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The Germans. Among my ancestors.

The bad people who [tried to bring down Greek radicals.](#)

The good people [who welcomed Syrian sufferers.](#)

The bad people who [tried to deceive the United States Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\).](#)

Angela Merkel, corporations, Germany. 2015. The Germans. As Tom Lehrer once put it, 'We taught them a lesson in 1918, and they've hardly bothered us since then.'



The Germans. The confusing people.

In the wake of this fall's scandal over Volkswagen subverting the EPA's nitrous-oxide emissions controls through some funk-bubble software, the Korean conglomerate Samsung was an immediate beneficiary. Market valuations of its electro-voltaic car batteries soared following the scam's exposure, to the [evident delight of the *Korea Times*](#).

Then came a seemingly similar TV-set scandal—shades of VW and the EPA. It involved none other than Samsung. Not such evident delight.

[Complian TV](#), a laboratory consortium funded by the European Union until it folded this month, alleged that the company had fixed its high-definition televisions so that they required less energy when formally tested than was the case in everyday customer use. This was [supposedly achieved via motion lighting](#).

Samsung itself, however, is proud of these TV sets, claiming remarkable things for their ecological footprint, for example.



[\(What's the story\). morning glory?](#)

Samsung—one of South Korea's stunning industrial/post-industrial conglomerates, aided and abetted by decades of Cold-War preferential treatment by the Korean state, the US, and the West more generally, as part of the nation's remarkable transformation from a poor, peasant economy to a rich, industrialized one (Park, 1997).

Samsung—exploiter of vulnerable labor through subcontractors such as Taiwan's Foxconn that make its goods (Ngai *et al.*, 2014) and accused of unsafe working conditions leading to cancers among its employees (Lepawsky, 2012).

Samsung—*chaebol* champion and scion of *Hanllu/Hanyu* (the Korean wave of popular-culture exports such as K-Pop to East Asia and beyond), built on state policies that suppressed worker activism (Lee, 2008) and always-already poised to invest in textuality as well as technology (Shim, 2006).

Samsung—inventor of surveillance TV, which spies on you as you watch, [potentially recording your conversations](#) and sharing them with arcane 'third parties'.

Father, why do these words sound so nasty?

Hair "Sodomy"



As *The Seoul Times* ('Serving All Foreigners Interested in Korea') [blithely observes](#), '[c]orruption scandals at Samsung are common'.

The corporation's dozens of affiliates and hundreds of thousands of workers are used to it.

Samsung chairman say...



But to be fair, as this column of course always strives to be in chronicling the marvelous ways of capital, Samsung has reasonable form when it comes to the heavy-metal waste emanating from discarded cell phones and the toxicity of its computer screens; at least by contrast with many other firms (Maragkos *et al.*, 2013; Kolas *et al.*, 2014).

Based on such "score cards," the logic of self-regulation by companies like this one continues unabated. Capitalism is said by the true believers who dominate our airwaves (does anybody use that term any more?) to be trustworthy—and its corrupt, reprobate leaders nominated as atypical.

Here's the thing.

They're not. Trustworthy—or atypical.

Samsung and its rivals around the globe are all beavering away to avoid democratic rule over their activities in favor of plutocratic rule by market traders. Occasionally, that might mean conduct that is less or more environmentally devastating, and executives who are less or more duplicitous.

Enough. Corruption and gaming the system are not aberrations. They *are* systems, in and of themselves.

Firms like Samsung *ordinarily* sicken employees.

They *ordinarily* urge consumers to see themselves as that and that alone, not as fellow workers and citizens.

They *ordinarily* argue against popular control of their activities.

We're done with this. Aren't we?

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