revolutionized this process by allowing for the automatic application of age changes to faces. Unlike traditional methods, which require extensive manual work to remove wrinkles and smooth skin, AI can learn from large datasets of an actor's past performances and continually improve. By analyzing an actor's facial features and expression patterns, AI adjusts age while preserving consistent traits. This approach enhances character consistency and provides a more immersive experience for audiences. AI-driven de-aging has thus become a powerful tool, overcoming the limitations of traditional CGI methods. It enables filmmakers to create realistic, natural aging effects that significantly contribute to the film's overall quality, bringing both artistic and technological advancements to the forefront of modern filmmaking.


Prospect 3 AI Creating Characters Who Do Not Exist in Reality

In the 2024 Netflix Series *A Killer Paradox*, actor Son Suk-ku's younger likeness was praised for its authenticity and convincing performance, with viewers questioning who played the young version of the actor. However, they could



▲ Deepfake AI technology is used to recreate actor Son Suk-ku's childhood face.

not find any trace of the actor's face because it was not an actual child actor—it was created using deepfake technology. AI technology was employed to overlay Son's face onto a child actor's performance, creating a lifelike depiction of his younger self. Technologies like deepfakes, which are becoming more accessible and user-friendly, are being utilized more widely on screen. Kang Ji-young, a professor of Division of Communication and Media at Ewha Womans University said, "As AI continues to evolve, it will enhance both cinematic expression and audience experience." She added, "AI will further strengthen the realism and emotional expression of characters, allowing for greater emotional engagement and immersion." As technologies like facial recognition, de-aging, and motion capture become more refined, they will enable virtual characters and special effects to appear more lifelike, with emotional depth akin to that of real actors. This evolution in AI will deepen the connection between audiences and virtual characters, allowing viewers to experience a higher level of empathy and immersion. The future of AI in film holds the promise of transforming how audiences relate to both human and digital characters, blending the line between reality and virtuality even further.

In an interview with movie critic Josh Wilding, Richard Bluff, the visual effects supervisor for *The Mandalorian*, said, "One of the things we wanted was a bigger stage, in a different shape, where we could walk around longer and have conversations." This reflects AI's growing role as a collaborator in the creative process, helping artists and creators turn their imaginative ideas into tangible worlds. With AI, the boundaries of artistic expression are expanding, offering creators the ability to manifest previously unimaginable environments and concepts. While there may be inherent concerns or resistance toward AI like fear of it replacing human creativity or devaluing artistry, it is crucial to see AI not as a replacement, but as a facilitator. By overcoming these anxieties, filmmakers, artists, and creators can unlock new dimensions of storytelling, design, and emotional engagement. The key lies in embracing this technology as an ally in the creative process, breaking down the barriers of what people thought was possible in the world of art and film. 

taxsilver@hufs.ac.kr



From *The Office* to *Al Maktab*: Meeting Saudi in Cultural Translation

By Park Gyeong-jin

Associate Editor of Culture Section

From “power” to “the new oil.” The popular American TV series *The Office* (2005-2013) features the iconic line, “Information is power.” In contrast, the Saudi Arabian remake, *Al Maktab* (2022-2023), adapts this line to “Information is the new oil.” This subtle yet meaningful change reflects the unique characteristics of Saudi Arabia, a nation that gained immense economic influence following its oil discovery in the 1930s. The process of remaking content in another language goes beyond simple translation; it involves creating a new work that takes linguistic, cultural, and religious values into account. As a result, Arabic remakes often diverge significantly from their original counterparts. In celebration of World Arabic Language Day on December 18, this article examines the cultural and social contexts of *The Office* and *Al Maktab*, through a comparative analysis. The Argus seeks to foster a deeper understanding of the cultural differences between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Before Reading

On December 18, 1973, Arabic was recognized as the sixth official language of the United Nations, joining Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Arabic serves as the official language of 25 countries and is spoken by over 400 million people, making it a vital medium of communication. Moreover, Arabic holds a unifying role within Islamic society as the liturgical language in

which the Quran* was recorded. The language is broadly categorized into Modern Standard Arabic, Fusha, used in formal contexts such as media, literature, and journalism, and a regional dialect, Ammiya, which varies across different areas. Despite these dialectal differences, Fusha enables effective communication across Arabic-speaking countries, allowing people to consume content

from other regions with relative ease. The description of *Al Maktab* as “Arabic adapted” highlights this shared linguistic characteristic of Arabic-speaking nations, emphasizing the adaptability and inclusivity of the language.

*Quran: The Quran is the holy book of Islam, which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years. It contains prayers, moral guidance, historical narrative, and promises of Paradise.

American TV Series *The Office*

The sound of a copier echoes through the Dunder Mifflin office. Inside, weary employees stare at their computer screens, while their oblivious boss, Michael Scott, goofs off without a care. Welcome to the extraordinarily ordinary office. *The Office* is an American sitcom presented in a mockumentary* format, portraying the daily lives. The dynamic between Michael, who sees himself as a fun and admirable boss, and his employees, who find him exasperating and awkward, is a relatable depiction that transcends cultural boundaries. It is this universality that paved the way for the adaptation of the British original, *The Office*, into this American version.



©Wikipedia

Saudi TV Series *Al Maktab*

The Arabic adaptation of *The Office*, *Al Maktab*, derives its name from the Arabic article “al,” meaning “the” and “maktab,” meaning “office.” Directed by renowned Egyptian filmmaker Hisham Fathi and starring Saudi actor Saleh Abuamrh as the lead character Malik, the show brings a localized twist to the globally acclaimed sitcom. While originally based on the British version of *The Office*, most episodes were adapted from the American version. The show is set in a courier service company named “Tard,” a name that carries a dual meaning in Arabic: “package” and “dismissal.” This clever wordplay underscores the show’s central theme of job insecurity and restructuring.



©IMDb

*Mockumentary: A film or television show made in the style of a documentary to make invented events seem real

Bringing Saudi Viewers Closer Through Localized Costume

One of the most striking differences between *The Office* and its Saudi Arabian adaptation, *Al Maktab*, lies in the characters’ attire. While *The Office*’s Michael Scott sports a blue dress shirt and a black tie, *Al Maktab*’s Malik wears a traditional Middle Eastern thobe that flows from neck to ankle, paired with a shemagh, a traditional headscarf. Similarly, the women in *The Office* wear fitted shirts and skirts, whereas

their counterparts in *Al Maktab* don cloak-like garments called abayas that cover their hair with hijabs, and some even wear niqabs, leaving only their eyes visible. This change in wardrobe reflects a deliberate effort to make the characters more relatable to Saudi viewers by aligning with local cultural norms. Kim Eun-ji, a senior research fellow of the Institute of Middle East Studies, HUFs, stated, “The Saudi government has actively encouraged its citizens to wear traditional attire. Beginning in April 2024, traditional dress has even been mandated for all civil servants during working hours.” J.D. Straubhaar, a professor at the University of Texas, argued in his paper *Beyond Media Imperialism* (1991) that audiences prefer media that resonates with their cultural backgrounds. Elements like attire play a crucial role in shaping this resonance. From this perspective, replacing Western suits with traditional Saudi attire was a strategic decision to appeal to Saudi viewers by leveraging a sense of cultural familiarity.

While Saudi viewers may feel at home with the traditional outfits in *Al Maktab*, non-Arab viewers often experience visual dissonance. Kwon Hee-jin, a student from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, remarked, “It was as if they were working in hanbok. I didn’t realize traditional attire was worn daily until watching the show.” When clips of *Al Maktab* were shared on the American social media platform Reddit, the responses ranged from bemusement to ridicule. Some users compared characters in white thobes to samurais, and women in black niqabs to ninjas. Others commented that it looks “sad” and “oppressed.” These reactions highlight the biases tied to Middle Eastern traditional attire, which often stem not just from unfamiliarity but from preconceived notions. A 2012 study by the KBS Public Media Institute found that 47.9 percent of respondents perceived the hijab as a symbol of women’s oppression. This perspective can escalate into “hijabophobia,” a baseless hostility or aversion toward women wearing hijabs. Male traditional attire is also not immune to bias. Goldsmiths University anthropology professor Emma Tarlo noted that the thobe has been perceived as an indicator of religious fanaticism or political extremism in her book *Islamic Fashion Scape* (2020). The persistence of such stereotypes is reflected in online marketplaces like Amazon and Alibaba, where Middle Eastern attire is occasionally marketed as “terrorist costumes.”

However, *Al Maktab* skillfully tackles this potential cultural disconnect by incorporating humor around traditional attire. For example, in one episode, two women wearing identical abayas and niqabs look at a photo and jokingly ask which

Parallel Code

one of them it features. By setting aside preconceptions about Middle Eastern clothing, audiences can fully appreciate *Al Maktab*'s unique charm

and humor, which offer a refreshing take on *The Office*.



▲ Two female employees wearing niqab look at a photo of a person dressed in similar clothing and ask who she is among them.

©MBC Studios

He Is Not the Oscar Who I Know. Why?

After learning that Oscar, the accountant, is gay, Michael apologized for having jokingly referred to Oscar using a homophobic slur, “faggy.” This is in the first episode of *The Office* Season 3, “Gay Witch Hunt.” The episode, which depicts realistic workplace challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals, became a fan favorite, ranking 17th out of 188 episodes in viewer ratings. Also, Greg Daniels, the writer of this episode, earned an Emmy for Outstanding for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program in 2007. However, in the Saudi adaptation, *Al Maktab*, Oscar’s counterpart, Ziad, is not portrayed as gay, and this episode is excluded from the remake. The character’s reconfiguration reflects Saudi Arabia’s cultural and legal environment. Homosexuality is criminalized in Saudi Arabia, leading to significant alterations in directly remade works. For instance, the American animated film *Lightyear* (2022) was banned due to a scene with a same-sex kiss, and the American film *Doctor Strange: Multiverse of Madness* (2022) was barred for featuring a lesbian character. Globally, the number of countries criminalizing homosexuality has decreased from 92 in 2006 to 64 in 2024, yet Saudi Arabia remains staunchly opposed, both legally and culturally. This stance is deeply rooted in Islamic values.

Saudi Arabia’s legal system is based on Islam’s Sharia law and regulations that act as laws. When conflicts arise, Sharia takes precedence. In Islam, homosexuality is considered prohibited for two main reasons. First, it contradicts Allah’s* design for humanity to procreate and preserve the species. Qatar’s Islamweb* describes homosexuality as a threat to human reproduction and survival, potentially leading to

extinction. Second, the Quran recounts the story of Lot’s people, who were punished with rain of brimstone for engaging in homosexuality, interpreted by Islamic scholars as a mandated penalty for such behavior. The exclusion of LGBTQ themes in *Al Maktab* reflects this religious and cultural context.

As Saudi Arabia positions itself as the heart of the Arab and Islamic world, this adaptation aligns with its cultural and religious values. While non-Muslims may perceive the removal of LGBTQ themes as a suppression of individual rights, devout Muslims see it as an expected adherence to religious rules. Consequently, LGBTQ issues remain a non-negotiable matter in Saudi Arabia, and this is reflected in its entertainment.

*Allah: Arabic word for the one and only God, used by Arab Christians as well as Muslims

*Islamweb: A website of the Qatari Ministry of Religious Affairs designed to enrich the viewers’ knowledge and appreciation of Islam

Same Episode, Different Narrative

“Diversity Day” in *The Office* is reimagined as “The Lecture” in *Al Maktab*. Michael leads a workshop on racial diversity



▲ Employees play a game in which the other person explains the ethnicity attached to their foreheads.

©IMDb

in the original, whereas Malik focuses on guidelines for interacting with female coworkers in the remake. Michael starts his lecture, introducing himself as a person of English, Irish, German, and Scottish descent. Conversely, Malik uses a mannequin dressed in an abaya and asks Nidal, an acting manager, to simulate appropriate workplace interactions with someone of the opposite sex. He advises him not to initiate a handshake and to maintain physical distance. Both bosses aim to foster workplace harmony, but their methods are shaped by their respective cultural norms.

©MBC Studios



▲ Nidal talks to a mannequin.

The U.S. Census reports that the proportion of White Americans dropped from 80 percent in 1980 to 57.8 percent

in 2020. This demographic shift has influenced American workplace culture to embrace racial diversity. Social psychologist Robert Livingston emphasizes in *Harvard Business Review* (2020) that leaders must encourage open communication and team development in a multicultural work environment. In contrast, Saudi workplaces, where over 90 percent of Saudi citizens are Arab, prioritize gender dynamics. Senior Research Fellow Kim says, “Saudi Arabia places more emphasis on conservative approaches to gender interactions compared to other Arab nations.” The British Council’s document “Cultural Top Tips for Working with Saudi Arabia,” (2015) highlights the limitations on public male-female interactions. Although women’s roles were traditionally confined to domestic spheres, Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030* has dramatically increased women’s workforce participation, from 8.5 percent in 2009 to 33.6 percent in 2022. This shift necessitates new workplace norms, including a focus on respectful collaboration between genders.

Accordingly, an indirect adaptation was applied by incorporating content suitable for Saudi culture to enhance viewer acceptance. Unlike the surprising revelation about Oscar, this change is one that, considering the social context, facilitates easier reception by the Saudi audience. Had the original lecture topic of racial diversity been applied directly to *Al Maktab*, the story might not have resonated with viewers.

*Saudi Arabia Vision 2030: Vision 2030 aims to create a vibrant society in which all citizens can thrive and pursue their passions in a booming economy where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Details Make a Good Remake

Al Maktab stays faithful to the structure of *The Office* while embedding elements that highlight Saudi identity. From

incidents to dialogue, even minor details reflect the country’s culture. For instance, the Saudi adaptation incorporates a scene about

prayer, a daily obligation for Muslims. In one episode, when an intern witnesses an argument between Talal and Nidal over a stapler submerged in honey, the intern excuses himself, saying, “I did not perform the afternoon prayer,” and escapes from the situation. *The Office* concluded this event with an interview with the character’s innermost thoughts, but *Al Maktab* added a new code here: “Prayer.” Senior Research Fellow Kim explains, “Praying is a Muslim’s mandatory act, so it is a good excuse to use to avoid uncomfortable situations and an act that can actually be done.” The intern was able to freely say this because he worked in a Saudi workplace where prayer was commonly used as a Muslim duty.

Another noteworthy cultural tweak is replacing Jell-O with honey. While Jell-O would not disrupt the storyline, honey is more culturally relevant in Saudi Arabia, where annual per capita honey consumption is twice the global average. Additionally, even sports references have been localized. The “Basketball” episode in *The Office* becomes “The Football Game” in *Al Maktab*, reflecting the Saudi populace’s passion for soccer, the country’s most popular sport. By embracing these small yet significant details, *Al Maktab* emerges as an exemplary remake, celebrating Saudi identity while retaining the charm of the original.



▲ Jim puts Dwight's stapler in the Jell-O.

▲ Talal puts Nidal's stapler in honey.

Al Maktab exemplifies the art of adaptation, successfully combining the essence of *The Office* with elements that resonate deeply with Saudi culture. Through changes in costume, narrative, and subtle details, the show not only entertains but also provides insight into the cultural and social values of Saudi Arabia. *Al Maktab*’s ultimate goal was not to map the American language perfectly onto the Arabic language. It goes further to “translate” the culture itself. By striking a balance between the universal appeal of its source material and the unique characteristics of its local audience, *Al Maktab* demonstrates the potential of remakes to foster cultural exchange and understanding. This cross-cultural translation reminds viewers of the richness and diversity that storytelling can achieve when tailored to reflect different perspectives and traditions. 🇸🇦

202101330@hufs.ac.kr

THE HUMAN COST OF WAR : A PLEA FOR GAZA CIVILIANS

By Kim Si-yon

Staff Reporter of Social Section

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.” This is Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948. The declaration was a response to the atrocities of World War II. After the war ended, humanity acknowledged the barbarity of the war crimes committed and vowed never to repeat them. However, 76 years after the adoption of the declaration, in 2024, the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis living in the Gaza Strip are being violated due to the Israel-Hamas war, and no active measures are being taken to protect them. As of August 4, 2024, over 41,000 Palestinians had been killed, with more than 95,000, including many permanently disabled, injured. The international community cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the people of Gaza. Therefore, on December 10, Human Rights Day, The Argus aims to shed light on the human rights violations occurring during the Israel-Hamas war and call for solutions.

[Before Reading] Israel-Hamas War

The war between Israel and Hamas began with a surprise attack by the Palestinian Islamist militant group Hamas on October 7, 2023. This is a conflict that escalated into an unprecedented large-scale assault as Israel launched comprehensive military attacks in return. The Israel-Hamas war stems from a territorial dispute over the Palestinian territories* that dates back to the aftermath of World War I. Since the declaration of the State of Israel by Jewish leaders in 1948, the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis has persisted. Hamas, which aims to eliminate Israel and establish an Islamic state, launched its attack on Israel due to the failure to secure Palestinian sovereignty in the region and the lack of respect for religious differences.

*Palestinian Territories: The Palestinian territories refer to not only the Gaza Strip, which is central to the Israel-Hamas war, but also the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and present-day Israel.

A Wound That Could Not Heal: The Enduring Suffering of Palestine Refugees

©Al Jazeera



▲ In 1948, after the Arab-Israeli War broke out, Palestinians leave a village in the Galilee, Israel.



▲ Palestinians flee north Gaza to central Gaza after Israel started attacking the Gaza Strip.

©CNN

The Palestine refugees have always been the victims in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which has lasted for nearly 100 years from the mid-20th century to the present. The large-scale displacement of Palestinian refugees around the time of Israel's founding in 1948 left them without territorial or sovereign guarantees even before the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. Before the declaration of the State of Israel by Jewish leaders, Palestinians lived in the land of Palestine. Palestinians made up 70 percent of the population while Israelis in Palestine at the time constituted 30 percent of the population. However, following World War I, in 1917, Britain promised to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration. This heightened tensions between Jews and Palestinians, as Palestine was considered the ancestral homeland for Jews while it was the actual living space for Palestinians. Amidst growing conflict, Jewish leaders declared the establishment of Israel in Palestine in 1948. In response, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq launched an attack on Israel, which led to the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to flee. About 800,000 Palestinians lost their homes and land during this process. As a result of this war, the territories now known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied by Jordan and Egypt, respectively, among the five Arab countries that had launched the attack, while the rest of Palestinian land was taken over by Israel. The Palestinians who had fled had no homes to return to, as Israel did not allow refugees and their descendants to return. Consequently, the refugees were dispersed across Gaza, the West Bank, Israel, and East Jerusalem.

For decades, successive Israeli governments have oppressed the people of Palestine, claiming that if Palestinians reclaim their homeland, it would threaten Israel's existence as a Jewish

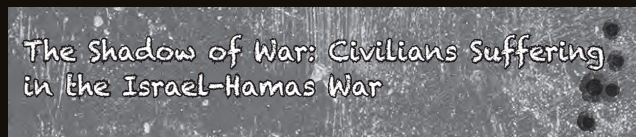
state. Jewish Israeli citizens are guaranteed the right to move and live anywhere at will as long as they have an identity card proving their Jewish Israeli identity. However, people of Palestine living in the Gaza Strip are prohibited from entering the West Bank or Jerusalem. Those living in the West Bank must obtain permission from the Israeli military and pass through checkpoints to visit the Gaza Strip or Jerusalem. After the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, the Israeli government has once again pushed the Palestine people to the brink. On October 28, 2024, the Israeli parliament passed a law banning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) from operating in Israel and East Jerusalem and other occupied territories. According to the BBC on October 30, 2024, the Israeli military has claimed that in total, more than 450 UNRWA staff were members of "terrorist organizations." UNRWA has been the backbone of all relief activities in the Gaza Strip, transporting and distributing aid provided by the United Nations (UN) and the international community, providing medical services and refugee shelters, as the UN has been under siege by Israel for over a year and the war continues. With the Israeli military's blockade of the Gaza Strip, more than 2 million of the 2.3 million people in the area have relied on UNRWA's relief activities. Moreover, more than 1 million refugees who lost their homes in the war have been using UNRWA schools and other shelters. By designating UNRWA as a terrorist organization and cutting off the lifeline of refugees, Israel has essentially abandoned them. Kim Han Min-yeong, a campaigner at Amnesty International Korea, who is investigating human rights violations arising from the hostilities between Israel, Hamas, and other armed groups, explained, "In January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to take all necessary measures to protect civilians. However, the Israeli



©The Times of Israel

▲ Palestinian refugees from north Gaza take shelter at a school run by UNRWA in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

parliament passed a law banning UNRWA's activities in Israel on November 28. This is expected to further exacerbate the already disastrous humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestine territories." While the occurrence of refugees may be inevitable during wartime, it is never justifiable to ignore and abandon their suffering. The suffering of Palestine refugees is an international responsibility as countries have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention to protect refugees and treat them according to internationally recognized standards.



1) Hamas's Attacks on Civilians: War Crimes and the Devastating Consequences



▲ Portraits of people who were taken hostage or killed in the Hamas attack on Supernova music festival are placed at an open-air memorial.

The massacre at the Supernova music festival on October 7, 2023, carried out by Hamas militants, marked the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war. This massacre is considered a representative war crime by Hamas, targeting Israeli civilians. Over 260 people, including foreigners, were killed and more than 1,400 were injured. According to the *Chosun Ilbo* on October 9, 2023, Hamas, armed with weapons, stormed the festival site and opened fire. Dozens of civilians were also abducted that day. Hamas militants knocked on the doors of private homes one by one, pulling out civilians to attack them. Witness testimonies later emerged that Hamas fighters had committed mass sexual assaults and beheadings, while the Israeli police reported a total of over 1,500 cases of sexual violence. According to *The Segye Times* on December 4, 2023, a senior member of the Israeli rescue and emergency response service ZAKA, who helped recover the bodies, claimed that the attacks by Hamas were aimed at sexual violence against women,

specifically targeting civilians. This was not the end of Hamas's attacks on civilians. According to *Yonhap News* on October 11, 2023, after the surprise attack on the Supernova music festival, Hamas militants infiltrated around ten villages and towns in Israel, including Kibbutz* Kfar Aza and Be'eri. It is estimated that about 1,000 Israelis were killed in these attacks, and children, women, and the elderly were taken hostage.

BBC News Korea on December 5, 2023, reported that Israeli women's rights and legal activists have been demanding that major international organizations publicly acknowledge the sexual violence that occurred during Hamas's attacks. Amit Soussana, an Israeli woman who was kidnapped during Hamas's surprise attack on October 7 and released on November 30 of the same year, testified to *The New York Times* about her experience of sexual violence. She described being beaten, tortured, sexually harassed, and assaulted by a Hamas militant who was assigned to monitor her during her captivity. Meanwhile, a Hamas spokesperson, in an interview with *The Washington Post*, denied the allegations, stating that any sexual relations outside of marriage are forbidden in Islam. Han Chang-wan, attorney at law at Bae, Kim & Lee LLC explained, "International law clearly stipulates that any party involved in an armed conflict is subject to international humanitarian law. In international armed conflicts, organizations like Hamas, as belligerent parties, also have the obligation to adhere to international law, including the duty to protect civilians." Hamas will also be held accountable for the attacks and violence directed at civilians during the Israel-Hamas war.

*Kibbutz: A communal settlement in Israel

2) Israeli Military Attacks on Civilian Hospitals and Refugee Camps

The Israeli military has continuously attacked medical facilities, claiming that these civilian areas are being used as bases by Hamas fighters. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, since the outbreak of the war on October 7, 2023, the Israeli military has carried out more than 400 attacks on medical facilities and personnel in the Gaza Strip over five months. On February 15, 2024, the Israeli military launched a large-scale assault with shelling and explosions on Nasser Hospital in Gaza, claiming that Israeli hostages were being held there. Just a month later, on March 18, Israeli forces used tanks and heavy artillery to attack Al-Shifa Hospital. This attack marked the fourth time Al-Shifa



▲ Al-Shifa Hospital now lies in ruins, its original structure barely recognizable after being bombarded by Israel for two weeks.

Hospital had been targeted since the outbreak of the war. In an interview with CNN, a Palestinian male witness described the horror, saying, “Bulldozers crushed bodies of people everywhere around and in the yard of the hospital.” After two weeks of operating Al-Shifa, the Israeli Defense Forces spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, stated 900 suspected militants had been detained during its operation and more than 500 of these had been identified as members of Hamas. Recently, Israel also attacked Kamal Adwan Hospital, the only remaining functioning hospital in northern Gaza. According to the *Kyunghyang Shinmun* on October 29, 2024, the Israeli military’s attack left only one pediatrician at Kamal Adwan Hospital, leaving it in a state of complete paralysis.

Moreover, according to various reports, the Israeli military has been targeting Palestinian refugees as a primary objective. On July 15, 2024, Qatar’s Al Jazeera reported that the Israeli military attacked a UN-run school, Abu Oraiban, in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing at least 17 people and injuring 80. The school housed “thousands of displaced people,” and most of the casualties were women and children. As Al Jazeera reported on the same day, the Israeli military said its air force struck a number of terrorists who were operating in the area of Abu Oraiban school building. The Geneva Conventions, among the most well-known international humanitarian law treaties, establish standards for humanitarian conduct during war, recognizing that the wounded, the sick, medical personnel, and hospitals or mobile medical units should not be targeted even in times of conflict, and any such targeting is considered a war crime. Furthermore, the Conventions explicitly mandate the protection of civilians in war zones. Israel is also a signatory to the Geneva Conventions. Lee Ji-won, a coordinator at the Center for Peace and Disarmament People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy explained that Israel’s actions “constitute a violation of the Geneva

Conventions and fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in accordance with the laws regarding the punishment of crimes related to humanitarian activities or identification markings, specifically Article 12 on war crimes involving humanitarian activities or identification markings, and Article 13 on war crimes using prohibited methods.”

The Responsibility of War: The Role of Global Citizens

1) The Link Between the Blood of Gaza and Arms Exports

Does the world bear no responsibility for the war crimes occurring in Gaza simply because it is not directly involved in the Israel-Hamas war? A close examination of the Israel-Hamas war shows that this is certainly not the case. During the war, Israel has used U.S.-made weapons for attacks in Gaza, with at least 500 confirmed instances of such attacks. According to the Swedish government’s Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 69 percent of the weapons Israel imported between 2019 and 2023 were from the United States. The United States has been providing Israel with US\$3.8 billion worth of military aid annually, as part of a 10-year agreement, ensuring Israel maintains a so-called “qualitative military edge” over neighboring countries. SIPRI also reports that Germany is the second largest exporter of weapons to Israel, accounting for 30 percent of Israel’s arms imports. According to *BBC News Korea* on April 10, 2024, as of November the previous year, Israel imported €300 million (US\$314.6million) worth of weapons from European countries, a tenfold increase from 2022, with most of the exports approved after Hamas’s attack on October 7, 2023.

South Korea is no exception. According to UN Comtrade, since October of the previous year, when Israel began bombing Gaza, South Korea has exported US\$900,000 worth of weapons over the following 11 months. Campaigner Kim Han, explained, “Given the amount of weapons South Korea has exported since Israel began bombing Gaza last October, there is a high probability that South Korean-made weapons are being used to attack civilians in Gaza. The South Korean government, as a signatory of the UN Arms Trade Treaty, has an obligation to halt arms exports to countries involved in war crimes.” Countries including the United States and South Korea signed the UN Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013. The

treaty stipulates that countries should not transfer weapons if they are aware that the weapons could be used to attack civilians or commit war crimes. Yet, many countries continue to violate this agreement by exporting weapons to Israel. While they may not be directly firing the guns themselves, the international community is providing the bullets that threaten and take the lives of Gaza's residents.

2) Global Responsibility in Facing the Truth of the Israel-Hamas War

How is the world viewing the Israel-Hamas war? Nine months after the outbreak of the war, in June 2024, the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry (COI) released its first report, stating that both Israeli authorities and Hamas should be held accountable for war crimes committed against civilians. Since the attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, the COI has conducted interviews with victims and witnesses and employed advanced forensic analysis to investigate human rights violations that occurred on the battlefield. The report found that Israeli authorities had committed various war crimes, including starvation, intentional killing, deliberate targeting of civilians, forced displacement, sexual violence, torture, and arbitrary detention against Gaza's residents. It also concluded that Hamas had perpetrated sexual violence against Israeli women in several regions in a similar manner. The UN's investigation is expected to impact the ongoing investigations and trials by the ICJ and the ICC concerning the Israel-Hamas war. Sung Il-Gwang, a research professor at the Euro-MENA Institute at Sogang University, explained, "The United States is pressuring Israel to increase the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza, threatening to impose an arms embargo if Israel does not do so. Additionally, countries including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have been sending field medical units and providing relief supplies


to Gaza," reflecting the global demand for protection of Gaza's residents. This shift in global perspective signifies a collective commitment to no longer remain silent or condone the suffering of Gaza's residents.

The war crimes and human rights violations occurring in the Israel-Hamas war require a swift and cooperative response from the international community. However,



▲ An Israeli protestor shows her hands with the words "Stop The War" written on them.

the role of individuals, as members of society, is also important. Global citizens must always approach the Israel-Hamas war from a fair and impartial perspective. "This claim could not be independently verified by us." This phrase has frequently appeared in foreign news reports covering the situation that unfolded after Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel. It underscores how, in a rapidly changing environment, media outlets are unable to fully ascertain the details of the ongoing war. Therefore, individuals must be aware that media coverage may sometimes misrepresent or omit certain facts. Lee Dong-hwa, a secretary general at the Asian Dignity Initiative stated, "A nation's parliament, government, and society move according to public opinion. Anyone who listens to the voices of Gaza's residents and, even indirectly, takes part in breaking the vicious cycle of war crimes should be involved." Coordinator Lee stated, "The solidarity of a single individual can give great courage to the Palestinians, who are resisting simply by existing." By amplifying the voices of the marginalized and demanding accountability for human rights violations, individuals can play a vital role in shaping a more just future.

What is this war for? Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel's goal in the war in Gaza is to "destroy Hamas's rule and military capabilities." Since the war broke out, Israel has claimed to have destroyed 18 out of 24 Hamas military units in Gaza and completed the dismantling of Hamas's military organization in northern Gaza. Despite this, the war continues. Israel insists that it must continue in order to achieve a "complete victory." But what does "complete victory" really mean? Seventy-six years ago, the international community declared that the human rights of every individual are precious and must be protected. Returning to that spirit, the international community must take action to end the war crimes occurring in the Israel-Hamas war by urging Israel and Hamas to both heed to international law and prioritize civilians' safety. 

siyonkim@hufs.ac.kr

Behind the Walls:

The Roots of Europe's Anti-Immigration Surge

By Cho Subin

Associate Editor of Theory & Critique Section

In an increasingly inclusive Europe, walls against migrants are rising. Out of the 281 million international migrants worldwide, around 87 million, or 30 percent, have moved to Europe. Despite Europe's history of openness, anti-migrant sentiment is growing. Political parties promoting anti-immigration policies have been gaining momentum since the 2015 Europe's refugee crisis* and are using the criticism of pro-migrant policies to strengthen their position. With key elections in 2024, including the European Parliament vote in June, anti-immigration sentiment has surged in Europe. What has led to the rise of anti-immigration sentiment? The United Nations (UN) designated December 18 as International Migrants Day to acknowledge the rights of the world's increasing migrant workers and members of their families. Celebrating International Migrants Day, The Argus examines the roots of anti-immigration sentiment from a social-psychological and neuroscientific perspective, helping readers better understand the broader context.

*2015 Europe's Refugee Crisis: This refers to the chaos that occurred from 2014 to 2015 as Europe hosted large numbers of refugees from the Syrian civil war.

[Before Reading] International Migrants

In general, the term "migrants" is used by organizations like the UN, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the European Union (EU) when conducting statistics and research on people who move to a new place. International migrants move to another country including immigrants, who move permanently, and refugees. In recent years, the term "migrant background population" has been used to describe both first-generation and second-generation migrants, the latter being those born in their host country with at least one foreign-born parent. While definitions may vary, this article follows the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in defining migrants as individuals living in a country other than their birthplace for over 12 months. Meanwhile, this article uses the term "anti-immigration sentiment," as commonly used in mainstream media, to refer to hostility toward migrants.



Why Do People Hate “Them?”

1-1. The Formation of “Our Group”: Self-Domestication

Hostility toward people from other groups is not a new phenomenon. Human babies around six months old show strong attachment to their parents and cry when faced with strangers. Distinguishing between in-groups and out-groups, people naturally bond with their in-group. However, this group loyalty often leads to fear and aggression toward out-groups. Brian Hare, a professor from the Department of Evolutionary Anthropology at Duke University, explains this with the self-domestication hypothesis. This theory suggests that Homo sapiens evolved to be more social, much like domesticated animals. Professor Hare’s studies on human fossils show that behavioral and physical changes seen in domesticated animals also occurred in human evolution. For example, dogs became friendlier through domestication but also developed aggressive behaviors like barking at potential intruders. Similarly, humans show heightened vigilance when their loved ones are threatened. Physical changes are also observed. In domesticated foxes, selective breeding for friendliness influenced growth hormone levels, altering their appearance. Humans experienced similar changes about 50,000 years ago during their evolution into Homo sapiens. Steven E. Churchill, a human paleontologist from Duke University, and his student Bob Ceiri show that human skulls from 200,000 to 90,000 years ago had higher brow ridges and longer faces than those from 38,000 to 10,000 years ago. Professor Hare suggests these changes were due to lower testosterone levels, as this hormone interacts with others and may increase aggression. According

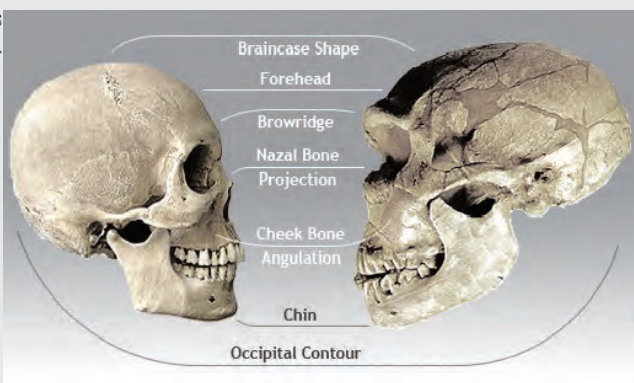
to this theory, Homo sapiens thrived by being less aggressive and more social than earlier human species.

Humans’ unique ability to form in-groups through self-domestication is rooted in the development of self-control. While self-domestication might exist in other animals, Homo sapiens stand out with their innate capacity for extreme self-control. Suzana Herculano-Houzel, a neuroscientist from Vanderbilt University linked self-control to an increase in neuron density and number in the cerebral cortex, particularly the prefrontal cortex. The cerebral cortex is a collection of nerve cells covering the brain’s surface. Its front part, the prefrontal cortex regulates self-control and emotional responses. Henry M. Wellman, a psychologist from the University of Michigan found a correlation between weak emotional responses and stronger self-control, aggression, and cooperation. Weaker emotions lead to increased activity in the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), which regulates emotional responses. As self-domestication progresses, oxytocin, a hormone that enhances empathy, becomes more influential. Oxytocin activates the mPFC and reduces fear and disgust responses, fostering trust within the group. This suggests that people evolved to perceive their group members as family. This combination of self-control and emotional regulation shapes people’s unique social cognition. By suppressing emotional responses through self-domestication, people enhance their ability to make prudent judgments and actions. In short, people’s capacity to form groups through affinity has been essential for survival and development.

1-2. The Formation of “Them”: Dehumanization

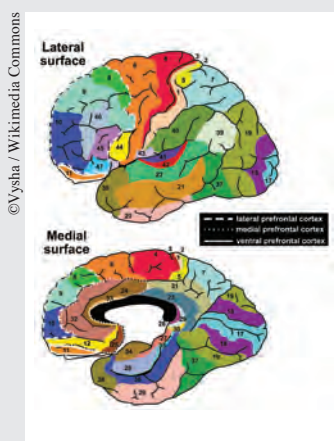
While humans evolved to form social bonds through affinity, this same affinity can also lead to hostility towards outsiders. In extreme cases, it can dehumanize others, leading to harmful actions. One explanation for the extreme acts of violence that go beyond simple distrust of out-groups is the tendency to see the other side as less than human. This dehumanization was evident during the 2014 Gaza War,* where brutal acts were reported. The conflict lasted 50 days, resulting in around 2,200 deaths, with 70 percent of the casualties being civilians. After the war, a dehumanization test conducted on the parties involved showed that both sides viewed each other as less than human. British Philosopher Philip Goff defines dehumanization as the perception of an out-group as subhuman beings, evoking

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Paleoanthropology



▲ In anatomical comparison, skulls of Homo sapiens (L) and Neanderthals (R) differ in brow ridge prominence and overall length.

reactions such as disgust, fear, and hatred. Dehumanization can be triggered by seemingly trivial distinctions, like wearing an armband, and can escalate from minor rivalries to extreme acts of violence, especially when one's group feels threatened. Muzafer Sherif, an American social psychologist, demonstrated



▲ According to the Brodmann Area (BA) map, BA 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 25 constitute the mPFC.

In a study “Dehumanizing the Lowest of the Low: Neuroimaging Responses to Extreme Out-Groups” (2006), Princeton University’s Neuroscientist Lasana T. Harris and Psychologist Susan T. Fiske demonstrated the neurobiological basis of dehumanization. By using functional magnetic resonance imaging, they observed brain activity while participants viewed different social groups. This study utilizes the Stereotype Content Model, which categorizes the emotional system of individuals or objects of a particular group. The emotions toward a group were categorized into warmth and competence, and the degree of each emotion was measured as low and high. The study found that when participants viewed groups categorized as “low warmth, low competence,” like drug addicts and overflowing toilets, the mPFC was hardly activated. The mPFC is typically involved in recognizing humans and making social judgments. When viewing out-groups with negative emotions, the brain’s response suggests that these groups are perceived as less than human.

*2014 Gaza War: This refers to a war that began when the Palestinian militant group Hamas kidnapped and killed Israeli teenagers, prompting Israel to bomb the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip in retaliation. The conflict, which lasted from July 8 to August 26, 2014, caused widespread civilian casualties.



Europe Today: Why the Hostility Toward Migrants?

2-1. The Unique Characteristics of Europe

While dehumanization can lead to prejudice and discrimination, it is important to note that anti-immigration sentiment is not universal. “Europe 2024 has a special point, which is the change from the existing Dublin Regulation to the EU Migration Pact,” said Lee Do-Sol, a lecturer of the Department of Scandinavian Languages at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. The Dublin Regulation is a treaty that requires asylum seekers to claim asylum in the first EU country they enter. If they subsequently apply for asylum in another EU country, their application is typically rejected and they are returned to the original country of entry. While signed in 1997, the 2015 refugee crisis, with a surge of asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq, placed a significant burden on Mediterranean countries. The upcoming EU Migration Pact aims to reform the current asylum system. It seeks to redistribute asylum seekers more fairly among EU countries and establish greater cooperation with non-EU countries, often called “safe third countries.” In short, there is a genuine interest in externalization, or “outsourcing” of migration. These economic, political, and regional factors, combined with media coverage, have contributed to the rise of anti-immigration discourse. Anti-immigration parties may seek to influence EU policies by gaining seats in the European Parliament, especially when EU policies favor migration. In such a context, these parties may become vocal opponents of pro-migration initiatives.

According to OECD data, Europe has been a major destination for migrants over the past two decades. Five of the top 10 countries with the highest number of international migrants are European, as of 2021. Lecturer Lee explained the rising anti-immigration sentiment in Europe by stating that “A lack of physical, human, and institutional resources to care for them, coupled with growing fatigue, is contributing to the rise of anti-immigration sentiment.” According to UN statistics, Germany hosted the largest proportion of migrants in Europe in 2021, accounting for approximately 19.8 percent of its total population. These migrants primarily originate from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, with significant numbers coming from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Nigeria.

2-2. Perceived Threats to a Stable Life

Of course, interests also play a role here. Anti-immigration groups especially in the EU, like their counterparts elsewhere, represent specific interests, and by extension, particular beliefs and values. The more immigrants are perceived as causing harm, the stronger the anti-immigration sentiment becomes. Thus, anti-immigration sentiment cannot be solely attributed to nativist-immigrant tensions, but also to the role of gatekeepers for subsequent migrant groups. In this case, the interests of the already established group significantly influence the gatekeeping process. It is important to recognize that anti-immigration sentiment is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors, including economic and social interests. According to an article in *The Guardian* on May 28, 2024, the Eurobarometer survey showed a rise in anti-immigration sentiment across Europe over the past four years, particularly among young people. Those in the 15-24 and 25-34 age brackets held negative views towards immigration, showing increases of 3 and 4 percentage points, respectively, in anti-immigration sentiment.



▲ Europe's GDP growth shows its economic growth to be sluggish.

The recent economic downturn in Europe has exacerbated anti-immigration sentiment. A chant at an August 2024 anti-immigration protest in the United Kingdom, "Use the money for migrant housing to build homes for the homeless," shows this sentiment. Many analysts believe that economic instability has fueled anti-immigration sentiment. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe has experienced sluggish economic growth. Based on the economic analysis for Europe by the Bank of Korea (BOK), released on November 15, 2024, the euro area recorded 0.0 percent year-on-year Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) growth in the third quarter of 2023. In addition, growth slowed to -0.1 percent in the fourth quarter due to the cumulative impact of high inflation and high interest rates. Despite the recovery with 0.3 percent growth in the first quarter of 2024, the BOK said the recovery in production and consumption is still not significant as households' consumer sentiment is slowly recovering due to high economic uncertainty.

Economic hardship in Europe has fueled anti-immigration sentiment. As Elisa Rustenbach, a researcher at Pennsylvania State University, explained in the journal article, "Sources of Negative Attitudes Toward Immigrants in Europe: A Multi-Level Analysis" (2010), economic factors, such as competition for jobs, can contribute to negative attitudes towards immigrants. Low-wage workers, especially, may feel threatened by immigration. Additionally, economic dissatisfaction often leads people to blame migrants for the recession. Migrants often find themselves in a lower socioeconomic position in their host country than they might expect, given their education and qualifications. This is often due to issues like credential recognition and language barriers. As a result, migrants tend to have lower rates of education and employment, which can strain the resources of the host country.

Social disruption caused by immigration can also fuel anti-immigration sentiment. Sweden, for instance, has experienced a surge in gun violence linked to migrant communities. As an advocate of immigration, Sweden welcomed a record-high 163,000 refugees in 2015 alone, the highest per population in the EU. However, the country now has the highest per capita rate of gun violence in the EU. According to the Swedish Ministry of Justice, crime rates among children of immigrant families are 3.1 times higher than those of native-born Swedish children. Manne Gerell, an associate professor from the Department of Criminology at Malmö University, said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on May 22, 2023, that "the problem was caused by poor integration and exacerbated by years of insufficient response from authorities, police, and politicians." In some cases, the failure to integrate immigrants and the subsequent social tensions have led to negative attitudes toward newcomers.



Beyond Anti-Immigration Sentiment



▲ Protesters against anti-immigration hold signs and chant slogans in London, United Kingdom on August 10, 2024.

“Stop the far right: Don’t let the racists divide us.” Thousands chanted this slogan during a protest in the United Kingdom on August 10, 2024, against an anti-immigration protest provoked after three children were killed and 10

were injured in a knife attack at a dance class in Southport, near Liverpool, in July 29, 2024. Economic hardship and social unrest can fuel hostility towards marginalized groups, including immigrants. However, many are actively resisting this trend. Samira Ali, the head of Stand Up to Racism, which is a British anti-racism group, criticizes the far-right for stoking bigotry and Islamophobia. Given the targeting of Muslims in anti-immigration sentiment, activists like Ali fear that such sentiments could escalate into extremism. However, not all anti-immigration protesters are racially or religiously motivated. As Jacob Davey, a director of Policy & Research, Counter-Hate at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue in the United Kingdom specializing in extremism, told *The Guardian* on August 3, 2024, “There have been known figureheads at protests – including some avowed neo-Nazis – but there is also this loose network that includes concerned local citizens and football hooligans.” He added that these individuals are connected through loose online networks, often influenced by unknown and untrustworthy sources spreading misinformation.



▲ Anti-immigration protesters set a police van on fire in Southport, United Kingdom on July 30, 2024.

Beyond this anti-immigration sentiment, modern societies are grappling with growing tensions along the lines of gender and generation.

When individuals with similar but varying beliefs form a group, they often converge on more extreme positions. This phenomenon, known as group polarization, can lead to increased social conflict and radicalization. As French Social psychologists Marisa Zavalloni and Serge Moscovici argued, the average person in a group is not the group’s personality, but rather more extreme than the most extreme individual, a phenomenon they call group polarization. For example, political polarization can lead to social conflict as individuals with extreme views influence others. The waterfall effect, one of the causes of group polarization, refers to the rapid spread of minority beliefs and perspectives to the majority, potentially leading to radical change. The problem is that group polarization can radicalize even those who initially held moderate views.

The proliferation of fake news, facilitated by various media platforms, has exacerbated group polarization. Indeed, misinformation about the child killings in Southport served as a catalyst for the large anti-immigration protests in the United Kingdom in August 2024. Tommy Robinson, the founder of the far-right group English Defense League and an anti-Islam activist, posted on his social media platform, X, a message falsely claiming that the attacker was a Syrian Islamic immigrant. The post incited anti-immigration protesters to take to the streets and spiral out of control into violence. It is crucial to be vigilant against the tendency to express overly extreme views towards other groups due to group polarization. The stabbing highlights the power of fake news. People must be cautious not to allow extreme arguments to draw us into a spiral of group polarization, leading to an expanding list of targets for their dislike or like.

Humans have survived by developing advanced cognitive abilities through traits like cooperation and social bonding while feeling hostility towards out-groups. This tendency is a double-edged sword. While it has driven civilization forward, it has also led to conflict by creating divisions and animosity. Currently, new threats are rising such as the escalating climate crisis and ongoing security issues, which highlight the possibility of us facing the same challenges as migrants. The lines separating in-groups and out-groups are becoming increasingly blurred. Instead of focusing on these divisions, maybe it is time to lean into the human capacity for connection and empathy. 🌐

subincho2022@hufs.ac.kr

Analyzing Capitalism and Social Inequality Through *Squid Game*

By Lee Seeun

Associate Editor of Theory & Critique Section

“I never forced anyone to play the game. They all came back on their own, didn’t they?” This is what host Oh Il-nam said to protagonist Seong Gi-hun, who blames him after the *Squid Game*. This line puts the blame for the brutal outcome of having to kill one another in an extreme survival competition solely on the players themselves, but are their deaths the result of their own choices? Season 1 of *Squid Game*, released on Netflix on September 17, 2021, explores the economic inequality in South Korea (hereafter Korea) through a brutal competition in which individuals at the margins of society risk everything in a desperate bid for survival. The series powerfully resonates with contemporary social issues, reflecting the struggles of modern society. Despite the death of most of the players in Season 1, the *Squid Game* is repeated again. This suggests that economic inequality still persists in Korean society. With the release of Season 2 on December 26, 2024, *The Argus* will examine the class system that runs through the entire series, the competition for survival and the moral dilemmas that arise from it, and consider what direction modern society should take in the hyper-competitive society created by capitalism.



[Before Reading] *Squid Game*

Season 1 of *Squid Game*, released on Netflix on September 17, 2021, is a Korean drama that follows 456 people living in massive debt and despair as they compete in a survival game for a prize of 45.6 billion won (US\$32.6 million). The players, all of whom have been pushed to the brink by economic hardship, will compete in six games that Koreans often played as children, such as “Red Light, Green Light,” “Sugar Honeycomb,” and “Tug of War.” If they fail or lose, the only thing that awaits them is death. As the games progress, the players reveal their true instincts as they help or betray each other in increasingly extreme situations. In this competition for survival, the drama has resonated around the world, sharply exposing the economic inequalities of modern society and the ambivalence of human nature.



Economic Inequality



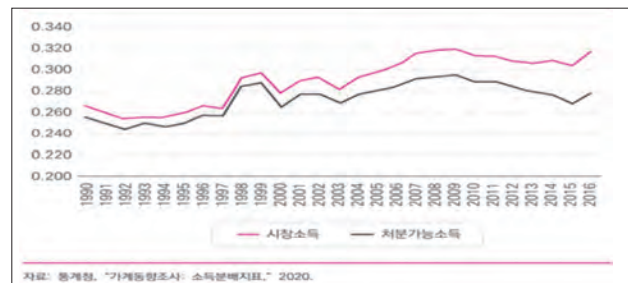
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▲ Players, burdened by overwhelming debts and financial struggles, listen as the managers emphasize their dire circumstances.

“All of you in this room right now are standing on the precipice of life, with debts you can’t afford.” The manager says to the players as the *Squid Game* begins. The players of the *Squid Game* paint a picture of the inequality that capitalism has created. When *Squid Game* appeared on Netflix, the world’s media focused not only on Korean cultural content, but also on the inequality of Korean society. Is Korea really economically unequal? According to Gimm Gong-hoe, an associate professor of the Department of Economics in Gyeongsang National University, “One of the representative measures of income inequality in a country is the Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient has a value between 0 and 1, with the more equal the income distribution, the closer it is to 0, and the more unequal it is to 1. As of 2022, Korea’s Gini coefficient is 0.324, which puts it in the middle to low range within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This means that inequality is quite high,” he said, explaining the situation in Korea. But what are the structural causes of such inequality? French economist, Thomas Piketty is one of the most prominent statistical researchers on the subject. Although Piketty’s theory has been criticized by some Marxist economists as being trapped within the framework of mainstream economics, his theory has remained one of the most prominent theories for analyzing the process of capital accumulation and rising income inequality in capitalist societies. According to Piketty’s theory, the main reason why wealth is overly concentrated in certain classes is due to low-growth societies where the return on capital* is consistently and significantly higher than the growth rate of national income. In the case of Korea, economic growth has generally been significantly lower since the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. Capitalism tends to increase inequality when the rate of return on capital is higher than the rate of economic

growth. This means that wealth accumulated in the past is re-capitalized at a much faster rate than economic growth. According to Kim Hyoungjin, a professor of Chung-Ang University School of Economics, “Asset returns are returns that only wealthy people have. It is estimated that there are only about 5 percent of the Korean population who have more asset income than labor income. If the economic growth rate eventually equals the average growth rate of workers’ real wages in the long run, but the return on assets is higher than the economic growth rate, inequality will increase because the growth rate of assets is greater than the growth rate of workers’ wages. In the case of Korea, the return on financial assets is not high, but the return on real estate is very high, so inequality has increased,” he said, explaining the causes of social inequality in Korea. In such an unequal capitalism, what kind of life do people at the bottom of the ladder, like players in the *Squid Game*, lead?

*Return on Capital: A company’s profit for a particular period compared with the capital invested in the company



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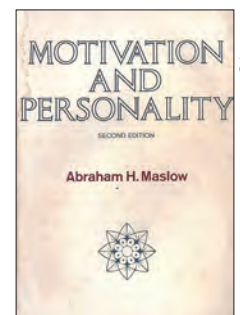
▲ The graph illustrates the trend of Korea’s Gini coefficient over time, reflecting changes in income inequality.



How Far Can One Go for Money?



American psychologist Abraham Maslow’s book *Motivation and Personality* (2021) introduces the “Hierarchy of Needs,” outlining the core theory of human needs’ stages and examines human motivation through a holistic lens. The *Squid Game* forces the players to prioritize survival over their value as human beings, reminding us of the conflicts faced by people in extreme competition. In a modern society based on capitalism, how far are people willing to go when they



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are at the bottom of the pecking order with no money? This book seeks to answer this question by exploring how human needs are expressed through motivation and personality.

1) Basic Needs and the Hierarchy

What happens to people at the bottom of the hierarchy due to economic inequality? After witnessing the deaths of many people in the first game, “Red Light, Green Light,” the players in the Squid Game are terrified, give up the game, and return to the real world. However, after experiencing their harsh reality, they are willing to risk their lives for money to play the game again. Just as the Squid Game players returned to the game for money, all human behavior stems from motivation. Individuals are driven to act in a certain way because they have an internal drive, which can be called a desire, need, or fear. What are these drives that make one tick? According to his hierarchy of needs, Maslow focused on the factors that cause and sustain human behavior, or lead to inaction. He identified that individuals have five needs, and that these needs form a hierarchy of motivators. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists of two basic premises: that a satisfied need loses its power as a motivator until a new need arises, and that the needs of the average person are not of equal intensity but are hierarchical.

According to Maslow, the starting point is the so-called physiological drive. Of all the other needs, physiological drives are the strongest. If food, safety, love, and respect are all lacking, a person will want food more strongly than anything else. The second need is the need for safety. Once an individual’s physiological needs are met, the need for safety takes precedence and strongly influences behavior. In the absence of physical or economic security, the need for safety often manifests as a preference for job stability and the purchase of insurance policies. After physiological and safety needs are met, the third level of social needs is related to interpersonal relationships and belonging. Humans are social beings, so we have a need to belong to a group, to maintain relationships, and to be accepted by others. The fourth is the need for esteem. This is divided into two parts: internal esteem needs, which are the need to feel self-esteem, autonomy, and fulfillment internally, and external esteem needs, which are the need to be recognized externally



▲ Maslow’s hierarchy of needs depicted as a pyramid, illustrates the progression from basic physiological needs to self-actualization.

and to have some status within a group. Finally, once esteem needs are somewhat met, the need for self-actualization is the strongest. The need for self-actualization refers to the desire for self-fulfillment, which is the desire to realize one’s potential for self-improvement. It is the tendency to become the best version of oneself, to realize what is true of oneself.

2) Poverty in Korea

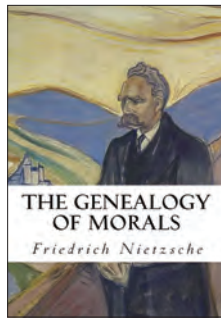
The players in the Squid Game lacked both physiological and safety needs, the most basic levels in the hierarchy of human needs. The lack of the needs can also be found in anyone in the real world. In a capitalist society, the most basic physiological needs are determined by income and capital. The lack of resources to fulfill basic material needs is called poverty. “The absolute poverty rate is decreasing as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increases, but the relative poverty rate is increasing as income inequality increases,” said Professor Kim, explaining the current poverty trend in Korea. The absolute poverty line was historically determined based on the minimum subsistence cost published by the Ministry of Health and Welfare; however, it is no longer calculated due to a decline in the population living in absolute poverty. The median income refers to the income level of the individual positioned in the middle when all incomes are arranged in ascending order. The relative poverty rate, in turn, represents the percentage of people earning less than a specified proportion of the median income, typically 50 percent. According to the OECD, Korea’s relative poverty rate is 16.7 percent, the fourth highest among 37 countries. These poor people are unable to secure the minimum resources needed to survive, and their daily lives are often unable to fulfill even their physiological and safety needs.



How Evil Can Capitalism Make Someone?



Genealogy of Morals (1887), written by Friedrich Nietzsche, a philosopher from the Kingdom of Prussia (modern-day Germany), examines the origins and evolution of the concepts of good and evil, arguing that these ideas stem from the development of guilt and the human conscience. The environment of the Squid Game is structured to make it difficult to survive without losing humanity. Players value moral values that go beyond mere survival, but these values can easily break down in extreme situations. Their survival instincts lead them to make immoral choices, and they find themselves losing their humanity in the process. These dramatic situations raise questions about how moral conscience works in a capitalist society. How does the capitalist system reshape notions of good and evil, and what does conscience and humanity look like in this environment? This book will trace the origins of how capitalism affects moral conscience and notions of good and evil.



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being killed in the game. Why do the players commit such horrible acts, even killing others to fulfill their personal desires? Nietzsche explains that human morality is divided into two: master and slave. Master morality is the morality of wealthy masters who consider themselves and their actions to be “good.” Thus, they consider strength, power, health, wealth, and happiness to be “good,” and they sense what Nietzsche calls “pathos of distance”^{*} between themselves and the poor, unhealthy, weak, and incompetent. These feelings of the master generate the opposition of good and bad in the master’s morality. Meanwhile, those who oppose master morality develop slave morality. The poor, weak, and incompetent who serve slave morality come to hate and resent the power and health of their masters, and they label themselves as “good” while their masters are “evil.” In other words, slave morality reflects their own insecurities and resentments, labeling the strong as “evil” and glorifying their suffering as “good.” In this way, slave morality is a clear contrast between good and evil.

It is within this contrast that Nietzsche explains the concept of resentment. Nietzsche argues that the moment of slave revolt in morality is when resentment itself becomes a creative force and gives rise to values. This resentment is that of those who see themselves as harmless beings who abandon any real or acted response and take revenge only in their imagination. Because slave morality is passive, negative, and reactionary in nature, it arises from the denial of all that is different, of all that is not self, and as such, it turns its gaze outward and resents the hostile external forces that oppose or oppress it. Since the weak are unable to strike back directly against the strong, they accumulate resentment and repressed anger within themselves. When these resentments are given the opportunity to be released, they manifest themselves as anger and evil. In other words, when the oppressed are given the opportunity to take out their pent-up resentment on others in certain situations, they suppress their own moral conflicts and act ruthlessly. In this process, the moral ideas taught by society are temporarily broken down or justified in a certain way.

1) The Source of the Bad Behavior



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▲ Amid chaos and desperation, players turn against one another, driven by the grim realization that every death adds 100 million won (US\$71,457) to the prize pool, pushing morality aside for survival.

“People are dead! Can’t you hear me? We shouldn’t be doing this! We shouldn’t be killing each other like this!” In the Squid Game, the final prize pool increases by 100 million won (US\$71,457) for every player who dies during the competition. Realizing this, the players kill each other when the game is not in progress to reduce their chances of

^{*}Pathos of Distance: When human beings are divided into two types, such as the strong and the weak, the noble and the lowly, etc., the former do not lower themselves to the latter, but try to defend themselves by distancing themselves from the latter.

2) Conscience

As the game progresses, some people feel guilty about killing others. Players are constantly torn between the guilt that comes from the situation of living only if someone else dies and the need for money to survive in the real world. This conflict is something we can easily relate to, so it is easy to immerse yourself in their emotions. What would you do if you had to harm others in order to get a promotion or make more money? You may feel similar moral dilemmas to the players. Why do people feel guilty, even in the most extreme situations? Nietzsche suggests that instincts that cannot be directed outward inevitably turn inward. The hunting, cruelty, and persecution that characterized human life in prehistoric times had to be suppressed with the advent of settled society. As a result, all violence was turned inward, creating a new wildness that had to be fought and overcome, and in the process, an inner life and remorse began to emerge. In other words, remorse is the resentment of the weak who cannot strike back directly against the strong. Unable to express their anger directly, the repressed people internalize their feelings and express them in the form of guilt. The guilt felt by the characters in the *Squid Game* is that they are forced to make cruel choices in order to survive in extreme competition, yet they instinctively feel guilt and remorse. This is the result of the internalization of Nietzsche's slave morality, and the moral ideas they have learned from their society are strong in extreme situations. They must do evil things for their own survival, but at the same time, their internalized morality proscribes those actions, which causes them to feel guilty.



The Never-Ending Squid Game



The *Squid Game* came to an end when there was only one person left. However, the *Squid Game* that we thought was over is now starting again. This suggests that Korean society

is in a constant cycle of economic inequality. The current low growth in Korean society is not the result of stabilization of the economy and society, but rather a sharp decline in the growth potential and vitality of the economy. Given the current job crisis for young people, the rapid aging of society, the declining birth rate, and the growing economic inequality, it is likely that our economy will be stuck in a worse state than it is now. Professor Gimm said, "Many scholars have attributed Korea's rapid economic growth to its unique dynamic, where the most important element of that dynamic is class mobility - the possibility for anyone to succeed if they work hard enough. This possibility is diminishing in Korean society, partly as a result of low growth." So how did the hierarchies that divide Koreans become ingrained? "It is true that the 'bottom' of our society has risen a lot since the 'Great Workers Struggle' in the late 1980s," Professor Gimm explains, "but in the meantime, many artificial criteria have been created to separate the 'winners' from the 'losers' in our society. It has become customary to separate people based on whether they work full-time or part-time, whether they work for a large company or a small company, whether they went to college or not, and inequality in our society has rapidly increased along these lines."

Piketty explains that rising inequality can lead to the breakdown of democracy. "Democracy is a 'one person, one vote' political system in which all members of a community have equal rights. But when inequality grows so deep that a few rich people control the economic resources and income of the majority, politics will not be free from their 'money power,'" Professor Kim says. Piketty describes this situation as "the mechanism by which capitalist structures of inequality limit individual agency," and warns that democratic values and freedoms are threatened as the concentration of capital leads to greater inequality between classes.

Economic inequality and hyper-competition are harsh realities of modern capitalist societies, pushing individuals to the brink and forcing them to confront profound moral dilemmas. It raises urgent questions about human values, societal priorities, and the balance between individual success and ethical choices. As viewers anticipate Season 2 of *Squid Game*, it is crucial to reflect on the structural issues that perpetuate such disparities and to examine mutual support over relentless competition. *Squid Game* is not just a story of individual desperation but a call to address the deep-rooted inequalities that define our world so the readers should take this opportunity to think about economic inequality and the moral dilemmas it can bring about. 📺

yisuws@hufs.ac.kr




What a University Should Be For

By Lee Jue-hyun
Editorial Consultant

In November, students at Dongduk Women's University (hereafter Dongduk) raised their voices strongly in opposition to the school's attempt to become coeducational. Protesting the university's unilateral decision without consulting the students, other women's universities in Seoul also expressed their support, striving to preserve their identity as women's institutions. What is this space these students are so determined to protect? More broadly, what kind of space should a university be?

After news of the Dongduk situation spread, many discussions about the purpose of women's universities surfaced online. Those who had attended a women's university described it as a place with "freedom to lie down on the grass" and "a space where we can freely discuss women's issues without censorship." For these people, a women's university is a community where they can learn about the unique characteristics of women and engage in free discussions about womanhood. It seems the reason that Dongduk students and many other women's university students came together to raise their voices is because they believe that the space they experienced as a "women's university" enabled their growth.

However, the third-party discussions about the Dongduk situation were quite detached from the values the students sought to protect. A post asked, "If this were Seoul National University, would this struggle have been dealt with in the same way?" This was a valid question, as many discussions about the situation mocked and belittled Dongduk. The university, a reward for some after twelve years in a strict educational system, had become the basis for all the claims made, and it seemed to have turned into the easiest method of determining the merit of the arguments. Additionally, when Dongduk's job fair was disrupted by the protest, some reacted by claiming it was incomprehensible, accusing the students of losing touch with reality. Unlike the students who were challenging the institution to protect their identity, these critics viewed the university simply as a stepping stone for employment, reducing it to a process for obtaining credentials. How should we strike a balance between the university's "identity" and its "competitiveness?"

Ultimately, this question is not limited to women's universities. It is a question about how students define the university where they will spend two to six or more years, and what values they hope to learn in that space. The academic and educational values of truth-seeking and personal growth seem distant from the university today. The university has become another cog in the process to gain employment and a place to build one's resume, leading us to question whether silence now equates to flexibility. In our society, many argue that the era when university students' passion and drive were seen as necessary calls for change is long gone, but I still believe that the romantic era we grew up in can return. I believe that somehow, we must continue to speak the words we need to say in this time and space, and always strive to understand why others think differently. This incident once again begs the question of what a university should be for. The students have spoken, and now it is time for the university and society to respond. It is time for us to deeply reflect on the kind of university we dream of. 

hufswspace0520@hufs.ac.kr



A Chapter in The Argus

Kim Yi-eun

This year at The Argus has been a year where I can truly say I lived with passion. At the beginning of the year, everything felt new, and giving and receiving feedback, sharing opinions, and speaking out during editorial meetings felt awkward. Now, I find myself already missing the late-night meetings and the rush of deadlines. It has been such a rewarding experience. It has been a pleasure to be a part of The Argus, and I will always cherish the experience and memories that I will never forget.

Park Gyeong-jin

Coming back to The Argus after a year's absence, there were so many things that felt awkward- from the editorial plan to writing articles to giving feedback. However, when I attended my first editorial meeting, everything fell into place as if I had not been away for a year, and I was as happy as ever to be back on The Argus staff for another semester. All those unforgettable times, the reporters I worked with, and the articles I wrote will stay with me forever. Thank you all with all my heart.

Lee Seeun

The Argus has fueled my life. The positive energy I get from The Argus has allowed me to be passionate about other important things in my life, such as my studies and friendships. However, the most valuable thing I have gained from The Argus is friendships with the people that I work with. Life at The Argus can be very demanding at times, making me feel as if I am completely spent at times, but when I am with the other reporters, I feel like I can do anything. I am so grateful to The Argus for giving me the most jam-packed, intense experience of my life.

Cho Subin

This semester, I felt a stronger sense of being part of The Argus team. Discussing topics with my peers in editing meetings was truly rewarding. Even though we had to stay up late for editing meetings and I had to run to catch the last subway, it was enjoyable. As I leave The Argus at the end of this semester, I am grateful that I have left a tiny footprint on the continuing journey of The Argus.



Kim Si-yon

Before becoming a staff reporter for The Argus, I believed that The Argus was indispensable to HUFS. However, after a semester as a staff reporter, I realized that The Argus is equally essential to me. Through The Argus, I have learned how to be passionate about what I do and how to love my work. I have also gained an understanding of my limitations, imparting me with humility. As a staff reporter for The Argus, I now aspire to become someone “The Argus needs.”

Park Se-eun

As a staff reporter for The Argus, I initially found it bizarre to spend hours discussing a single topic and providing feedback on each other’s articles. However, the time spent working alongside other reporters with a shared passion and a common goal brought me a deep sense of fulfillment. Immersing myself in my work and writing with genuine affection for my articles was an invaluable experience, one that cannot be replaced by anything else. I will always remember the feeling of walking out of the building after late night editing meetings, breathing in the fresh night air.

Kim Su-yeon

Looking back on my time at The Argus, I vividly recall a particular late night spent with a fellow reporter, working together at her place. The pressure of the deadline was intense, but we persevered, writing through the night. Whenever I got stuck on a part of my article, she would willingly help me. The shared experience of that late night still lingers in my memory.

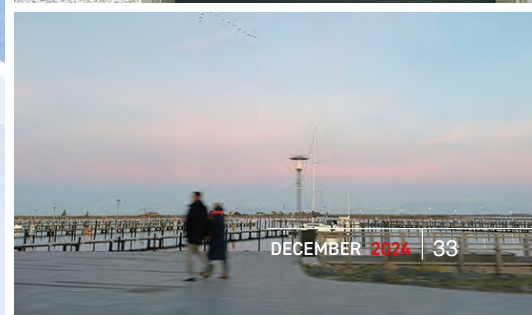
Lee Jue-hyun

The Argus was a place where I shaped my identity as a university student. I still remember the hours-long meetings where each reporters shared differing perspectives. All those times and every word we wrote, driven by the hope of making the society we live in a better place, became a stepping stone for our growth. I wonder what kind of people we will become after all these reflections and efforts. In the whirlwind of university life, which rushes by like a fleeting moment, I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity to share such an intense and meaningful part of it as an Argusian.

Nam Gyeong-eun

Wind starts blowing and the leaves fall in November in Hamburg. It is always cloudy with misty rain, and the sun is gone already from 5 p.m. Still, everybody is excited about Christmas, but somehow, I am not. However, I guess it’s the perfect mood and temperature to boil some tea and write some sentences. Thanks to The Argus, I could obligate myself a little to draw out those sentences from myself and turn my feelings into tangible ideas, as is happening now, as I write my last epilogue of this year with a “pico” bread and green tea beside me.

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