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REPRESENTATIONS OF COLONIAL COLLABORATION AND LITERATURE OF DECOLONIZATION IN KOREA, 1945–1950

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores Korean writers' pursuit of decolonization during the politically turbulent era from 1945 to 1950. Decolonization of this period was both from the Japanese empire, the colonial past, and from the newly established national division and Cold War order, the ongoing "neocolonial" present. Literary representations of colonial collaboration (*ch'inil*) were complicated in Korea's decolonization process under the solidifying political polarization. Investigating diverse transformations, inflections, and repeated resurfacings that arose in representations of collaboration, this dissertation pays particular attention to the struggles, predicaments, and anxieties faced by postcolonial Korean writers as they grappled with the colonial past and current neocolonial contexts.

The dissertation mainly presents two comparable genres: autobiographical writings, the facticity of which is often challenged, and long serial novels. Chapter One examines selected autobiographical narratives by Yi Sŏkhun, Yi Kwangsu, and Ch'ae Mansik, each of whom reckoned with their past acts of collaboration through painful self-reflection. The chapter focuses on the distinctive literary devices used to interrogate the complexity of collaboration and the consequences of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts. Chapter Three also deals with autobiographical writings, examining two versions of Yi T'aejun's autobiographical fiction and the role of state pressure on the representation of collaboration and resistance. The chapter explores Yi's struggles with the DPRK's strict literary policies.

Chapter Two and Four illuminate the literary reactions of South Korea's canonical writers to the increasing ideological rigidity of the Cold War. Yŏm Sangsŏp, the key novelist examined in Chapter Two, criticizes the supplanting of the Japanese empire with the U.S. occupation, and poses the act of crossing the thirty-eighth parallel as a way to imagine the space

beyond the border. By analyzing the lesser-known novels of Kim Tongni and Yi Kwangsu, Chapter Four traces how these writers aimed to accommodate, but failed to embody, the state-implemented anticommunist themes in their literature.

Postliberation literature provided a reflective space for interrogating collaboration, while challenging political polarization. In their literature of decolonization, postcolonial writers refute the imposition of the Cold War ideology, and thereby, postpone it for those five years.

INTRODUCTION

History is not written as it was experienced, nor should it be. The inhabitants of the past know better than we do what it was like to live there, but they were not well placed, most of them, to understand what was happening to them and why.

----Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility*

By day a colony
By night my mother country
During the night my forbidden mother tongue
Secretly was whispered within my slumbering body

Liberation has come
My mother tongue splendid

----Ko Un, "A Biography"

Korea since August 15, 1945: Continuity, Transition, and Decolonization

It was on a country bus on August 16, 1945, one day after the Emperor Hirohito announced the defeat of Japan, that the writer Hyŏn first heard the news of Korea's liberation from Japan. Hyŏn's elation shortly turned to frustration as he met the tired and indifferent faces of other bus riders. They did not show any excitement at the news of the nation's independence. Hyŏn "felt like crying at the dispirited looks of the miserable fellow countrymen."[1] This is a scene from a 1946 short story written by Korean writer Yi T'aejun, titled "Before and After Liberation." The scene captures an interesting moment in which liberation was not unanimously exclaimed as a dramatic and joyful moments—as numerous narratives have previously claimed. Similarly, Chi Haryŏn's "Path," another short story from the same year, portrays a young boy's unexpected crying outburst after hearing the news because he feels sympathy for the Emperor.[2] Later, Yi T'aejun rewrote the bus scene in his 1949 North Korean reprint, dramatically depicting

[1] Yi T'aejun, "Haebang chŏnhu" [Before and After Liberation], *Munhak* 1 (1946): 21.

[2] Chi Haryŏn, "Tojŏng" [Path], *Munhak* 1 (1946): 53–55.

other bus riders' immediate jubilation and tears of joy. In the three years between publications, the uneven experiences of liberation had been homogenized into the platitudinous national narrative of the 1945 liberation that we currently know.

Korean literature post-1945 converged into a history of national literature focusing on glorious national emancipation and the birth of the two opposing nation-states—thereby lessening the importance of the struggles of postcolonial subjects with the colonial past and the gravity of the indelible colonial experience as expressed in literature. This dissertation draws from various literary works to examine the representation of the colonial past in the formative years of national literature in both North and South Korea, as well as the ways in which literature became the site for pursuing the search for Korea's decolonization. The search mostly appears to involve colonial collaboration and also to resist the national division because the Cold War configuration imposed on the Korean peninsula was perceived as just another colonization.[3] For Korean writers, the decolonizing project in Korea was an ongoing battle begun with Japan's defeat and further complicated by the division of the peninsula.

The liberation on August 15th, 1945 is a watershed moment in modern Korean history, marking a clear demarcation between the pre-1945 colonial history and the history of the

[3] The Cold War was the state of hostile political tension after the WWII between the Capitalist Bloc and Communist Bloc with the two superpowers—the United States and the USSR—as their leaders respectively. As Charles K. Armstrong notes, the Cold War was characterized by "an enormous campaign of propaganda and psychological warfare on both sides" (Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945–1950," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 1 [2003]: 71). By the Cold War, in this dissertation, I indicate the configuration of political polarization on the Korean peninsula caused by the Allied occupations of the United States and the USSR. The notion of the Cold War, by definition, does not fit the Korean situation in which the global structure of the two opposing superpowers appeared in the form of a hot war. The "Cold War" is indeed "an erroneous term for a global conflict which, spanning several continents and a multitude of coups, civil wars, insurgencies and interventions, was characterized by ongoing armed aggression" (Andrew Hammond, "From Rhetoric to Rollback: Introductory Thoughts on Cold War Writing," *Cold War Literature: Writing the Global Conflict*, ed. Andrew Hammond [London and New York: Routledge, 2006], 1). The frame of the Cold War, however, has been overwhelming in Korea, which still experiences the obsolete, distorted ideological confrontation long after the end of the Cold War. In my dissertation, the Cold War is an intimidating structural power that determines the political and territorial border on the Korean peninsula and exercises violent ideological rigidity, wielded by the Allied occupations and the indigenous nation-states.

division and two Koreas since 1945. However, as much as the experience of liberation day was not identical for all Koreans, the lives of Koreans who lived before and after 1945 were not simply severed from the colonial past. As a transitional period, the three years from August 1945 to the birth of the separate nation-states in 1948 thus loomed large. The transitional period, which is commonly designated as the "liberation period," or "*haebanggi*" in Korea, saw tumultuous transformations of Korea's territorial, political, and social situations.[4] The Allied occupation forces advanced into the Korean peninsula less than a month after liberation. The two nation-states, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), were founded to the south and the north of the thirty-eighth parallel in August and September 1948, respectively. After this, the ideological confrontations between the two republics seriously escalated. Even with the establishment of the separate governments in the north and south, Koreans still eagerly anticipated a single, unified government—which, for those post-1945 Koreans, was often called "true independence" in contrast to the 1945 liberation declared by the foreign occupiers.[5] The explosion of a hot war in June 1950, however, dissipated the remaining possibility and hope for a unified nation-state. The upheaval of the civil war gave rise to irreconcilable antagonism, thereby making the division irreversible and destroying nearly all material conditions for human life and cultural production as well.

[4] Early Korean scholarship on the postliberation period, mostly conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, often designated this period as a "liberation space," or "*haebang konggan*," an interesting appellation for a time period with the use of spatial terminology. Theodore Hughes discusses the implications of this spatial labeling of a time frame. He points out that the term reflects the scholarly critique of the US-proposed and -implemented division of Korea and the attempt to question the state assertion of August 1945 as liberation. Theodore Hughes, "Producing Sovereign Spaces in the Emerging Cold War World Order: Immediate Postliberation 'South' and 'North' Korean Literature," *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu* 28 (2005): 4–5.

[5] The expectation of "true independence" yet to come, which contrasts with the August 15 liberation, is found during the postliberation period. For instance, see the newspaper article, "Wanjŏn tongnip i toelttae kkaji kŭkjang kwa yorijŏm ŭn hyuŏp" [Voluntary Closing of Theaters and Restaurants in Seoul until the Achievement of Complete Independence], *Chayu Sinmun*, December 31, 1945; or Kim Tongni's 1947 short story "Hyŏlgŏ pujok" [Cave Dwellers].

In this vein, I regard the transitional period—which I call the postliberation period in this dissertation—as the five years from August 1945 to the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Even after the establishment of the separate regimes in 1948, the division was not regarded as being completely settled and secured, and so it was still possible to cross the thirty-eighth parallel. Contemporary Koreans did not, and could not, think that the division of the thirty-eighth parallel would be continued indefinitely. Beyond the political fact of the genesis of the two nations, I take into more consideration mid-century Koreans' recognition and expectations for the future of the nation, notwithstanding the drastically escalating state control and violence, as well as their resistance to the emerging Cold War structure.

In Korean studies, academic concerns regarding the postliberation period have predominantly focused on the overwhelming Cold War and the resultant polarized nation-building process. As a consequence, the postliberation period has been characterized as full of possibility with frustration shortly following, or "postcolonial possibilities opened up and denied."[6] Literary and cultural studies also tend to view cultural products of this time as testifying to the emergent moment of the regional, political, and ideological border between DPRK and ROK. Reading this time period as the beginning of the Cold War, studies of postliberation literature have largely paid attention to writers' active political affiliations and organization, positions on the ideological division, and political migrations across the thirty-eighth parallel, among other things.[7] In his recent study of modern Korean literature, Theodore

[6] Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 61.

[7] There are numerous studies focusing on writers' political activities and positions since the late 1980s. For instance, Kwŏn Yŏngmin, *Haebang chikhu ŭi minjok munhak undong yŏn'gu* [Study of the National Literature Movement in the Immediate Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1989); Sin Hyŏnggi, *Haebang chikhu ŭi munhak undong non* [Study of Literary Movement in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Che sam-munhaksa, 1989); Kim Yunsik, *Haebang kongganŭi munhaksa ron* [Literary History in the Liberation Space] (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1989); Yi Uyong, ed., *Haebang konggan ŭi munhak yŏn'gu* [Study of Literature in the Liberation

Hughes sheds light on exceptional literary works that criticize and are at odds with the Cold War state ideology. As for the late 1940s literature, however, he reads it as eventually conforming to or serving to reinforce each state narrative—capitalist developmentalism in the case of South Korea and socialism in North Korea.[8] The social and cultural influences of the Cold War—not to mention its political gravity—on the Korean peninsula are undoubtedly profound. But when seeing Korean literature and culture as converging on Cold War logic, we are likely to downplay the roles of individual actors and their agency in the decolonization process of the postliberation period.

It has now become a cliché that decolonization in South Korea failed due to the Cold War staged on the Korean peninsula. Literary studies assume the same premise for the failure of decolonization—more specifically, the failure to deal with colonial collaboration, which I will further elaborate. When it comes to literary decolonization, scholars in both South Korea and North America seem to share the same conclusion that it was not until the 1960s that Korean literature started interrogating the problem of decolonization beyond the Cold War perspective—starting with Ch'oe Inhun's (1936~) novels, such as *The Square* (*Kwangjang*, 1960), *Voice of the Governor-General* (*Ch'ongdok ŭi sori*, 1967), and *The Tempest* (*T'aep'ung*, 1973).[9] All these works revisit Korea's colonial experience and examine the continuing effects of colonial legacies

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Space] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1990). Recent scholarship on the postliberation period focuses more on political migrations and the implications of the thirty-eighth parallel as a border. See Yi Chongho, "Haebanggi idong ŭi chŏngch'ihak" [Politics of Migration in the Postliberation Period], *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu* 36 (2009): 327–63; Chŏng Chonghyŏn, *Cheguk ŭi kiŏk kwa chŏnyu: 1940-nyŏndae Han'guk munhak ŭi yŏnsok kwa piyŏnsok* [Remembrance and Appropriation of the Empire: Continuity and Discontinuity in the 1940s Korean Literature] (Seoul: Ŏmunhaksa, 2012).

[8] Hughes, *Literature and Film*, 61–90.

[9] Hughes, *Literature and Film*; Kwŏn Myŏnga, *Singminji ihu rŭl sayuhada: T'al singminhwa wa chae singminhwa ŭi kyŏnggye* [Contemplating the Post-Colony: The Boundary Between Post-Colonization and Re-Colonization] (Seoul: Ch'aek Sesang, 2009); Kwŏn Bodŭrae, "Chungnip ŭi kkum 1945–1968: Naengjŏn nŏmŏ ŭi asia, hogŭn Ch'oe Inhun ŭl wihan siron" [A Dream of Nonalignment: Asia beyond the Cold War, or an Essay for Ch'oe Inhun], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 34 (2012): 261–313.

on Korean political and social systems in general as well as on the consciousness of the people specifically. When the scholars say "beyond the Cold War perspective," they mean that South Korean writers finally began to see beyond the state-imposed anticommunist beliefs and voice their critiques of South Korean dictatorships as well as the United States as a neocolonial power, which had obstructed the process of decolonization following the postliberation period.

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that various ideas and discussions for decolonization had already been put forth by literary texts of varying breadths and depths in the immediate postliberation period. With knowledge and experience of the long-lasting Cold War in Korea in hindsight, scholars have often forgotten that at that time the Cold War was not necessarily considered permanent; in reality, it was seen merely as temporary or reversible from the perspective of (post)colonial Korean subjects who lived through both the pre- and post-1945 years. The ex-colonized came out of the colonial state and quickly encountered foreign occupation and national division against their will, which for them were regarded as a reiteration of colonial domination. Colonial experience in the past affected perspective on the present. Therefore, postcolonial Koreans were more rebellious than scholars have considered them to be as well as more critical of the foreign occupiers. However, criticizing one side of the foreign occupation did not necessarily imply taking the opposite ideological stance.

In this sense, the decolonizing project in postliberation Korea was twofold: (1) the interrogation and overcoming of the Japanese colonial legacies and (2) the critique of and resistance to the Allied occupation and emerging Cold War that imposed the division of Korea. The latter becomes a significant part of the decolonization project because, for contemporaries, the ongoing Allied occupation was perceived as another form of colonization. In studies of decolonization, a "double decolonization" often implies a complex process of decolonization

from two separate, successive colonial (or semi-colonial) dominations.[10] On the other hand, Wimal Dissanayake, a scholar of Asian cinema, proposes a conceptualization of double decolonization as inhabiting two spheres: actual, political decolonization first and then epistemological decolonization.[11] Political emancipation, he states, does not necessarily entail the beginning of "a new history, a new sense of subjectivity and an assertion of agency."[12] Political decolonization should be followed by "an epistemological shift," which means to subvert and challenge the hegemonic, colonialist (mostly Eurocentric) discourse and knowledge to which the consciousness of the ex-colonized is still subjugated. The emphasis on epistemological decolonization—or the decolonization of consciousness, or of the mind, as it were—is one of the main themes with which postcolonial thinkers in Africa and Latin America have grappled, from Franz Fanon and Ngugi wa Thiong'o to more recently, Walter Mignolo.[13]

When I frame the decolonizing project in postliberation Korea as a double decolonization, first I note the double-layered colonial fetters of the former Japanese empire and then the perceived neocolonial occupation forces. But, at the same time, double decolonization in postliberation Korea could be considered as well to highlight the two different spheres of

[10] Although "double decolonization" is not always a central concept, the following works address the double decolonization process in Thailand, Bangladeshi, and Hong Kong, respectively. Peter A. Jackson, "Afterword: Postcolonial Theories and Thai Semicolonial Hybridities," in *The Ambiguous Allure of the West: Traces of the Colonial in Thailand*, ed. Rachel V. Harrison and Peter A. Jackson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 187–205; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Teaching for the Times," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock and others (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 468–90; Kwok-kan Tam, "Identity on the Bridge: Double (De/)Colonization in the Hong Kong Poet Gu Cangwu," *Colonizer and Colonized*, ed. Theo D'haen and Patricia Krüs (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 65–77.

[11] His conceptualization is based on Partha Chatterjee's analysis of two types of nationalism. Wimal Dissanayake, "Nationhood, History, and Cinema: Reflections on the Asian Scene," *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), xii.

[12] Ibid., xiii.

[13] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991); Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986); Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

decolonization: in being and in consciousness. The postcolonial decolonization endeavors found in Korea are combined, intertwined efforts between these two spheres of political condition and of consciousness, and which eventually pursue the decolonization of consciousness. We can see such pursuits in numerous examples, such as the common opinion among the public in the postliberation period that true independence had not yet arrived after the political emancipation from Japan; the raised voices of cultural producers coming to terms with colonial legacies in their cultural practices;[14] and the arduous self-reflections of writers' own colonial collaborations offered up in literary works,[15] among others.

The problem of colonial collaboration resides at the center of the process of double decolonization. Collaboration was not merely limited to interrogation in relation to decolonization from the former Japanese empire, but rather it repeatedly reemerged and was transformed in the narratives of postliberation Korean literature, interweaving with the critiques of the neocolonial present and ideas regarding constructing a future for the nation. It is not accurate then that the concerns of postcolonial Korean subjects completely shifted from the contemplation of collaboration to the ideological conflict and political positioning created by the national division.[16] In spite of the urgency of shifting political situations, the problem of colonial collaboration did not easily vanish. Rather, it has continued to haunt postcolonial subjects, shaping Korean subjectivity for years and even to the present.

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[14] See Chŏn Ch'anggŭn, "Susang: Tu ŏmŏni" [Essay: Two Mothers], *Yesul t'ongsin,* November 27, 1946; Im Hwa, "Hyŏnha ŭi chŏngse wa munhwa undong ŭi tangmyŏn immu" [The Current Situation and Pressing Tasks of Literary Movements], *Munhwa chŏnsŏn* 1 (1945).

[15] For instance, Yi T'aejun, "Haebang chŏnhu" [Before and After Liberation] (1946), Yi Sŏkhun, "Kobaek" [Confession] (1947), Yi Kwangsu, *Na ŭi kobaek* [My Confession] (1948), and Ch'ae Mansik, "Minjok ŭi choein" [Sinner of the People] (1948). Most of them are the main subjects of my analysis in Chapter One.

[16] Kim Yunsik, *Literary History in the Postliberation Space*, 8.

Retroactive Interrogation of Colonial Collaboration in South Korea

The discussion of decolonization in Korea has always begun with the question of how to "come to terms with colonial legacies," and without exception it has been redirected to the issue of colonial collaboration, "pro-Japanese collaboration" (*taeil hyŏmnyŏk;* 對日協力), or more commonly, "pro-Japanese" (*ch'inil*; 親日) as given in Korean. Pro-Japanese forces, or *ch'inilp'a* (親日派), is the Korean word to designate collaborators who cooperated with Japan's colonization of Korea and the subsequent colonial rule. Originally it meant persons whose political stance was favorable or close to Japan, similar to the usages of pro-Qing forces (*ch'inch'ŏngp'a*) or pro-Russian forces (*ch'illŏp'a*) in the late Chosŏn Dynasty. But as it came to refer to people who engaged in anti-national activities during the Japanese colonial period, the term has retained a connotation of being national traitors. The act of committing a "pro-Japanese" act—which is usually indicated with a conjugated verb form, *ch'inil-hada* in Korean—varies from the high treason of signing the document for Korea's annexation, to physically and materially harming the lives and safety of Koreans by participating in the colonial apparatus, to disseminating the colonial policies of assimilation, imperialization, and war mobilization to the public through the forms of writing and lectures. The last type of activity was performed by leading intellectuals and writers, and who are the subject of this dissertation. In the late 1940s Korea, there were altogether four attempts by different parties to define *ch'inilp'a* and *ch'inil* activities in the process of drafting the relevant rules to punish them, which reveals Koreans' desire to deal with this issue and its surrounding complexity.[17]

[17] The four agents that sought such regulation are: The Democratic National Front, the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly, the South Korean Labor Party, and the North Korean Labor Party. Yi Kangsu, *Panmin tŭgwi yŏn'gu* [A Study of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts] (Seoul: Nanam ch'ulp'an, 2003), 26.

The negative connotations of the term *c'hinilp'a* that formed immediately after liberation have stayed the same, if not worsened, over time. Initially, academic discussions on "pro-Japanese" collaboration showed strong nationalist approaches, which made moral judgments against collaboration as a cowardly, morally weak, or corrupted act against the nation. But since the late 1990s and 2000s, scholars have taken into consideration the more complicated factors and ambiguities of collaboration. The concepts of colonial modernity and a colonial gray zone represent the effort to transcend the simple nationalist binary between resistance and collaboration and to complicate colonial experience according to class, region, gender, and ethnicity, among other factors.[18] In contrast to these scholarly contributions, popular discourse still holds strong antipathy against *ch'inilp'a*, grudges against the unpunished, and retains a fervent wish for proper punishment.[19] Behind these intense popular feelings is the wide recognition that "cleansing of the pro-Japanese forces" (*ch'inil ch'ŏngsan*) was frustrated by the interference of the Syngman Rhee administration.

The South Korean Constitutional Assembly, formed in the national election on May 10, 1948, launched to legislate the punishment of "pro-Japanese collaborators and national betrayers," which had been delayed during the U.S. occupational rule.[20] The problem of coming to terms

[18] See Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Edson Robinson, ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999); Yun Haedong, *Singminji ŭi hoesaek jidae* [Colonial Gray Zone] (Seoul: Yŏksa pip'yongsa, 2003).

[19] As for one of the most recent examples, see the huge success of the film *Assassination* (*Amsal*) in the South Korean box office in 2015 and the following popular discussions about the "cleansing" of former "pro-Japanese" forces.

[20] What I mean by delayed during the U.S. occupation is exactly what it sounds like. The U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) established the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (SKILA) to formulate draft laws to be employed later when Koreans formed their own government. One of the first bills that the SKILA attempted to enact was the law of purging pro-Japanese collaborators (*ch'inilp'a sukch'ŏngppŏp*). The USAMGIK delayed approval of this law for about four months and later declined its approval for the reason that it should be approved by the national assembly elected by popular vote. See Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*, 85–7. This suggests that the USAMGIK was hesitant to enact a law in Korea regarding the

with colonial collaboration, which lost its urgency in the Korean public sphere due to other emerging political issues—such as foreign occupation and national division—quickly resurfaced in the process of founding the nation-state. The reemergence of the issue of collaboration reflects to what extent Koreans thought it was necessary to deal with the colonial past—to punish the former "pro-Japanese forces" in particular—in the nation-building process. As a result, Korean constitutional law included an article (No. 101) to enact a special law to punish "malicious anti-national criminals." Based on this article, the Anti-National Acts Law was decreed on September 22, 1948. The law called for the creation of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts (*Panminjok haengwi t'ŭkpyŏl chosa wiwŏnhoe*), which had the authority to form its own special police, prosecution, and justice units.[21]

It is well known that South Korean government institutions, including the police and military, inherited the systems and resources of the Japanese colonial regime after the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK; September 1945–August 1948) maintained them for the more effective and convenient rule of Koreans.[22] It was against public opinion to continue employing the personnel who worked for the colonial apparatus. In the case of the police force, more than 80 percent of high-ranking officers had served in the Japanese

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purging of collaborators, and that, in contrast, whenever there was a chance to enact a law, Koreans first discussed the possibility of purging pro-Japanese elements above anything else.

[21] As for the process of enacting the Anti-National Acts Law, see Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*; Hŏ Chong, *Panmin tŭgwi ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong* [Organization and Activities of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts] (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004). In spite of its significance and its widely known existence, the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts has not been fully studied in academia. The monographs above—both based on doctoral dissertations—are thorough, but rare, scholarly contributions. There are several testimonies of former investigators available, which are far from scholarly works.

[22] Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*, 16.

colonial force.[23] Therefore, the effort to come to terms with former colonial personnel was not only belated but also faced the obstacles of government and police power. For instance, during the enactment of the law in the National Assembly, the Ministry of Home Affairs held an anticommunist mass rally in September 1948 to denounce the assemblymen, who were enacting the law, as communists. To dissolve the Special Police, the state police attacked the capital and local offices of the Special Committee in June 1949, and President Syngman Rhee later admitted to commanding the police to dissolve the Committee.[24] There were repeated attempts to link the Special Committee members with communists, one of which was the so-called National Assembly *P'rakch'i* incident.[25] Since most of those trying to purge former collaborators were labeled as communists, the central members of the Special Committee all resigned. Then, the Special Committee was newly constructed, in large part with dissenters of the purge. As a consequence, the new Committee prosecuted merely one out of 38 cases in July and August. The Special Committee—and its task for properly punishing the "pro-Japanese"—was effectively incapacitated during the aggressive anticommunist movement of June 1949.[26] The Special Committee, having pursued legal treatment for colonial collaboration as a due process of decolonization, came to be redefined as a communist force that agitated society less than a year.

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[23] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 158–69; Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*, 35–41; Hŏ Chong, *Organization and Activities*, 36–52.

[24] Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*, 213.

[25] Fifteen members of the National Assembly were charged and declared guilty for being in league with the South Korean Labor Party (SKLP) and organizing a cell (a so-called *p'ŭrakch'i* in Korean; *fraktsiya* in Russian) within the Assembly. The charged assemblymen were those who strongly supported the enactment of the Anti-National Acts Law. Although the incident is believed to have been fabricated by the government, there is no evidence to prove this, because all concerned parties ended up fleeing to the north or dying. For further discussion of the 1949 *P'ŭrakch'i* incident, see Gregory Henderson, "Human Rights in South Korea 1945–1953," in *Human Rights in Korea: Historical and Policy Perspectives*, ed. William Shaw (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 151–163.

[26] Yi Kangsu, *A Study of the Special Investigative Committee*, 150–51.

This process of the dissolving the Special Committee has engendered one of the basic agreements about South Korean history: the task of decolonization was halted by the Syngman Rhee administration.

As a result, there has been no proper chance to appease popular feelings toward "pro-Japanese collaborators" and the demand for justice. Old grievances about colonial collaboration have met a long history of dictatorships and social conflicts between the conservative and the progressive factions, which made the issue even more polemical and politicized in the contemporary South Korean political landscape. The unsolved problem of "pro-Japanese collaborators" has often been blamed as the cause of dictatorships, political and economic dependence (upon the U.S.) and corruption, and all other possible problems blemishing Korean history. One scholar's oft-quoted comment, "no matter what problem arises in Korean society, it is never unrelated to the question of collaboration," mirrors, albeit exaggeratedly, the lingering frustration and anger toward this unfulfilled national project.[27]

While taking into full consideration all of the complicated and polemical contexts for the discussion of the "pro-Japanese" forces, in this dissertation, I carefully keep a distance from the strong nationalist, accusatory ramifications of the word. Except for some exceptional cases that are necessary to express the judgments and grievances of members of the Korean public in postliberation Korea or to directly cite their own words, I use the more general term, "collaboration." When I write that someone "collaborated" in a certain context, or call someone a "collaborator," I refer to participation in support of the Japanese colonial policies to a varying degree, or a person who supported these policies. As historian Yumi Moon reflects, the use of

[27] Kim Pongu, "Ch'aekmŏri e" [Introduction], *Ch'inilp'aran muŏsin'ga* [*Who are the Pro-Japanese Forces?*], ed. Minjok munje yŏn'guso (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1997), 6. I have quoted this sentence from Koen De Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 207.

the term of collaboration "does not deny the heterogeneity or multiplicity of human interactions in colonial contexts."[28] Studying collaboration, Moon argues, is a matter "of understanding the choices and consequences of local actors in the changing political, normative, and material contexts of a conquered society."[29] The use of the term "collaboration" in my dissertation thus encompasses predicaments, various chances, negotiations, and state pressure and violence that the actors encountered under colonial rule as well as their alleged acts in support of the enemy. Furthermore, studying collaboration in literary studies, I argue, should entail the careful examination of the inner conflicts, hesitations, anxieties, and perplexities of the (ex-)colonized people in the transitional period, during which the meanings of justice and truth were shifting. Therefore, the study of collaboration revolves around not only the colonial period in which collaboration occurred but also the postcolonial time in which such collaboration would be interrogated. Despite all the efforts to complicate the implications of collaboration, however, the word inevitably gives rise to moral judgments even in scholarly discussions. I discuss below how the study of collaboration in Korean literature has been intertwined with moral judgments.

Literature of Collaboration: Moral Accusations and the Longing for Modernity

For Korean literary scholars, the fact that major Korean writers collaborated with the Japanese colonial policies, including the founders of the modern Korean novel and poetry, has made the issue of collaboration both unavoidable and more challenging. Collaboration has been intensively and extensively discussed in literary studies, from investigating the motives for collaboration to interpreting hidden messages of resistance between the lines in literary works. It

[28] Yumi Moon, *Populist Collaborators: The Ilchinhoe and the Japanese Colonization of Korea, 1896–1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 7.

[29] Ibid.

is no coincidence that the pioneering study of collaboration in modern Korean history began with rigorous scrutiny of pro-Japanese writers and literature.[30] For almost five decades since then, there have been numerous scholarly works concerning collaboration and collaboration literature—so-called pro-Japanese literature (*ch'inil munhak*). Studies of collaboration have shifted their focus from the initial nationalist accusations to the exploration of the complicated psychological motivations behind such activities, intertwined with Korean intellectuals' yearning for modernity, and culminating in the recent attempt to reframe the terminology and implication of collaboration itself.[31] Resonant with postcolonial studies that examine the inevitable correlations between modernity and colonialism, recent research has demonstrated the dilemma of colonial subjects in Korea who ended up being complicit with the Japanese empire.[32] As my description above suggests, the term *ch'inil* employed in academic contexts carries a twofold meaning: a despicable treasonous act against national interests—which is close to current popular perceptions of it—and an attraction and assimilation to the discourse and culture of the Japanese empire as representing modernity in a broader sense.

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[30] Im Chongguk, *Ch'inil munhak non* [A Study of Pro-Japanese Literature] (Seoul: P'yŏnghwa ch'ulp'ansa, 1966).

[31] There are noteworthy scholarly achievements in exploring writers' modernity-driven impulses to cooperate with colonial policies: Kyeong-Hee Choi, "Another Layer of the Pro-Japanese Literature: Ch'oe Chŏnghŭi's 'The Wild Chrysanthemum,'" *Poetica* 52 (1999): 61–87; Kim Chaeyong, *Ch'inil munhak ŭi naechŏk nolli* [The Internal Logic of Pro-Japanese Literature] (Seoul: Yŏngnak, 2003); Han Suyŏng, *Ch'inil munhak ŭi chae insik: 1937–1945 nyŏn'gan ŭi Han'guk sosŏl kwa singminjuŭi* [A New Understanding of Pro-Japanese Literature: The Korean Novel and Colonialism from 1937 to 1945] (Seoul: Somyŏng, 2005); Kwŏn Myŏnga, *Contemplating the Post-Colony*, among many others. For a new approach to reframe the implication of collaboration, see Nayoung Aimee Kwon, *Intimate Empire: Collaboration and Colonial Modernity in Korea and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[32] As for the inevitable complicity between modernity and colonialism, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); and Bill Ashcroft, "Modernity's First Born: Latin America and Postcolonial Transformation," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 29, no. 2 (1998): 7–29.

Recent scholarship exploring the modernist impulses undergirding colonial collaboration has enriched the discussion by examining colonial modernity, the mechanisms and motives of assimilation, and cultural hegemony, among others. Such studies have expanded the conversation beyond the Korean context of collaboration and colonial studies to a broader East Asian context within the Japanese empire.[33] But, at the same time, the attempts to explore the theoretical motivations, the internal mechanisms of collaboration, or the cultural and discursive production of colonial encounters, in spite of their appropriate consideration of the hegemonic domination of Japanese colonialism, often put the very nature of colonial collaboration in parentheses—its coerciveness or violence. Even if scholars interpret collaboration as an attraction to what is modern and consequently, as the voluntary transformation of thought in a broader sense, the very nature of collaboration lies in the irreversible hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized, and exploitation and violence in every phase of colonial life. Therefore, if one overly emphasizes the (in)voluntariness of collaboration—which is often found in Korean scholarship—one may fall into an unwanted conundrum of having to prove the indemonstrable: to what extent is collaboration voluntary and to what extent involuntary?[34]

Colonial collaboration is, at the same time, a voluntary change of thought based on fascination with modernity and an involuntary forced conversion. As such, it can be argued to be a matter of life and death from a certain point of view, although there may be no knife literally

[33] See Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Nayoung Aimee Kwon, *Intimate Empire*, to name a few.

[34] Despite its contribution to interpreting colonial rule as hegemonic rather than coercive, Kim Chaeyong's book-length study, *Collaboration and Resistance*, enters into the same trap of simplifying the categorization as a dichotomy between collaboration and resistance. Kim Chaeyong, *Hyŏmnyŏk kwa chŏhang: Ilche mal sahoe wa munhwa* [Collaboration and Resistance: Society and Culture in the Late Japanese Colonial Period] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004).

held to the throat. Hyŏn's cry "I wanted to live!" in "Before and After Liberation," or a writer's decision to collaborate with the Japanese wartime policy for fear of imprisonment in the 1948 novella "Sinner of the People" could be read as merely supporting the writers' self-justifications. But this life-and-death nature makes a contemporary scholar hesitate before jumping to conclusions. I am not arguing that we, who have not been in the same shoes as these Korean colonial subjects, should not retrospectively scrutinize them from our vantage point. As John W. Treat points out in his article on the collaboration of Yi Kwangsu, quoting Hannah Arendt, we nonetheless inevitably judge their past collaboration because "we instinctively put ourselves in the place of those we study." Further, we "ought to do so;"[35] otherwise, history cannot be written nor justice administered.

To make a historical, literary, or ethical judgment on collaborators in Korea, however, I argue that we should carefully consider how the (post)colonial subjects looked back on their colonial past and engaged in serious self-contemplation as much as we explore the psychological motives for colonial assimilation. Considerable scholarly efforts have been made to examine colonial-period ideological conversion, collaboration activities, overt as well as hidden motivations, the dilemmas of colonial intellectuals, and their lack of perspectives, among others. Then, in what ways did newly postcolonial subjects, who confronted the dilemma of collaboration and became themselves part of the colonial legacy to be overcome, try to come to terms with their own colonial past and undertake decolonization in immediate postcolonial Korea? Or, I pose the question again: why have not the depression, perplexity, and anxiety of postcolonial intellectuals been examined as much as those of colonial intellectuals?

[35] John Whittier Treat, "Choosing to Collaborate: Yi Kwang-su and the Moral Subject in Colonial Korea," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 1 (2012): 82.

It is partly because there is a relatively little writing in the postliberation period that looks back on the past acts of colonial collaboration compared to the wide spectrum of texts published during the thirty-five-year colonial period that offer a rich variety of perspectives between both sides: the conspicuous voices of resistance versus total complicity with the Japanese assimilation policy. As for the absence of self-reflection in the immediate postliberation literature, noted literary historian Kim Yunsik writes, "There was no time for a full literary embodiment of confession [of collaboration]. Too drawn to the impending ideological conflict between left and right, the statements of writers rapidly came to have a strong political nature."[36] Kim's assessment, made in 1989, is accurate and still valid regarding the circumstances of rapid transition in which these Korean writers were placed. But the statement misses the fact that although there were many writers who could pretend as if their collaboration never happened, there were several postcolonial writers who persistently thought about the colonial past and were unable to pretend. As a result, although Korean literary history witnessed a large number of writers who assimilated with, or were mesmerized by, Japanese colonial discourse and its alternative modernity, it has rarely given due credit to those who pursued a deliberate, often painful, self-reflection over their own collaboration.

Hence, the focus of this dissertation lies in the retrospective representation of colonial collaboration and the colonial experience in postliberation Korean literature. I investigate both a collective understanding of collaboration as well as the individual efforts to offer in literary writings different implications for collaboration. The issue of colonial collaboration is transformed, inflected, and resurfaced in the decolonization project rather than being "swept away" by the sociopolitical turbulence of political polarization. Here, the activities of the Special

[36] Kim Yunsik, *Literary History in the Liberation Space*, 8. Kim's discussion of "writers' self-reflection" is discussed in further length in Chapter One.

Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts are worth considering together since they triggered the motivations for representing collaboration and transformations of the modes of representation. The Special Committee has been, however, rarely discussed in literary studies.[37] The double decolonization in Korea, first from the former Japanese empire, and then from the postliberation—but neocolonial—state of the national division, seems to be two separate problems of the past and of the present, respectively. They both represent one serious problem, however, for postliberation Koreans, particularly regarding the political, cultural, and psychological emancipation from foreign dominations.

Literary works that are the subjects of my analysis exhibit the ways in which postcolonial Korean writers contemplated decolonization with varying depths and intensities. This dissertation demonstrates the reflective and interrogatory role played by postcolonial literature in the interstices between decolonization and the emergence of the Cold War. Through the dissertation, I aim to give postcolonial Korean writers a valid voice to talk about that which they experienced, thought about, and grappled with. I offer a space for current readers to engage with the voices, experiences, thoughts, anxieties, and aspirations of those postcolonial subjects in their struggles with decolonization, and the intellectual, moral, and emotional predicaments surrounding it. The history of decolonization in Korea is marked as a history of failure. But individual endeavors—although seemingly fruitless in hindsight—are not completely meaningless. In their literary endeavors for decolonization, postcolonial writers resist the imposition of the Cold War on the Korean peninsula, and thereby, in the end, temporarily suspend it.

[37] Sometimes, without considering the ramifications of the Special Committee, wrong interpretations have been made about the motives regarding the publication of some autobiographical writings. For further discussion, see Chapter One.

Chapters Overview

The individual chapters of the dissertation examine the depictions and interrogation of colonial collaboration actively explored in literary texts, as well as the different conditions of the social and political turbulence faced by postcolonial Korean writers. The external determinants of literary practice that I focus on include liberation, foreign occupation, the national election and the founding of opposition governments, and the year-long process of the Special Committee's formation and failure. These transformations affected the perspectives and representations of collaboration and the implications of decolonization that contemporary Koreans perceived and grappled with. With the interrogation of collaboration, the chapters also examine writers' serious questions and critiques of the national division imposed by the foreign occupiers as well as literary devices deployed in the works. Autobiographical fiction and newspaper serial novels, among others, are two distinctive modes of writing that display these writers' endeavors in postliberation Korea.

Chapter One examines a selection of autobiographical writings by writers such as Yi Sŏkhun, Yi Kwangsu, and Ch'ae Mansik, all of whom collaborated with Japanese wartime policies—as alleged by others as well as self-identified. The selected writings have in the past been largely interpreted as self-justifications for the authors' collaboration and examined in terms of their veracity in narrating colonial experience. In this chapter, I pay attention to the literary strategies, intentions, and effects of the autobiographical writings and demonstrate the interrogatory and reflective role played by those works in the discussion of collaboration. Among those writings, Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People" (1948) provides a reflective site for

readers to interrogate collaboration by summoning them as an audience, jury, and/or judge for the fictional trial of a collaborator.

Chapter Two investigates Yŏm Sangsŏp's *Dawn Wind* (1948), a newspaper serial novel illustrating the uncomfortable and hostile dynamic between Koreans and the U.S. occupation government, as well as the novelist's painstaking search for decolonization by challenging Korea's neocolonial present. I examine the replacement of the old Japanese empire by the U.S. occupation forces and its literary embodiment—portrayed in the shifting status of a Japanese woman, pro-Japanese collaborators, and the Japanese language in the novel. In the relinquishment of power from Japan to the United States, this novel shows the newly reconstructed problems of decolonization in relation to the United States. I argue that *Dawn Wind* is Yŏm's literary refutation to the Cold War structure imposed on the Korean peninsula—or, a reappearance of the empire—by deploying a literary trope of crossing the thirty-eighth parallel, which repeatedly imagines the space beyond the border, rather than making it invisible.

Chapter Three explores a noted modernist writer Yi T'aejun's literary works, and the circumstances and ramifications of his abrupt migration to the north across the thirty-eighth parallel (*wŏlbuk*). In this chapter, I conduct a comparative reading of two extant editions of Yi's "Before and After Liberation"—originally published in 1946 Seoul, and later redacted in 1949 Pyongyang. The 1949 redaction, which has never been referenced in Korean literary history, testifies to the conflicting moments in which solidifying state policy modified the memory and representation of collaboration. This chapter complicates the approach to reading the retrospective representation of collaboration by focusing on the ruptures and anxieties created in the process of reconstructing memories, rather than merely criticizing the distortion and self-justification for collaboration.

Chapter Four focuses on the literary representation of shifting national enemies from pro-Japanese collaborators to communist villains under the hardening anticommunist regime in South Korea after the dissolution of the Special Committee. With a focus on two understudied novels by two canonized South Korean writers, Kim Tongni's *Liberation* (1949–50) and Yi Kwangsu's *Seoul* (1950), in this chapter I examine the lack of a smooth literary transition in depicting villains caused by ambiguities in characterization, which betray the ostensible novelistic themes of the exoneration of collaborators or anticommunism. In *Liberation*, interrogating collaboration, I demonstrate, does not vanish but persistently resurfaces to torment a postcolonial Korean subject. Also, in *Seoul*, I argue that the author's ambiguous depiction of a communist villain as well as advocacy of Asian nationalism give rise to a critique of the hegemonic American cultural influence. For such reasons, these two works have been long forgotten from South Korean literary studies.

The texts that I deal with in the chapters are not necessarily the canonical ones in Korean literary history. Most have been insufficiently studied, and some even forgotten in spite of their writers' well-established reputations. One has never been discussed. I bring these effaced or forgotten works into scholarly focus—not as an intent to introduce a new text but as a consequence of exploring literary works that reveal the writers' persistent and sometimes painful pursuit of interrogating collaboration, and whose critique is toward the same region of the peninsula that the author was located—not toward the other side of the thirty-eighth parallel. These works are certainly valuable texts in terms of their subtle but rich implications and the writers' serious examinations of the problems of the time, as well as their literary designs. By bringing these texts into discussion, I raise important questions about the boundaries and

evaluations of South Korea's "national literature" and our approach to reading the literature, which is yet still somewhat preoccupied by the perspective of state ideology.

Chapter One
Interrogating Collaboration in Autobiographical Writings

Hurrah! For Freedom (*Chayu manse*, dir. Ch'oe In'gyu, 1946)—notably the first Korean feature film since the 1945 liberation and a monumental work in Korean film history—portrays exciting scenes and activities of independence movement activists during the Japanese colonial era. Appealing to popular anti-Japanese sentiment following colonial rule, the film achieved huge box office success for the time.[1] The film director Ch'oe In'gyu was one of the leading Korean filmmakers who had produced famous propaganda films for the Japanese empire during the late colonial period, such as *The Children of Sun* (太陽の子供達, 1944) and *Love and Pledge* (愛と誓ひ, 1945). Ch'oe's contemporary, Ch'ae Mansik, criticizes cultural producers for their all-too-smooth transformation from propagandists of the empire to passionate nationalists, exaggeratedly saying "just one day before the day of liberation or even the morning of the day of liberation," they had served Japan faithfully as their master, but "before even several hours had passed" since Emperor Hirohito's declaration of Japan's surrender at noon, they started speaking and writing about the atrocious enemy Japan "with those same mouths, the same pens and brushes."[2] However, according to the late film critic, Yi Yŏngil, who viewed *Hurrah! For Freedom* at the theater in the year of its release, contemporary audiences did not seem concerned with what the filmmaker had done under the colonial rule. Instead, Yi recollected, it was more significant to watch a Korean-language movie, an experience that had not been enjoyed for a

[1] Yang Hun, "Yŏnghwa sip'yŏng: Chayu manse twie onŭn munje" [Comments on Current Film: The Problems Following *Hurrah! For Freedom*], *Chungoe Ilbo*, December 14, 1946.

[2] Ch'ae Mansik, "Minjok ŭi choein" [Sinner of the People], *Paengmin* 4, no. 5 (1948): 57–58. His critique toward opportunistic changes in the recipient of their loyalty is here specifically targeted against writers and poets.

long time.[3] By making this film hailing Korea's liberation, the director Ch'oe was able to successfully continue his film career in postliberation Korea.

All cultural producers that were involved in the production of Japanese wartime propaganda, however, were not as fortunate as Ch'oe. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, for writers, a previous career of collaboration seemed to be a more serious matter. There were some postcolonial writers who were not able to pretend they had not collaborated during the colonial period, as many other writers were able to do. This chapter focuses on a selection of autobiographical writings by writers who had collaborated with Japanese wartime policies—collaborations alleged both by others as well as self-identified. Such writers as Yi Sŏkhun, Yi Kwangsu, and Ch'ae Mansik chose to confess their "shameful" past rather than remain silent about it. In this chapter, I examine the literary devices deployed in their autobiographical writings and their differing intentions and effects, and by doing so, demonstrate the interrogatory and reflective role played by those writings in the discourse surrounding colonial collaboration. In the process, I also discuss the characteristics of autobiographical writing in Korea since the late colonial era, as well as a mode of reading them that has continued in literary studies until the present. Along with literary analyses, I pay attention to the organization and activities of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-national Acts (*Panminjok haengwi t'ŭkpyŏl chosa wiwŏnhoe*) created in 1948 and their effect on the production and publication of autobiographical narratives. The formation of the Special Committee is a critical factor in determining how collaboration was self-represented, but it has rarely been considered in Korean literary studies.

The main texts of the chapter are "Confession" ("Kobaek") by Yi Sŏkhun (李石薰; 1908~?), *My Confession* (*Na ŭi kobaek*) by Yi Kwangsu (李光洙; 1892–1950?), and "Sinner of

[3] Yi Yŏngil, "Haesŏl" [Commentary], DVD, *Chayu man*se [Hurrah! For Freedom] (Seoul: Sŭp'ekt'ŭrŏm dibŭidi, 2004).

the People" ("Minjok ŭi choein") by Ch'ae Mansik (蔡萬植; 1902–1950). They are rare works that provide the authors' autobiographical accounts of their collaborations. Yi Sŏkhun's confession is a short essay written in early 1947, and the latter two were published in late 1948, after the establishment of the Republic of Korea. While briefly discussing Yi Sŏkhun's "Confession," I pay particular attention to the latter two works and especially to their distinctive literary strategies for elaborating the implications of colonial collaboration. Among the different modes employed to reflect on collaboration, Ch'ae Mansik's literary staging of an imagined court in the piece, I argue, provides a site for the reader to interrogate collaboration as both an audience and judge.

By prefacing a work with the adjective "autobiographical," I emphasize that the piece is "dealing with the writer's own life," according to the Oxford Dictionary definition of the word "autobiographical." However, when I term a text an "autobiography" in a more limited sense, I specifically consider Philippe Lejeune's definition, one to which most theorists of autobiography ascribe when dealing with this genre. An autobiography necessitates an explicit indication of the single identity of the narrator, the protagonist, and the author: the author's name on the book cover *as author*.[4] This definition connotes that the author explicitly put the work before the public as his own experience and wants it to be read in that way, unrelated to its so-called facticity. The "autobiographical contract" between the author and the reader—the affirmation of the identity of the narrator, the protagonist, and the author—as a matter of fact emphasizes "the author's initiative in establishing this mutual contract."[5] Autobiographies that I designate throughout this chapter are thus limited to works with titles or subtitles containing "sugi"

[4] Philippe Lejeune, "The Autobiographical Contract," in *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*, ed. Tzvetan Todorov (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 192–222.

[5] Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 6.

(memoir), "kobaek" (confession), or "chasŏ" (self-narrative), which are the indications to read the text as the author's real-life experience. On the other hand, in case of a work which deals with the writer's personal life history and is, however, published under the genre of "sosŏl" (fiction) or "ch'angjak" (creative work), I designate it autobiographical fiction, and according to its length, autobiographical novel or autobiographical short story.

Recently, however, theorists of autobiography pay attention to the fluid boundary between fiction and autobiography. As Jerome Bruner has earlier addressed, "there is no such thing as a life as lived to be referred to."[6] The act of autobiography construes and (re)constructs the experience of life. As a consequence, autobiography is not factual history. In their seminal book of autobiographical studies, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson stress its rhetorical and fictional features. "To reduce autobiographical narration to facticity," they argue, "is to strip it of the densities of rhetorical, literary, ethical, political, and cultural dimensions."[7] My reading of autobiographical narratives in this chapter pays more attention to their fictional executions and their social, ethical, and political implications than to the factuality of colonial memory narrated in those works.

"Writers' Self-Reflection" and the Critique of Confession

[6] Jerome Bruner, "The Autobiographical Process," in *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*, ed. Robert Folkenflik (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 38.

[7] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 13. Against a unitary Western mode of autobiography—which tends to designate a self-narrative of a white, male, privileged individual, the authors use the term "life-narrative" over "autobiography." But I use "autobiography"—a term still widely used—in my dissertation, while considering its limited use in recent scholarship. The autobiographical writings, as subject of this chapter, are indeed ones written by mostly privileged Korean male intellectuals, most of whom had the opportunity to study abroad in Tokyo, exposed to the modern knowledge of the metropole. But their non-Western, colonial identity brings about nuanced interpretations of these Korean autobiographical narratives. Recent scholarship on autobiography, or life narratives, are usually centered on the colonized of Western empires, which excludes other under-represented groups of people in the theory of autobiography—the colonized of the Asian empire.

In his influential study of the postliberation literature, *Literary History in the Liberation Space*, Kim Yunsik presents and analyzes the roundtable discussions on "writers' self-reflection" held in late 1945. When Korean writers first gathered two days after liberation, Yi T'aejun, a respected writer, contended that he would not work with those who held high positions in the Patriotic Association of Writers (*Munin pogukhoe*) during the colonial period, which was the writers' organization to support Japanese colonial policies and especially, war mobilization. Since most writers agreed with Yi's protest, two writers who were accused of collaboration had to leave the meeting.[8] Literary critic Paek Ch'ŏl recollects that the one who would be in an embarrassing situation there was Im Hwa, who muttered, "After all, is there anyone who is faultless…?"[9] Paek Ch'ŏl seems to want to point out that Im Hwa—a prominent poet and critic who was the chairman of the forcibly dissolved Korean Artists Proletarian Federation—also worked on behalf of the Japanese colonial policies in the last years of the colonial rule, but indeed Paek Ch'ŏl is a better known "pro-Japanese" writer in modern Korean literary history.[10] The observation that "after all," there is no one "who is faultless" was the reality of many Korean writers who had just endured the thirty-five-year colonial period.

[8] Paek Ch'ŏl, *Munhak chasŏjŏn* [Literary Autobiography] vol. 2 (Seoul: Pakyŏngsa, 1975), 300. Requoted from Kim Yunsik, *Haebang konggan ŭi munhaksa ron* [Literary History in the Liberation Space] (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1989), 4.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Several of Paek's works are regarded as "pro-Japanese." He also was a member of the Patriotic Writers' Association. See Im Chongguk, *Ch'inil munhak non* [A Study of Pro-Japanese Literature] (Seoul: P'yŏnghwa ch'ulp'ansa, 1966), 297–307.

In the roundtable discussions among writers held later, Im Hwa stresses the necessity of repeated and serious "self-criticism" based on "courage of conscience."[11] Kim Yunsik's comment on the discussion of "writers' self-reflection" is worth noting:

> As Im Hwa's remark on self-criticism was related to a universal principle rather than targeted against a specific person, everyone at the roundtable agreed with it. Unfortunately, there is hardly to be found a work that internalizes or writes about the principle of self-reflection, however. It is not irrelevant to our intellectual climate, having a poor literary tradition of a confessional form, but is more because of the ideological struggle between left and right in the liberation space, in which literature was inevitably swept away by politics. In other words, there was no time for a full literary embodiment of conscientious confession. Too drawn to the impending ideological conflict, the statements of writers rapidly came to have a strong political nature."[12]

As for the postliberation Korean literary situation, Kim assesses that writers' self-reflection was "swept away by politics." As a consequence, there was "no time for a full literary embodiment of conscientious confession" due to the urgency of "the impending ideological conflict." It is, I believe, one of the most perceptive and appropriate explanations regarding this transitional period in which postcolonial writers were situated. With this comment, his focus of study shifts onto the ideological remapping of the Korean literary world. Other initial studies, as well, have paid attention to the ideological and national literary movements of writers at the time.[13]

But Kim Yunsik's statement about "a poor literary tradition of confessional forms," which clearly considers the Japanese I-Novel and the lack of its Korean equivalent, or that there is "hardly a work that internalizes or writes about the principle of self-reflection" requires

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[11] "Chosŏn munhak ŭi chihyang: munin chwadamhoe sokkirok" [The Aim of Korean Literature: The Stenographical Record of Writers' Roundtable], *Yesul* 3 (1946): 133; "Munhakja ŭi chagi pip'an: chwadamhoe" [Writers' Self-Criticism: Roundtable], *Inmin yesul* 2 (1946): 169. Both records are cited from Song Kihan, Kim Ŏegon, ed., *Haebang konggan ŭi pip'yŏng munhak* [Literary Criticism in the Liberation Space] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1991).

[12] Kim Yunsik, *Literary History in the Liberation Space*, 7–8.

[13] See Kwŏn Yŏngmin, *Haebang chikhu ŭi minjok munhak undong yŏn'gu* [Study of the National Literature Movement in the Immediate Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1989); Sin Hyŏnggi, *Haebang chikhu ŭi munhak undong non* [Study of Literary Movement in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Che 3 munhaksa, 1989); Yi Uyong, ed., *Haebang konggan ŭi munhak yŏn'gu* [Study of Literature in the Liberation Space] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1990), among others.

scrupulous reconsideration. Although they are not large in number, there are postliberation works that reveal the painful confessions laden with self-reflection, self-loathing, and anxiety of those who ended up collaborating with the empire. Focused on several autobiographical short stories, which she calls "confessional writings," Kelly Y. Jeong explores the sense of shame and self-loathing in the works written by the male authors.[14] She argues that the self-hate of male writers not only stems from their acts of collaboration but also from their recognition of their failure as cultural leaders of the nation. By doing so, she convincingly shows a crisis of masculinity of colonial intellectuals.[15]

Recent Korean-language scholarship on self-reflective writings of the postliberation period tends to focus on the ways in which the narratives constructed and distorted the memory of colonial experience. For instance, Pak Yongjae defines the postliberation period as a period of "self-narrative" and reads the self-narratives to be intended to restore the (national) identity of the writers.[16] With a focus on Yi T'aejun's "Before and After Liberation" and Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People," O T'aeyŏng criticizes the distortion and erasure of memories for the sake of self-justification in those same writings.[17] Kim Kyŏngmi focuses on the author's desire to regenerate as a nationalist, as shown in Yi Kwangsu's *My Confession*.[18] Mostly, the studies of autobiographical writings about the author's colonial collaboration well demonstrate how the

[14] Kelly Y. Jeong, *Crisis of Gender and the Nation in Korean Literature and Cinema: Modernity Arrives Again* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011), 31–51.

[15] Ibid., 108.

[16] Pak Yongjae, "Haebanggi chaki sŏsa wa chuch'esŏng pogwŏn ŭi kihoek" [Self-Narratives in the Liberation Period and the Project of Restoring the Subjectivity] (master's thesis, Tongguk University, 2009).

[17] O T'aeyŏng, "Haebang kwa kiŏk ŭi chŏngch'ihak" [Liberation and Politics of Memory], *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu* 39 (2010): 171–98.

[18] Kim Kyŏngmi, "Haebanggi Yi Kwangsu munhak ŭi kiŏk sŏsa wa minjok tamnon ŭi yangsang" [The Memory Narrative and the Nationalist Discourse in Yi Kwangsu Literature in the Postliberation Period], *Hyŏndae munhak iron yŏn'gu* 43 (2010): 73–99.

dishonorable memory of collaboration was narrated, distorted, or blotted out in the texts. They conclude with a criticism of those autobiographical narratives for their self-deception or self-justification. A number of other scholars not listed above reach similar conclusions.[19]

These studies fully examine the significant literary genre of autobiographical writings in the postliberation period, but there are two problems in those critiques of self-representations related to colonial collaboration. First, as I state above, the autobiographical process assumes a reconstruction of memory and as such, it is by nature a process of reinterpreting life experiences. Considering the nature of the act of writing autobiography, what contribution to the discussion does a critique of self-deception or self-defense bring? It is no more than tautology. As Smith and Watson have pointed out, the emphasis on the facticity of autobiographical narratives may then in turn contribute to the loss of the complexities of the political, social, and cultural dimensions of self-narratives as a writing process within a particular context.[20]

Second, the critique of facticity in the text always gives rise to the question of how truthful the self-reflection is, that is, a question of the writer's sincerity or morality. It is valid to pose moral questions in literary study. But if we presume to hand down moral judgments on the "sincere self-reflection" of former collaborators, why do we not then give due credit to their acts of confession—their choice to sincerely, indeed, even voluntarily, confess over remaining silent? For writers, it is difficult to conceal their acts of collaboration because the evidence for collaboration remains in the form of their texts. Therefore, writers' collaboration is more widely

[19] Kim Yunsik, Chŏng Houng, *Han'guk sosŏlsa* [History of Korean Novel] (Seoul: Munhak tongne, 2000), 311–12; Yun Taesŏk, "Sŏsa rŭl t'onghan Kiŏk ŭi ŏgap kwa kiŏk ŭi punyu" [Oppression and the Sharing of Memory Through the Construction of Narratives], *Hyŏndae sosŏl yŏn'gu* 34 (2007): 77–90; Kang Yujin, "Manggak kwa waegok ŭi kŭlssŭki rŭl t'onghan chagi hamnihwa kwajŏng" [The Process of Self-justification Through Writings of Oblivion and Distortion], *Urimunhak yŏn'gu* 33 (2011): 229–52.

[20] Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 13.

recognized and criticized than perhaps other forms of collaboration.[21] In liberated Korea, public attention devoted to the trials of beloved writers such as Yi Kwangsu was more intense than that given to other political leaders.[22] As far as traces of collaboration are concerned, the recollection and recognition of past collaboration written after liberation is ineffaceable evidence as much as, if not more than, the "pro-Japanese" writing itself during the colonial period. If, for instance, Ch'ae Mansik did not publish his autobiographical fiction "Sinner of the People" in 1948, would his so-called betrayal of the Korean people have been known to the public as widely as it is now?

Thus, instead of focusing on the veracity of the narratives, I explore the social and political contexts in which the authors chose to write them at all rather than remain silent, as well as the motives for the confession. Yi Sŏkhun's short, three-page "confession," I discuss below, reveals the author's anxiety, bitterness, and repentance over his role as a former collaborator, and his wish to be accepted as a valid member of the nation. I then conduct a close analysis of the works by Yi Kwangsu and Ch'ae Mansik, both of which were written in 1948, within a political environment in which public discussions about the legal punishment of former collaborators had resumed.

Yi Sŏkhun's Confession: Reclaiming an Author's Real Name

[21] This is not only the case in postcolonial Korea. Philip Watts has pointed out that the purge of the Nazi collaborationist writers in postwar France was stricter than, and even a precedent to the purge of politicians because the writers had left traces of their collaborations in writing. Philip Watts, *Allegories of the Purge: How Literature Responded to the Postwar Trials of Writers and Intellectuals in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3.

[22] Several accounts of the trials against collaborators testify to that the Korean public had a greater interest in Yi Kwangsu's trial more than any other. See Chŏng Unhyŏn, ed., *Irŏbŏrin kiŏk ŭi pogosŏ: chŭngŏn Panmin T'ŭgwi* [The Record of Forgotten Memory: Testimonies of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts], (Seoul: Samin, 1999).

Yi Sŏkhun's "Quiet Storm" ("静かな嵐," 1941), the author's most well-known short story written in Japanese, illustrates well a Korean writer's rebirth as a sincere imperial subject of the Japanese empire over the course of a writers' lecture tour in Hamgyŏng Province. Publishing almost twenty pieces of fictions and essays propagating Japanese colonial policies, Yi "played an active role at the forefront of so-called *kokumin bungaku*," according to his own expression.[23] In his postliberation "Confession" published in January 1947, he confesses his unusual reaction upon liberation. When liberation came, he writes, "I didn't dare join in my compatriots in raising *T'aegŭkki* and hailing on the street."[24] He feels he does not deserve to join in celebrating liberation. "If I jumped into the crowd deeply moved and hurrahing," he adds, "people next to me would beat me and say 'Go away! This is not a place for you, you coward!'"[25] Since liberation, being afraid of running across anyone who knows him, he avoids meeting people. Calling himself a "moral sinner," he lives in hiding more than a year and ekes out a living by selling his writings under an alias. "I, before August 15th, too" he continues, "couldn't help selling my writings for a living as I was cornered in a dead-end alley."[26] Such an explanation for the reason for his collaboration—for a livelihood—is one of the most common ways, in post-1945 Korea, writers accounted for their colonial collaborations.

Although Yi's excuse for collaboration is similar to that of many others, the difference lies in the fact that he could not honorably write anything since liberation under his given name as a former collaborator. The very moment of the confession is his "first time to write under my

[23] Yi Sŏkhun, "Susang: kobaek [Essay: Confession]," *Paengmin* 3, no. 1 (1947): 45.

[24] Ibid., 46.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

real name after the August 15th liberation," which "makes him nervous and his heart pound."[27] The purpose of the confession is to say farewell forever to the "I, before August 15th"—that is, his stained past of collaboration—to atone his sin, and to purify his tarnished name. His friends—writers An Hoenam and Kim Song—advised him to have the courage to write with his real name "honorably."

From Yi's "Confession," we can grasp how much guilt he felt about his collaboration, and suffered from and feared of the expected censure from other people. But in the eyes of his friends, it was right for him to come forward to the public and write under his real name. "After all," for them, "there is no one who is faultless." Indeed, their judgment was not wrong. It seems that he did not need to be afraid of other people. There was no restriction on the literary activities of writers who had formerly collaborated, nor were there legal repercussions.[28] Therefore, self-reflection on collaboration came to become completely a matter of personal conscience. The weight of conscience and self-reflection was not the same for everyone. Later in 1948, a short report of writers' recent activities published in a literary journal states that Mr. Yi Sŏkhun has not written any work for a long time since liberation, and thus, they anticipate him publishing a masterpiece anytime soon,[29] as if his lack of productivity was owing to being in the throes of completing a masterpiece. No one was responsive to his desperate confession. In the end, he

[27] Ibid, 45.

[28] Immediately after liberation, there was a voluntary movement to impose restrictions against former collaborators. For instance, in October 1945, the Kyŏngsŏng Publication Guild decided not to publish books by former "pro-Japanese" collaborators. By 1947, such restrictions seem to have vanished. Yi Chungyŏn, *Ch'aek, sasŭl esŏ p'ullida: Haebanggi ch'aek ŭi munhwasa* [Books, Unshackled: A Cultural History of Books in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Hyean, 2005), 323.

[29] "Mundanin ŭi p'yochŏng" [Writers' This and That], *Paengmin* 4, no. 5 (1948): 135.

seems able to resume his literary career, as attested by an advertisement for his new publication *The Literature Reader* (*Munhak kamsang tokpon*) in January 1949.[30]

When Yi Sŏkhun published "Confession" in 1947, the matter of past collaboration seems to have been forgotten in the public sphere. In 1948, however, the National Assembly started a discussion of punishing collaborators belatedly and enacted a relevant law. For former collaborators, the period from the late half of 1948 to the first half of 1949 was a time of dread, in which they feared their past crimes, which they believed had been absolved, had come back to haunt them. After the South Korean government was established in August 1948, the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts was created to investigate and prosecute collaborators. Although the Syngman Rhee administration strategically hindered the Special Committee to execute its full function, which I elucidate in the Introduction to this dissertation, most former collaborators anxiously maintained silence about their past, with the exception of the cases I discuss below.

Yi Kwangsu's Confession: The Creation of Fictional Hero and Fictional Reader

Yi Kwangsu started writing his post-1945 autobiography, *My Confession*, in August 1948, and published it in December of the same year. It should be noted exactly when this autobiography was written and published. In southern Korea, with the formation of the National Legislative Assembly in May 1948, an impassioned discussion was raging about the Anti-National Acts Law. It was in September that year, after the Republic of Korea was formally established, when the National Assembly promulgated the Anti-National Acts Law. The Special

[30] "Munhak kamsang tokpon" [Advertisement: The Literature Reader], *Paengmin* 5, no. 1 (1949): 94.

Committee was organized on September 22nd.[31] Yi Kwangsu wrote the confession at the time when the Special Committee was actively organized and began its investigations and arrests in January of the next year.

In the last section of *My Confession*, Yi Kwangsu explicitly states his intention of writing: "The Anti-National Acts Law has already come into force, I don't know when I will be judged, and what sentence I will receive when I am judged. Thus, I would like to write mostly about my nationalistic movements while I am yet able to write, and share my thoughts with the people who love and care about me, or hate and curse me."[32] He was right about his reputation, a national writer whom the Korean people both loved and then hated because of their feeling of betrayal by his notorious collaboration with Japan. Thus, his contemporaries seemed to want to read what he would write about his acts of collaboration. On the previous page, he notes, "several friends have already urged me to write a confession."[33] According to Kim Tongin, one of Yi's contemporary writers, Yi's books sold well in the postliberation period to Korean readers who anticipated his repentance or confession.[34] If his readers anticipated excruciating repentance for his betrayal, however, this expectation was also betrayed. *My Confession* was not what the Korean public wanted to hear in several regards.

My Confession consists of seven sections and an appendix titled "Defense of Pro-Japanese Collaborators" ("Ch'inilp'a ŭi pyŏn"). Discussions about *My Confession* usually focus

[31] As for the process of enacting the Anti-National Acts Law, see Yi Kangsu, *Panmin t'ŭgwi yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Nanam ch'ulp'an, 2003); Hŏ Chong, *Panmin t'ŭgwi ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong* (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2003).

[32] Yi Kwangsu, "My Confession" [Na ŭi Kobaek], *Yi Kwangsu chŏnjip* [Yi Kwangsu's Complete Works] (Seoul: Samjungdang, 1962), 283.

[33] Ibid., 282.

[34] Kim Tongin, "Ch'unwŏn ŭi 'Na'" [On Yi Kwangu's Autobiography], *Sinch'ŏnji* (March 1948): 120–22. Cultural historian Yi Chungyŏn also interprets the fact that Yi Kwangsu's books were bestsellers during those years as the expression of the public expectation for Yi Kwangsu to show contrition or confession of his "pro-Japanese" collaboration. See Yi Chungyŏn, *Books, Unshackled*, 340–45.

on the very short appendix due to its audacious, controversial claims on the pending issue of collaboration. For instance, Yi Kwangsu argues that if there was anyone who had never collaborated with Japan under the nearly forty years of systematic Japanese rule, he must have been born and reared outside of Korea, and that even American officers knew that Korean people's cooperation with Japan was unavoidable. Also, he defends Hong Saik, who was a lieutenant-general of the Japanese imperial army and hung at the Japanese War Crime Trials in the Philippines in 1946. Such claims are certainly the ones that would rouse public antipathy. Critiques of Yi Kwangsu's audacity not to make proper apologies for his collaboration after liberation are mostly based on this appendix.

It is possible to see that Yi Kwangsu's claim in the short appendix is what he truly wants to tell his contemporary Koreans through writing this confession—that is to say, to argue that almost everyone remaining in the Korean peninsula was culpable for collaboration and, thus, to generously forgive former pro-Japanese collaborators for the sake of national unity. But except for the argumentative appendix, most of this lengthy autobiographical narrative, which is also deliberately written, is far from a direct defense of collaborators or a holding of all Koreans accountable. The main sections primarily deal with the formation, development, and practice of Yi's national consciousness from his childhood through the entire colonial era. It is interesting to note that the confession of Yi Kwangsu, whose name was notoriously associated with collaboration, was written with the central theme of unyielding national consciousness. The seven sections consist of: "When My National Consciousness Burgeoned;" "The First Practice of National Movement;" "Exiled People;" "The Year of 1919 and I;" "My Apostasy;" "Preservation of the Nation;" and "Liberation and Me." His detailed descriptions range from his dedication to national education as a young teacher at Osan School to his deep involvement in the March First

Movement to the organization and activities of the Provisional Government during his stay in Shanghai. His active involvement in the nationalist movement takes up two-thirds of the entire autobiography to the antepenultimate "My Apostasy," which finally covers his collaboration. What Yi Kwangsu "wanted to share with the people" obviously seems to be his life-long dedication to the nation of Korea.

The penultimate section "Preservation of the Nation" clearly demonstrates Yi Kwangsu's paradoxical claim of collaboration for the nation. According to his explanation, Yi makes a judgment that resistance against imperial Japan would be impossible. For the preservation of the nation, thus, it would be better to take the collaborationist attitude the Japanese empire demanded of Koreans until the end of the war. He then reaches the conclusion that there was no harm for Koreans to demonstrate a cooperation with Japan. The only sacrifice, if any, is for several outstanding nationalists—like himself—to pretend to actively cooperate in order to convince the Japanese colonial authorities to believe in Koreans' true cooperation with Japan, which sacrifices honor of those nationalists as leading patriots and national leaders. As a consequence of this oddly self-centered reasoning, Yi Kwangsu decides to sacrifice himself for the nation, identifying himself with "Sim Chung," an iconic filial daughter character in a well-known Korean traditional story, who "sells her body to save her father from his agony."[35] In addition, his physical frailty adds a tragic element to his sacrifice. "My body was infirm to the extent that I could die in any day soon."[36] It explains his self-abandoning decision. It is certainly a serious misjudgment not consider the numerous lives of young Korean soldiers and mobilized workers who were sacrificed in the process of (in)voluntary wartime collaboration. Based on this wrongly

[35] Yi Kwangsu, "My Confession," 279.

[36] Ibid.

driven "nationalism," Yi anyway chooses a dishonorable path of collaboration, which he realized was not understood by general public. But for him, already intoxicated by his own tragic self-sacrifice, it was the only way to prevent the extinction of the Korean nation under brutal colonial rule. His self-sacrificial decision is to prove his strong loyalty to the nation in his autobiography.

Yi's stance about choosing to collaborate for national salvation is resonant with the "collaborationist nationalism" of Gu Cheng's Reformed Government in occupied wartime China, which Timothy Brook articulates. Collaboration, for Gu, was "the only realistic means of ensuring the survival of the nation," since resistance could give rise to its annihilation.[37] The rhetoric of collaboration for national salvation worked to justify their deeds, although it would easily fail to compete with the nationalist narrative of resistance. Similar to the notion of collaborationist nationalism, a Korean scholar has also defined Yi Kwangsu as an oxymoron of "pro-Japanese nationalist."[38] In both the Chinese and Korean cases, their paradoxical claim for national salvation failed to persuade their fellow nationals and gain public sympathy in the end. Rather, the claims for collaborationist nationalism hurt the popular nationalist sentiments of the majority. Also, they meant to disregard the apparent grim reality of being colonized, especially among ordinary people, which is exactly revealed in Yi Kwangsu's reasoning of a minimal sacrifice for collaboration.

The public did not understand the path of the so-called "pro-Japanese nationalist," though Yi Kwangsu surely recognized such a path as a dishonorable one staining his name as a nationalist. In spite of people's misunderstanding of his "true intention," however, he persists in

[37] Timothy Brook, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, ed. Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 160.

[38] Cho Kwanja, "Minjok ŭi himŭl yongmanghan ch'inil naesyŏnŏllisŭtŭ Yi Kwangsu [Yi Kwangsu, A Pro-Japanese Nationalist Who Endeavored for the Strength of the Nation]," in *Haebang chŏnhusa ŭi chaeinsik* [Rethinking History Before and After Liberation] vol. 1, ed. Park Chihyang et al. (Seoul: Ch'aek sesang, 2006), 524-55.

pursuing the misinterpreted way, which elicits scathing censure from the public. In this autobiographical narrative, he describes himself as a scapegoat for the nation, whose genuine intention should be hidden and falsely reviled. Yi Kwangsu portrays himself as a tragic national hero, or an antihero, lonely and misunderstood by the majority of fellow Koreans.

A portrait of a hero, one who is unfairly blamed from Yi's point of view, at the same time, requires a character who would testify to the hero's secret motive for such despicable acts and agonies in a retroactive way. Here Yi introduces an "ideal" response and interpretation to his heroic acts of collaboration, which seems to be more like an expression of his wish rather than what actually happened as he claims. Yi writes that people who loved him–his wife, family members, acquaintances, and even not-acquainted young students—came to persuade him not to take the path of collaboration. These small numbers acquaintances and bright young students—Yi had them go to the battlefield—are depicted to know his genuine intention. Their existence is crucial in the text because they are the ones who knew his nationalist intention from the beginning and would prove it retroactively.

The creation, or fictionalization, of Yi Kwangsu himself as a national hero is conspicuous in the scenes of his confrontation with Korean students at the lecturing tours in order to encourage them to volunteer for the imperial army. Yi recalls "some weepy memories of student soldiers." In his recollection, students came to see him and did nothing but weep. He writes, "I did not try to ask who they were and why they cry to the extent that their tears wet the floor. No need for asking. Since my mind and their minds are one."[39] Sitting face to face with students and crying without a word are repeated in his recollection. Some students ask Yi if he has more to say to them, but he just answers, "There are some words that we naturally understand without

[39] Yi Kwangsu, "My Confession," 280.

saying them. It is meaningless if we say them aloud."[40] These tearful moments and telepathic communications are oddly reminiscent of Yi Kwangsu's colonial-period writings, which propagated the assimilation policy of "Japan and Korea are One Body" (*naesŏn ilch'e*; *naisen ittai*). In those colonial writings, Japanese and Koreans often telepathically understood each other, for instance, in a way that "a heart and a heart truly connect."[41]

Among his recollections of communicating with young students, Yi Kwangsu offers the interesting anecdote that a young female student fully understands his secret and desperate sacrifice:

> One day a thick envelope arrived. Addressing the letter with "Dear Father," the author of the letter said that she knows me but I would not know her, that she calls me Father because she has thought of me as her father for a long time, then she said that although she heard all my lectures in Tokyo, she knows there is something else that I truly wanted to say to the Korean compatriots and knows that I would not able to say it in words or in writing, and to me, she said, the words I wanted to speak, I should write the words, that I cannot speak now, in detail, and bury them under the floor, or in the ground when I die, and she said that she writes this staying up all night, weeps and writes again, lastly, she said that a daughter, who I've never met in this world, sincerely hopes that I listen to her saying. … The letter was doubt, resentment, reproach, advice, admonition, hope, care, and love altogether, for me, all the Korean people's letter for me. I truly wanted to keep the letter, but since I was afraid of future troubles for me and the sender of the letter, I burned the letter at a brazier.[42]

It is well known that Yi Kwangsu spoke and wrote many propagandistic messages for the imperial war mobilization. The verbose phrases above—including a ten-line long sentence—again emphasizes that his lectures for war propaganda were different from what he sincerely wanted to say to fellow Koreans. He was not allowed to say what he truly wanted to say obviously because of the colonial situation. But one day he receives a thick letter from a young

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[40] Ibid.

[41] I have taken this expression from Yi Kwangsu's Japanese novel encouraging Japanese-Korean interracial marriage. Yi Kwangsu, *Chinjŏng maŭm i mannasŏya mallo* [Hearts Truly Connect], trans. Yi Kyŏnghun (Seoul: P'yŏngminsa, 1995), 9–99. The original Japanese title is *心相觸れてこそ* (1940).

[42] Yi Kwangsu, "My Confession," 280.

female student, who took the trouble to come to every one of Yi's lectures. She is the one who thankfully understands his untold heart. For his own good, she advises him to write the words that he truly wants to say and "bury them under the floor or in the ground" when he dies. Then, his truth would be revealed later and his name would be cleared. But he did not do what she urged him to do and now the letter has been destroyed. Being "afraid of future troubles" for himself and the letter writer, he burned the letter off, and even its author's name is unknown. It implies, of course, that there is no way to prove that this letter really existed. Rather, Yi's way of describing the letter in the narrative seems to be total fiction. Surely, it does not matter whether he actually received this letter or not. Regardless of the existence of the letter, in this anecdote, it is important that the letter works as a fictional device to prove his true heart for the nation.

It would not be enough to argue that, at some point after 1945, Yi merely pretended to collaborate with the empire in deep worry about the nation's future. There should be a small number of people who would prove his true motive back then, even if the majority of fellow Koreans would not understand his true heart for the nation and denounce him, not knowing his loyalty. The existence of these young and faithful students is critical because they were the very victims of Yi's collaboration—through the lectures and writings that encourage students to go to war. In addition, the sender of the letter in the episode above yet thinks Yi to be her father, the father figure of the nation—the letter even starts with "Dear Father," in spite of his all activities that seemingly betrayed the nation. Her belief in him attests to his innocence. By repeatedly introducing (or fictionalizing) stories of young students who believed in his true motive, Yi Kwangsu supports his argument for a feigned collaboration for the sake of the nation. In the name of autobiography, he designs fictional characters who respond to, or read, his acts in the way he wants to be read by others.

In *My Confession*, Yi Kwangsu creates one of the most tragic figures in colonial Korea: a national hero, pitiful scapegoat, and tragic antihero whose sincere loyalty has been misunderstood. His project for saving the nation would culminate when he let fellow Koreans misunderstand and condemn him. In the piece, which is presented as an autobiography, not as fiction, Yi elaborately devises a character, a nationalist hero, Yi Kwangsu himself. In this sense, *My Confession* is his magnum opus, which he has elaborately created in order to provide a new implication for his collaborative acts during the entire colonial period. The new meaning is his tragic, self-sacrificing collaboration for the Korean nation. By portraying fictional readers of his collaboration, who deeply understand Yi's "true heart" for the nation, this autobiography interrupts a typical understanding of his collaboration, and reiterates his version of colonial truth that had never been spoken out loud or would never have been proven but in his confession. Also, discerning readers would certainly not buy his version of truth.

After Yi Kwangsu published *My Confession* in December of 1948, he was arrested in early February of 1949 along with Ch'oe Namsŏn, another literary giant of modern Korean literature. Several months thereafter, in June, the Special Committee was dissolved due to a series of acts of sabotage, which were mainly perpetrated by the government. The charges against Yi Kwangsu, who was first released on sick bail soon after being arrested, were ultimately dropped on August 29, 1949. Ultimately, no literary figure was prosecuted for the charge of collaboration in South Korea.

Critique of Yi Kwangsu's confession as merely an audacious excuse for his colonial collaboration does not further discussion of this postcolonial autobiography, but only focus on Yi's ostensible lack of conscience and immorality. Instead, I have explored the ways in which Yi

deploys narrative techniques in the autobiography in order to make readers imagine his colonial past in the way that he wants them to.

In the next sections, I deal with autobiographical writings, which were published under the genre of "fiction," but mostly read as autobiography. In order to understand this specific reading mode, a discussion of the characteristics of autobiographical fiction in the late colonial period precedes the analysis of Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People." This discussion helps to explain the context in which Ch'ae's novella has been interpreted in Korean literary studies.

Reading Autobiographical Fiction in Late Colonial Korea

South Korean literary scholars have tried to find a Korean literary tradition or literary practice of the pursuit of the self, which corresponds to the distinctive literary tradition of the "I-Novel" in Japan.[43] Such efforts to search for an equivalent I-Novel category imply that Korean literature is deficient or immature vis-à-vis Japanese literature. In the formative era of modern literature since the early 1920s, Korean writers started experimenting with confessional voices as an exploration of the modern self, which was indeed influenced by the Japanese I-Novel.[44] Since the 1930s, though not formally established as a genre, there was a tendency toward autobiographical novels in Korean literature, often designated as "novels about novelists" (*sosŏlga sosŏl*; 小說家小說), "personal novels" (*sinbyŏn sosŏl*; 身邊小說), or "psychological

[43] U Chŏnggwŏn, *Han'guk kŭndae kobaek sosŏl ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa sŏsa yangsik* [The Formation and the Narrative Mode of Modern Korean Confessional Novel] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004); Pang Minho, "Ilbon sasosŏl kwa han'guk ŭi chajŏnjŏk sosŏl ŭi pigyo" [A Comparative Study of the Japanese I-Novel and the Korean Autobiographical Novel], *Han'guk hyŏndae munhak yŏn'gu* 31 (2010): 35–84; Pang Minho, "Sasosŏl ŭi chŏnyu wa munhaksajŏk wisang: Yi T'aejun ŭi kyŏng'u" [Appropriation of the Japanese I-Novel and Its Literary Status: The Case of Yi T'aejun], *Ilche malgi han'guk munhak ŭi tamnon kwa teksŭtŭ* [Discourse and Text of Korean Literature in the Late Japanese Colonial Period] (Seoul: Yeok, 2011), 117–52.

[44] For instance, works by Kim Tongin ("To a Weak-minded Human Being") and Yŏm Sangsŏp ("A Green Frog in the Specimen Room"), both of whom are known as the founders of modern Korean literature, show confessional voices.

novels" (*simgyŏng sosŏl*; 心境小說). Well-known writers such as Pak T'aewŏn, Yi T'aejun, and Yi Sang fictionalized their own daily lives and experiences, with a writer or a socially, economically incompetent colonial intellectual—seemingly the author himself—as a main protagonist.

While the novels are presented as "fiction," some of which were written in third-person narrative modes, their main protagonists bear considerable resemblance to the authors in terms of their biographical facts—from personal lives and family relations to literary career and accomplishments in particular, such as the titles or the descriptions of authored and published literary works. The texts are characterized by two contrasting features: the fictitiousness of the protagonists (e.g., mostly third-person narratives) and nonetheless, the evident congruence of literary achievements between the author and the protagonist.

Philippe Lejeune regards autobiography as a contractual genre between the author and the reader, established by the identity of the narrator, the protagonist, and the author's name on the book's cover.[45] According to Lejeune's definition, the autobiographical stories that I list above are autobiographical "novels," not autobiographies; these narratives refuse the possibility of identity between the author and the protagonist by creating a fictional character who resembles the author. For instance, Yi T'aejun's "Hyŏn" in his several autobiographical short stories, "P" in Ch'ae Mansik's "Ready-made Life," or "Kubo" in Pak T'aewŏn's "A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist," among others. The name of the protagonist is different from the author named on the book cover. No matter how the protagonist's life resembles the author's, it is not an autobiography without the "autobiographical contract" of the clear affirmation of identity between the author and the protagonist.

[45] Philippe Lejeune, "The Autobiographical Contract," 192–222.

The fact that the author pointedly refuses his text to be read as an autobiography, however, does not mean that the reader does not read it as one. As Lejeune himself has pointed out, readers tend to seek resemblances between protagonist and author if there is no affirmation of identity, and to look for differences if there is an affirmation.[46] Reading a text as the author's autobiography depends on the reader's expectations and reading practices, regardless of Lejeune's precise textual definition. In her significant study of the Japanese I-novel, Tomi Suzuki pays attention to a mode of reading in which the reader believes first-person narratives to be "transparent" expressions of the author's "true self."[47] The Japanese I-novel, Suzuki argues, is defined by such a reading mode that assumes the single identity of the protagonist, the narrator, and the author in a given text. Therefore, the Japanese-specific I-novel is "a literary and ideological paradigm" to read a text, assuming this congruence of these three functions (i.e., protagonist, narrator, author), than based on "a specific formal characteristic."[48]

In reading Korean autobiographical novels, which emerged during the late colonial period in the 1930s, a consideration of the mode of reading the I-novel is a useful reference. As I further demonstrate below, these autobiographical novels were declared to be fiction, but at the same time, the authors deliberately made them appear to be the authors' personal stories; the authors' allusion to a shared identity between author and protagonist operate to establish such a reading mode. For instance, when Yi T'aejun portrays a writer protagonist whose biographical details are identical with his own as author, he gives the protagonist a specific name, "Hyŏn." Yi's autobiographical fictions, from "Taedong River is Frozen" ("P'aegangnaeng," 1938) and "A

[46] Ibid., 203.

[47] Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self*, 6.

[48] Ibid.

Story of Rabbits" ("T'okki yiyagi," 1941) to "Before and After Liberation" ("Haebang chŏnhu," 1946), which fully illustrate a writer's lived experience and his psychological and economic hardships under colonial rule, always have a writer named Hyŏn as their main protagonist. In other words, for readers, "Hyŏn" is the fictional persona of Yi T'aejun, and as a result, Hyŏn's story is regarded as Yi T'aejun's story. This is the case as well with Pak T'aewŏn's famous novel about a novelist—representative of *sosŏlga sosŏl*—"A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist" ("Sosŏlga Kubo ssi ŭi iril," 1934). This novel meticulously depicts one day in the life of the main protagonist, a novelist named "Kubo," which is Pak's well-known *nom de plume*. Although these texts employ third-person narrative modes, the third-person protagonists have the names of the authors, which makes readers think the text is autobiographical, or at least confuses them based on this interaction of information between the writer and the reader.

In the case of a first-person narrative, the distinction between fiction and autobiography can be more ambiguous. Writers often deliberately blur the distinction between the main protagonists and themselves by including specific biographical information and, especially, their distinctive literary inclinations or their products into the text. In "Sinner of the People," a 1948 novella by Ch'ae Mansik, the main protagonist and narrator "I" is described to have published a short story titled "Constable Maeng" ("Maeng sunsa") as his first literary piece since the 1945 liberation. The title and description of the short story are exactly the same as the author Ch'ae's actual existing work. Although the readers know the text is supposed to be read as fiction, the author encourages the reader to anticipate and read the fiction as autobiographical.

When reading literary works with a first-person narrative of a writer-protagonist, Korean literary scholars tend to use the typical mode of reading, that is, interpretation of an autobiographical fiction as the author's self-narrative. In spite of a well-acknowledged literary

notion that the first-person narrator cannot necessarily be identified with the author, contemporary literary scholars seem to resort to such a mode of reading by default. The critique of postcolonial autobiographical fiction for distorting, hiding, or deceiving memories of the colonial past, as I state above, is in fact a consequence of reading a work of fiction as an autobiography.[49] If reader-researchers merely regard them as fiction, it would not make much sense to pay close attention to the veracity of memory in the fictional text. The motive for such a reading mode is, again, based on the author's intention to blur the identity between the protagonist and the author.

The process of reading an autobiographical text is thus informed by interactions on both the sides of the reader and the writer; there is on the one hand, a mode of reading that assumes that a text reflects a personal story of the author, and on the other hand, the author's intentional strategy to compel readers to interpret a text to be autobiographical. This intersubjective process of reading is one of the fundamental components in understanding Korean autobiographical fiction and how it has been accepted among Korean readers. Even if a story whose main protagonist is a writer is published with under the genre of "fiction," the author often deploys devices that allude to the identity of the author and the protagonist, and the reader then accepts that identity as real. In *Reading Autobiography*, Smith and Watson place an emphasis on the intersubjective exchange between author and reader in life-narratives. The intersubjective mode is the process of interpreting a subjective truth proposed in autobiographical narratives. "Autobiographical truth," Smith and Watson note, should be differentiated from historical truth, because it is based on a "shared understanding of the meaning of a life" through the

[49] See the above-mentioned studies, such as O T'aeyŏng, "Liberation and Politics of Memory," or Kang Yujin, "The Process of Self-justification Through Writings of Oblivion and Distortion."

intersubjective process between author and reader.[50] For instance, in the case of Yi Kwangsu's *My Confession*, the autobiographical truth proposed in the text is Yi's tragic, self-sacrificing collaboration for sake of the Korean nation. Reading Yi Kwangsu's *My Confession* entails a process of sharing as well as contesting perspectives, indeed, negotiating the autobiographical truth between reader and author. Yi even created an ideal response to his truth in the narrative. But through the intersubjective reading process, readers do not choose to share Yi's labored autobiographical truth. In the next section, I analyze Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People" with a focus on the ways in which the author invites contemporary readers to engage with the interpretations of truths about the issue of colonial collaboration.

Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People": A Fictional Court and the Reader as Audience

Ch'ae Mansik's autobiographical novella, "Sinner of the People" ("民族의 罪人") was published in two installments in October 1948 and January 1949. This long short story is the most prominent and rigorous self-reflection among autobiographical narratives which deal with acts of collaboration with colonial rule that has been produced by a Korean writer, and as a matter of fact, by any intellectual in twentieth-century Korea's colonial history.

The main event of the story is that the first-person narrator and main protagonist, a writer who once collaborated with Japanese colonial policies, was humiliated by an old acquaintance because of his pro-Japanese collaboration. Visiting a friend's publishing company, "I" runs across Yun, who "has no history of collaboration."[51] After Yun scathingly criticizes "I" for collaborating, "I" lies sick in bed for more than nearly two weeks. Along with this event, "I"'s

[50] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 16.

[51] Ch'ae Mansik, "Sinner of the People" [Minjok ŭi choein], *Pangmin* 4, no. 5 (1948): 35.

recollections of the colonial period—from his experience of being interrogated by the Japanese thought police and short imprisonment for the charge of organizing a secret circle (which later turns out to be fabricated), to the detailed descriptions of his collaboration activities, among other things—are woven into the narrative. At the end of the story, "I" encourages his visiting nephew to join the boy's schoolmates in a student strike to expel a formerly pro-Japanese teacher from school. Advising his nephew to do the just thing with bravery and no regard for personal interest gives "I" a small sense of solace while making him feel ashamed at the same time.

"Sinner of the People" has been often regarded as a self-justification for the author's colonial collaboration on some grounds.[52] For instance, regarding his passiveness and refusal to fight for the nation, the narrator first admits that it was surely his own fault [that he did not fight], "caused by my feeble, cowardly personality."[53] But he soon casts a shadow of doubt over the nature of the entire Korean people by saying, "it was the general nature of a nation that had lost its own country, that tends to be selfish, passive, and retrogressive,"[54] thereby indirectly rejecting the notion that he is solely to be blamed and even implicating the entire nation. Another self-justification is that "I" considers his motivation to write war propaganda to be based on a question of livelihood. Likewise, when "I" was ordered to go on a lecture tour to provoke hostility among the public toward the United States and England, he defends the reason that he could not help but follow the order: his previous experience of imprisonment in a police station by Japanese thought police had made him fearful of a similar punishment should he refuse to

[52] See Kim Yunsik, Chŏng Houng, *History of Korean Novel*, 311–12.

[53] Ch'ae Mansik, "Sinner of the People," 36.

[54] Ibid.

obey. As noted, the author tries to show the inevitability of his acts of collaboration under the auspices of livelihood and survival under colonial rule.

The defense for collaboration is conspicuous in a dispute scene among three characters: the narrator "I;" Yun, who castigates "I" and other collaborators in "I"s presence; and the editor, Kim, who defends "I." Although there are three participants, the dispute more accurately centers on Yun and Kim. "I" is directly concerned, but he does not, or cannot, say a word in his own defense. As soon as he meets Yun, "I" becomes restless and is unable to protest against Yun's harsh criticism or mockery; his face just "turns as white as a sheet."[55] Instead, it is the editor, Kim, fiercely defending "I." All defense for collaborators is offered through Kim's impassioned speech: Kim first points out that Yun's fortunate material circumstances, in which he did not need to keep working as a journalist in order to make a living as others did, derive from his rich parents, which means that Yun was not compelled to collaborate with Japanese policies as a journalist. As a consequence, from Kim's perspective, Yun is "a person who hasn't been given an active chance to test the strength of his loyalty," and "a person who is *by luck* innocent."[56] Kim further defends writers and journalists who cooperated with Japanese war propaganda because they did so to earn a living and in any case, their propaganda was not very effective for war mobilization.

In the dispute, "I"'s silence stands out, while Yun and Kim keep quarreling fiercely in accusation and defense in front of "I." Arguably, this scene of the quarrel is essentially staging a trial with "I" as the defendant, Yun as the prosecutor, and Kim as the defense. In other words, "Sinner of the People" imitates a trial scene of collaborators. In the trial of the collaborator "I,"

[55] Ch'ae Mansik, "Sinner of the People," *Paengmin* 5, no. 1 (1949): 61.

[56] Ibid., 59. Italics are mine.

each party makes a plausible case against the other, but the trial is suddenly suspended by the defendant's abandonment of a further appeal.

> Kim's defense for pro-Japanese collaborators was, even if Yun did not point it out, rather contrived, and implausible and flawed on the whole. Even if his defense was convincing, in the first place, me, as a defendant, would say, "No, the concluding speech of the prosecutor is right and the defense of the advocate is totally useless."
> Under such psychological circumstances, therefore, there is no further justification possible.[57]

For the defendant, the narrator "I," Kim's defense is "implausible and flawed on the whole." Because the defendant does not think his sin is venial from the outset, the accusation of the prosecutor is absolutely right. Thus, the defendant overrules the heated defense for his behalf, which was proceeding borrowing Kim's voice. For "I," any effort for his defense is "totally useless." Because "I" stops describing the discussion only after Kim has already given a lengthy defense, perhaps the narrator's abandonment of a further appeal may appear merely to be a token gesture for the purpose of emphasizing "I"s sincere repentance. It should be noted, however, that throughout the narrative the narrator never believes in his own redemption.

In "Sinner of the People," Ch'ae Mansik portrays colonial collaboration as an unforgivable sin, with vivid images of the "mire of pro-Japanese collaboration,"[58] and "immortal rubber boots."[59] Once one falls into the "mire of pro-Japanese collaboration," it would be impossible for him to return to a clean state with unstained skin.

> Even if I escaped from the mire while it was up to my shins, the dirty mud that was once stuck to my skin was like immortal rubber boots on my legs. It was a permanent *mark of my sins*, which could not be erased no matter how I washed or peeled. It was as if a prostitute returned home and it would never happen that she could become a virgin again.

[57] Ibid., 61.

[58] Ibid., 53.

[59] Ibid., 54.

> Also, for the reason that I got out rather early from the mire, when it stained me up to my shins, there was nothing to be more proud of than those who were sunk up to their navel or chest. Even if one got out of the mire when it was only up to his ankles, his skin was also stained by the dirty mud of being pro-Japanese. Therefore, regardless of whether they sank up to their shins, their ankles, or more deeply to their chest, there is no difference in the shade of the mark of sins, even if it merely makes a small difference in the quantity of sins.[60]

The image of the "immortal rubber boots" with which the author seems to be obsessed in the story is never "washed or even peeled" from his shins. The author adds, "there was nothing to be more proud of than those who were sunk up to their navel or chest" in the mire. But in spite of the statement, we can feel here that the author wants to emphasize that the stain of sins only reaches his shins, compared to those who seem to be wearing mud armor up to their chest. The intense images of "immortal rubber boots" and the "permanent mark of my sins" inscribed on the narrator's body demonstrate the impossibility of being forgiven as a collaborator and the resulting deep hopelessness. "I"'s advice to his nephew in the final scene also reveals the impossibility of redemption. In the final scene, the narrator claims that a new generation—that of his nephew and innocent young students—ought to replace the old generation with its permanently "stained" colonial past, represented by "I" and the "pro-Japanese" school teacher who should be expelled from school.

In his 1946 short story entitled "Journey" ("Yŏngno"; 歷路), Ch'ae Mansik presents a similar argument. The protagonist "I," traveling with his friend back to his hometown, is a writer who once cooperated with the Japanese war mobilization policy by giving some public lectures. His friend—again, a counselor character—advises him to actively participate from now on in any business related to the foundation of the new nation-state in order to clear his name from the old crime of collaboration. But from "I"'s perspective, there is nothing can save him from the

[60] Ibid. Italics are the original's.

dishonor of collaboration. Instead, he claims, "if a person committed a social crime or any wrongdoing, he ought to reveal how and why he did it and receive a proper punishment through appropriate legal procedures." He believes such process to be "fair and honorable" for the criminal himself. He continues that if he should live being criticized behind his back "without being interrogated," it is such an "intolerable displeasure, agony, and sadness."[61]

Hannah Arendt writes that punishment is as an important element in human affairs as forgiveness. "Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever."[62] Forgiveness and punishment "have in common that they attempt to put an end to something that without interference could go on endlessly."[63] This necessity for punishment is what Ch'ae Mansik's protagonists—his alter egos—claim in the two fictions. Without public forgiveness or appropriate punishment for a collaborator like "I," who has confronted his wrongdoing to the last without hiding it, he will "forever" be unable to overcome the acts he committed. By staging a court trial scene in "Sinner of the People," the author enacts his own trial, which never happened in real life.

The significance of the staging of an imaginary court in the piece lies not only in performing the author's own interrogation to put an end to the lingering psychological

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[61] Ch'ae Mansik, "Journey" [Yŏngno], *Haebang 50-nyŏn Han'guk ŭi sosŏl: 1945~1960*, ed. Hong Chŏngsŏn and others. (Seoul: Hangyore sinmunsa, 1995), 29. This fictional piece was originally published in *Sin munhak* [New Literature] in June 1946.

[62] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edition (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 237. I am not the first person to bring up Arendt's notions of forgiveness and punishment in reading Ch'ae Mansik's "Sinner of the People." See Kim Chiyŏng, "Hana ŭi haebang, tu kae ŭi sisŏn" [One Liberation, Two Perspectives], *Han'guk hyŏndae munhak yŏn'gu* 30 (2010): 324–5.

[63] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 241.

consequences of collaboration. More importantly, the fictional trial actively invites the reader to the intersubjective process of interpreting the realities and meanings of collaboration. In other words, the fictional trial provides various perspectives about collaboration—including accusation, defense, and the contrition of the defendant—and summons the reader as an audience, jury, or judge, and perhaps all three, for the trial for colonial collaboration. "Sinner of the People," therefore, demonstrates the author's genuine search for a means to overcome the colonial past by providing the reader with the fictional site for interrogation and reflection.

Finally, I discuss the time gap between the writing and publication of Ch'ae's "Sinner of the People," which is often a subject of discussion. At the end of the novella, the author indicates that he wrote it in 1946, but he did not publish it until October 1948. Several scholars have pointed out the belated publication, criticizing the opportunism of the author in waiting to publish the autobiographical fiction until the establishment of the Syngman Rhee government, when collaboration ceased to be a serious matter because of the government's objection to the investigation and prosecution of former collaborators.[64] But this argument is erroneous because it overlooks the significant fact of the formation of the Special Committee. During the latter half of 1948, the Special Committee rigorously carried out its investigations. Yi Kwangsu wrote his confession at the time when his arrest was impending. Collaboration committed by Ch'ae Mansik was not so serious that it would lead to his arrest, and has labeled himself a "minor criminal" in "Journey."[65] Even if his wrongdoing was merely a minor offense, Ch'ae Mansik is not able to feign innocence. Therefore, he stages a fictional trial in his autobiographical narrative.

[64] Such criticism also aims at Yi Kwangsu's *My Confession*, published after the founding of the Republic of Korea. See Kim Kyŏngmi, "The Memory Narrative and the Nationalist Discourse," 73–99; Jonathan Glade, "Occupied Liberation: Transforming Literary Boundaries in Japan and Southern Korea, 1945–1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 132, among others.

[65] Ch'ae Mansik, "Journey," 27.

For Ch'ae, collaboration is a heavy sin that he would never escape, but he confronts it with an effort to interrogate and overcome it. Such self-reflection and its novelistic representation are certainly rare in postcolonial Korean literature.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to complicate the current approach to reading autobiographical writings in the postliberation period, which until now mostly interprets them as an author's excuse or self-justification for colonial collaboration, based on the facticity of the autobiographical narratives. I instead focus on the workings of literary devices and the effects deployed in these autobiographical writings, and the ways in which the texts open up an intermediary site for interrogation and reflection about collaboration.

In *My Confession*, Yi Kwangsu proposes a different understanding of collaboration: as the heroic act, and as a thorny path, of a true nationalist. He reinforces his interpretation by devising several fictional characters who understand and offer support for his version of the truth. While Ch'ae Mansik gives readers a position from which to judge on their own, Yi Kwangsu orchestrates the ideal way to understand collaboration, as if he himself educated his readers as a national leader since the early twentieth century.

In "Sinner of the People," Ch'ae Mansik stages a fictional court scene, which never happened in real life, and tries to face his own colonial past. Reading this story with a focus on the defense of a collaborator makes the work operate as the author's self-justification in the face of the reader's incrimination, as it has been interpreted for a long time. But by inviting readers to also be an audience at a collaborator's trial, the author urges readers to hand down their own judgment and to be active subjects in the decolonization process.

Chapter Two
Writer on the Border:
Yŏm Sangsŏp's *Dawn Wind*, U.S. Military Occupation, and Border Crossing

The Election, Newspaper Serial Novel, and U.S. Censorship

In spring 1948, the burning public issue in southern Korea under the U.S. Military Occupation was whether southern Korea would hold a separate general election and establish a single government first, or whether it would continue making an effort to form a unified government with the north by attending the North and South Conference to be held in Pyongyang.[1] As the second U.S.-USSR Joint Commission had been disbanded, and northern Korea was going in the direction of setting up a separate government by drafting a constitution, the convening of a North and South Conference might have evidenced an idealism that failed to read the contemporary international situation of the emerging, rigid Cold War. The nationalist motivation for unification, however, appealed to many Koreans, who were concerned about prolonging the national division. A widely read Korean newspaper, *Chosŏn Daily*, pointed out that due to the repeated failures of the negotiations between the U.S. and Russia, Koreans would have to try to discuss their problems on their own—meaning, through holding the Conference. According to another major newspaper, *Chosŏn Central Daily*, the Conference was the "achievement of the aspiration of thirty million Koreans."[2] A moderately right-wing *Democratic Daily* credited the Pyongyang Conference with laying the groundwork for unification and Kim Ku (1876–1949) and Kim Kyu Sik (1881–1950), two nationalist leaders, for crossing the thirty-

[1] I use the geographic naming of "southern Korea" to designate the southern part of Korean peninsula occupied by the U.S. Military after World War II, which later became South Korea in August 8, 1948. Likewise, "northern Korea" corresponds to the northern part of the peninsula.

[2] G-2 Weekly Summary, No.133. United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), Record Group 554, XXIV Corps, G-2 Historical Section (Seoul: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, 1948), In the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland.

eighth parallel and attending the Conference. The newspaper commented that they, the "real patriots," provided "the light which shines on the path of the people."[3] The positive comment about the two nationalist leaders is far from the U.S. interpretation, as at the time only the left-wing press supported the North and South Conference, which I will further discuss in this chapter.

With great fanfare—as the very first election in Korea's history—the South Korean general election was held on May 10. The United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK; September 1945–August 1948) and the press that backed the USAMGIK widely publicized the significance of the general election while denouncing the North and South Conference as a Soviet stratagem to interfere with the election. Some typical headlines and slogans decorating *East Asia Daily* everyday were as follows: "Go forward with the election without being distracted by the stratagem of negotiation,"[4] "The North and South Conference is only a Communist Conference. People, do not be dazzled! The general election is the only way to unification,"[5] and "Your valuable vote is the cornerstone of the nation," to list a few.[6] As a result of the USAMGIK's large-scale campaigns, the May 10th election was a great success, in that 86 percent of the electorate registered to vote and of this, 92.5 percent actually voted.[7] The nationalist leaders Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Sik, who crossed the thirty-eighth parallel for the North and South negotiations, did not run for office and saw their political standing erode drastically.

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[3] G-2 Weekly Summary, No.143.

[4] *Tong'a Ilbo*, April 29, 1948.

[5] *Tong'a Ilbo*, May 4, 1948. This phrase was a part of General Hodge's Public Statement.

[6] *Tong'a Ilbo*, May 4, 1948.

[7] Kim Yŏngmyŏng, "Namhan ŭi chŏngch'ijŏk tongt'ae wa migunjŏng" [South Korean Political Situation and the U.S. Military Occupation], in *Han'guk hyŏndaesa ŭi chaeinsik* [A New Understanding of Modern Korean History], vol. 1, ed. Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn hyŏndaesa yŏn'guso (Seoul: Orŭm, 1998), 106.

One of the USAMGIK reports summarized the electoral result concisely: "The South Korean public defeats communism at polls."[8] But contrary to the U.S. characterization of the strong public opposition to the election as mere communist propaganda, those opposed to the separate South Korean election were not all communists.

In early May, when the anti-election campaign among Koreans was in full swing, there was an incident in which the publisher and chief editors of the so-called left-wing newspapers—*Central Daily*, *Independence News*, and *New People's Daily*—were arrested for "publishing editorials of an inflammatory nature intending to incite riot and civil disorder."[9] The writers of the editorials in question were charged with expressing strong dissenting opinions concerning the separate election. One of those arrested, the "left-wing" editor-in-chief of *New People's Daily,* was the leading writer Yŏm Sangsŏp (廉想涉; 1897–1963), whose serialized novel, *Dawn Wind* (*曉風*), was appearing in a newspaper named *Free News*. His detention caused a one-week suspension of the serializing of *Dawn Wind*. Resuming publication after the temporary cessation, he added a brief note to the end of the day's serialization, explaining the reason for the interruption of the novel as his being caught up in the clampdown of a certain newspaper.[10]

It is important to note that the suspension of the serialization was not because of the novel's content. First, this case suggests that the focus of the USAMGIK censorship, as Jung Keun-sik and Kyeong-Hee Choi have pointed, had shifted since the end of Japanese colonial rule from the details of the material text to the public activities or ideological positions of the text

[8] G-2 Weekly Summary, No.139.

[9] G-2 Weekly Summary, No.138.

[10] *Chayu sinmun* [Free News], May 10, 1948.

producers.[11] It is especially worthy of attention that the ideas conveyed in *Dawn Wind* were not the issue. This is surprising, given that *Dawn Wind* was highly critical of the U.S. occupation government and expresses some dangerous thoughts that the USAMGIK could have considered to be communist ideas, as I will discuss in full later in this chapter. This suggests a crucial point about newspaper censorship by the USAMGIK: U.S. military censors did not, maybe could not, read serialized novels that were being published every day in Korean newspapers.

Several U.S. military documents demonstrate the amount of attention the U.S. occupation authorities paid to the Korean press. The G-2 Weekly Summary, which was reported by the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff in the United States Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK), had a section titled "The Press," which briefed the details and tone of newspaper articles every week and included English translations of the important articles among them. The Daily Activity Reports, daily reports from each bureau, included analyses of major newspapers by the Department of Public Information. Also, separate from the Daily Activity Reports, the Department of Public Information created a weekly report that consisted of a daily list of newspaper articles and translations. In other words, Korean newspapers had been carefully read, analyzed, and reported on an everyday basis. In all of the documents, however, there was no comment on newspaper serial novels. They were never included in a list of the titles. The documents listed above mainly deal with the political perspectives of the parties and the press regarding the current situation and issues, and criticisms of the U.S. occupational policies. Since the interest was heavily focused on significant articles about pressing political matters, it could be assumed that serial novels did not interest them at all.

[11] Jung Keun-sik and Kyeong-Hee Choi, "Haebang hu kŏmyŏl ch'eche ŭi yŏn'gu rŭl wihan myŏkkaji chilmun gwa kwaje: singminji yusan ŭi chongsik kwa chaep'yŏn sai esŏ" [Issues and Challenges for Postliberation Censorship Studies: Between Abolition and Adoption of the Japanese Colonial Censorship System in South Korea, 1945–1952], *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* 74 (2011): 8, 32.

Based on this indifference to serial novels, I infer that literary works serialized in newspapers were, therefore, a kind of blind spot for the USAMGIK censorship. The political opinions of writers, which were often and thoroughly expressed through newspaper serial novels, were guaranteed a relative degree of freedom of expression compared to editorials and articles published in the same newspapers. This observation certainly calls for further thorough investigation of the USAMGIK's staff and translators, including the Department of Public Information in particular. Based on this observation, however, it can be said that the USAMGIK did not have a high opinion of the political nature of literature. It is a far cry from what Korean writers and readers have thought about novels.

Newspaper serial novels in postliberation Korea tended to be set in the period in which they were being written. Speaking as a well-respected writer, Kim Namch'ŏn indicated in his preface to his newspaper serial novel *August 15, 1945* (the first long novel written following the liberation of Korea in 1945), that in writing novels Korean writers of the time were aiming to describe the pressing issues of contemporary Korea and to seek for, and provide, a vision of a new society to the public.[12] Also, serialization in newspapers was one of the main ways to publish long novels, because publishing novels in book form was not common in Korea at the time. In the period from liberation to the establishment of the new Korean governments in 1948, newspaper serial novels were typically authored by well-known, leading writers such as: Yi Kwangsu, Yŏm Sangsŏp, Kim Namch'ŏn, Yi Muyŏng, Pak Chonghwa, and Kim Tongni, to name a few. Newspaper serial novels of this time are thus important literary texts in which leading Korean writers—Korean elite intellectuals—who had experienced both the colonial era

[12] Kim Namch'ŏn, *1945nyŏn 8.15* [August 15th, 1945] (Inch'ŏn: Chakkadŭl, 2007). He emphasizes that his novel is merely one answer to the pressing question of where the youth of the time should go in this vortex of complex and turbulent reality.

and liberation did their best to grapple with the issues of their time and propose solutions to them. Newspaper serial novels were also something like political essays or propaganda toward the contemporary masses; the novels were written for the purpose of enlightening and educating the Korean public.

Yŏm Sangsŏp had *Dawn Wind* serialized in *Free News* from January 1st to November 3rd for almost the entire year of 1948. It is one of the postliberation masterpieces, which captures "the whole national reality immediately after liberation."[13] It deals extensively with diverse strata of society in postliberation Korea, as well as various political events and decisions, including the sweeping roundups of leftists, terrorism of the left- and right-wing youth organizations, and attempts by leftist figures to head north across the thirty-eighth parallel. Also, as previous scholarship has emphasized, *Dawn Wind* fully demonstrates the author's political stance as a "neutral"—especially, his dissension toward the establishment of the separate regime and strong critique of the USAMGIK as a neocolonial force. I consider *Dawn Wind* to be Yŏm's literary refutation of the USAMGIK's anticommunist order, which labels dissenters as communists. In the novel, Yŏm Sangsŏp elaborately illustrates the debating and conflicting moments of the USAMGIK's standpoint and one of Korean dissenters.

This chapter closely reads *Dawn Wind* and investigates the sociopolitical context of the novel's serialization in 1948. First, I trace the process by which the old Japanese empire was replaced by the U.S. occupation government through the literary embodiment of the shifting status of a Japanese woman, former "pro-Japanese" collaborators, and the languages of the empire. I examine the USAMGIK documents relating to public relations, including reports on

[13] Kim Chaeyong, Comment on *Dawn Wind*, "8•15 ihu Yŏm Sangsŏp ŭi hwaldong kwa 'hyop'ung' ŭi munhaksajŏk ŭimi" [Yŏm Sangsŏp's Political Activities after August 15th and the Status of *Dawn Wind* in Literary History], In *Hyop'ung* [Dawn Wind] (Seoul: Silch'ŏn munhaksa, 1988), 365–66.

Korean press and public opinion, press releases, and public opinion surveys, along with Korean-language newspapers and contemporary literary works. Although my focus is on the hostile interactions—miscommunication, distrust, and discord—between the USAMGIK and the occupied Koreans, an examination or criticism of the USAMGIK's failure or inadequacy as an occupying force is not the aim of this chapter.[14] Instead, my concern lies in how the problem of decolonization was reconstructed in relation to the United States in the relinquishment of power from Japan to the U.S., and how the author Yŏm seeks a literary response to the binary Cold War logic that the USAMGIK was trying to impose on 1948 Korea.

Last, I pay attention to the acts of border crossing in *Dawn Wind* as one of key literary tropes of postliberation Korea. The significant status of the thirty-eighth parallel as border and the act of border crossing have become frequent motifs in postliberation Korean literature.[15] It has been hardly noted, however, that *Dawn Wind* portrays the act of going north across the border, in spite of the opposite direction to the south in Yŏm Sangsop's other short stories as well as his own personal history. I explore the implications of border crossing as a literary trope, and as well as a political act and a real life choice of a postcolonial Korean subject. I argue that *Dawn Wind* challenges the imposed demarcation of the thirty-eighth parallel by portraying disbelief in the USAMGIK propaganda against northern Korea and repeatedly evoking the space beyond the border. A North Korean short story, "Dust" ("Mŏnji," 1950) by Yi T'aejun, is

[14] In his book, Bruce Cumings fully shows the failure of the American occupation in the southern part of Korea. *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[15] As for the border-crossing motifs in the postliberation literature, the following studies are worth noticing: Yi Chongho, "Haebanggi idong ŭi chŏngch'ihak" [Politics of Migration in the Postliberation Period], *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu* 36 (2009): 327–63; Chŏng Chonghyŏn, *Cheguk ŭi kiŏk kwa chŏnyu: 1940-nyŏndae Han'guk munhak ŭi yŏnsok kwa piyŏnsok* [Remembrance and Appropriation of the Empire: Continuity and Discontinuity in 1940s Korean Literature] (Seoul: Ŏmunhaksa, 2012); Yi Hyeryŏng, "Sasang chiri ŭi hyŏngsŏng ŭrosŏ ŭi naengjŏn kwa kŏmyŏl" [The Cold War and Censorship as the Formation of Ideological Geography], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 34 (2012): 133–72.

discussed along with *Dawn Wind* in the regard that it also reveals similar attempts to refute the Cold War binaries, albeit in this case from the other side of the thirty-eighth parallel.

Southern Korea in 1948: Traces of the Fallen Empire and the Arrival of Another Empire

In the year of 1948, almost three years after liberation from Japan, the traces of the former Japanese empire still remained in southern Korea. But with the arrival of the strong foreign occupier, the problem of purging colonial collaborators, which was one of the most crucial tasks for decolonizing Korea immediately after liberation, seems to have been reconstructed vis-à-vis the present U.S. occupying force. I first examine the ways in which the former empire was replaced by the new ruling government of the U.S. Military in *Dawn Wind*, and how Koreans perceived and discussed the colonial past and the postcolonial present. The relinquishment of power from Japan to America is well portrayed in two major transformations in postliberation Korean society: the emergence and repetition of the comparative perception of Japanese and American as imperial masters and the shifting value of foreign linguistic ability.

A conspicuous device by which the Japanese colonial past is recalled in *Dawn Wind* is found in the character of Kaneko, a Japanese woman. She is the proprietor of a bar, and she and Hyeran, the heroine of *Dawn Wind*, are said to look very much like one another. Because of this resemblance, Kaneko's personal misfortune strikingly contrasts with Hyeran's blooming beauty and bright prospects in life. Kaneko's appearance is depicted as "certainly like that of a Korean *kisaeng*," and she speaks "perfect Korean," "with a perfect Seoul accent."[16] But "she seems to be very careful and there is something forlorn about her."[17] To Hyeran's eyes, Kaneko is "rather

[16] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Hyop'ung* [Dawn Wind] (Seoul: Silch'ŏn munhaksa, 1988), 26–27.

[17] Ibid., 27.

pitiful and evokes compassion," "to the degree that she has forgotten that Kaneko is Japanese."[18] In the time of Japanese colonial rule, this attractive woman fell for a handsome Korean clerk at the Mitsukoshi Department Store, actively tried to win his heart, and finally succeeded in persuading her parents to have him as a son-in-law and live with her family. After Japan's defeat she "fell over herself to become a Korean."[19] This daring young female student of the Empire, who was bold enough to chase a man of the colony, is now portrayed as pitiable, having "something of a forlorn atmosphere" in the liberated Korea. What is also interesting to note is the description of her Korean husband, Im P'yŏnggil.

> "Do you know that this house was Japanese property? Yes, this was enemy property but thanks to their Korean son-in-law, or, you know, adopted son according to Japanese custom, the old parents could safely leave Korea with most of their valuables, and what remained in Korea was all given to the daughter and her husband … Im P'yŏnggil (林平吉), becoming Heikichi Yoshino (吉野平吉), then became an adopted son-in-law of Kanematsu (金松). But since he hadn't entered the family registry yet, he was able to avoid conscription when Japanese men were drafted. When Koreans started being drafted into the army as well, he was not conscripted thanks to his father-in-law."
> "So, *isn't he a pro-Japanese or a national traitor*?"
> "As a matter of fact, once the madam was called to the police office, and nearly lost this house … but if he discarded the family name Heikichi (吉野) and pretended he was Mr. Im again, wouldn't he be a great Korean? Who would condemn him if he took possession of an enemy property as a Korean, that he was not inheriting the property of his stepfather or father-in-law? These days he is holding his nose in the air, bringing in a *kisaeng* concubine."
> "That is the *benefit of liberation*, indeed!"[20]

The quotation above, marked by the author's sarcastic tone, testifies to the sensitive nature of the issues of the "pro-Japanese" collaborators and former Japanese properties after liberation. Thanks to marrying a Japanese woman, Im P'yŏnggil escaped conscription and was quite well off in colonial times. He negotiated the changing situation brought about by liberation by

[18] Ibid., 28.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 31–33. Italics are mine.

"throwing away the family name Heikichi (吉野) and taking back the Korean surname Im (林), becoming a great Korean again," even successfully acquiring a previous Japanese property. It was not at all unusual in Korea at the time that a former "pro-Japanese" collaborator could continue to live in a grand style after the empire collapsed. Hyeran's question as to whether P'yŏnggil is called a pro-Japanese collaborator or a national traitor is asked in the present tense, but the answer that it was a problem "once" is given in the past tense. These tenses hint that treating pro-Japanese collaborators was already a past issue by this time.

Based on the description of this husband and wife, the former empire Japan is gendered as a woman and is an object of sympathy. The fact that Kaneko's parents "moved to the Korean peninsula in the age of the Japanese Resident-General" implies that her father had some status, being either a high-ranking official or at least a leading colonial entrepreneur.[21] Kaneko, a well-cared for daughter of the metropole, who had been "sheltered by a Korean nanny," now has to perform as a Korean *kisaeng* and is degraded to the point of allowing her Korean husband to have a mistress. The depiction of her degradation is a good metonymy for the end of the Japanese Empire.

Although the former empire is embodied in the figure of a pitiful woman, the narrator does not show any room for sympathy for a Korean-national man who was once considered a collaborator. This lack of sympathy is relevant to the fact that his acts of collaboration continue in postliberation Korea, merely replacing his imperial master with the Americans. Pak Chongyŏl, the father of Pyŏngjik (the main protagonist), is one example of such a figure who had held an important political position under Japanese colonial rule and continues to do so under the U.S.

[21] Ibid., 30.

occupation, and is therefore disparaged for being a so-called "pro-Japanese profiteer."[22] He had been a member of a local legislative body in the colonial era—an episode in his career that he would like to conceal—and now wields enough power to be named the "future minister of the Department of Finance."[23] Being a supporter of a youth organization, he obtained a Japanese property, based on the good excuse that he wanted to organize a youth club, but his secret intention was to "keep a mistress in that house."[24] Hyeran's father—Pak's old friend and a man of integrity—comes to despise Pak, thinking that he does not want to send his daughter to Pak's family because of Pak's despicable acts. Hyeran, a prospective daughter-in-law, also does not respect her future father-in-law. For her, it is "not admirable at all that Pyŏngjik's family received all these benefits of liberation, and instead there is a mixture of envy and derision in her mind. She doesn't think that it is an honor to be a daughter-in-law of the Pak family."[25]

The expression "benefits of liberation" (*haebang dŏk*) was often, and ironically, used in postliberation Korea. The people who derived benefits from liberation, seizing the moment of social and political chaos, in which power was transferred from the Japanese empire to the U.S. occupation government, such as taking Japanese property, or working for the USAMGIK, were mostly the previous opportunistic pro-Japanese collaborators, as shown in the cases of Im and Pak above. For ordinary Koreans, however, liberation in fact did not give rise to the changes in life circumstances or opportunities that they had anticipated. When Hyeran, being arrested because of her fiancé Pyŏngjik's departure to the north, was released from the police station, her

[22] Ibid., 152.

[23] Ibid., 221.

[24] Ibid., 294.

[25] Ibid., 226.

mother sarcastically tells her, "You went to the prison thanks to liberation! For us, this is the *benefit of liberation*."[26]

Hyeran feels both envious and contemptuous of the Pak family. This is a fairly frank response to these opportunist people, who received "all these benefits of liberation." It is rare in literature of this time that a protagonist would express envy rather than simply deep-rooted anger at those opportunist former collaborators. Hyeran's "envy" is at least balanced with contempt; her mother and sister-in-law, on the other hand, are obviously happy at their good fortune that Hyeran is likely to marry into a family with money and power.

To sum up, public discussions concerning prosecuting pro-Japanese collaborators seem to have already vanished as of 1948. Koreans were able to feel compassion for a poor (beautiful) Japanese woman—or at least it came to be acceptable to express emotions other than anger toward a Japanese. Common responses to former collaborators were in fact characterized by envy as well as contempt. This suggests a more complicated state of mind than what has been commonly thought to have been the case, namely, that the Korean people felt the same degree of strong hatred toward previous collaborators and the Japanese people. By 1948, pro-Japanese collaborators, apart from the fact that they were considered to be morally reprehensible, seem to be already deep-rooted in Korean society, as they had attained positions of prominence in politics, business, the bureaucracy, and the police system, rather than regarded as figures to be punished. In an atmosphere in which these people were considered to be prominent figures in society and often seen in the newspapers, ordinary Korean people, like Hyeran's family members, are not to be blamed for having forgotten about the moral concern with these figures' previous collaborations.

[26] Ibid., 308.

In sharp contrast to the portrayal of the collapsed Japanese empire as a pitiful, beautiful woman is the depiction of a young American man, Mr. Baker. An ambitious, promising American, Baker represents the newly emerging, powerful empire of the United States. As a loyal admirer of Asian culture, a typical Orientalist, Baker is fascinated by Hyeran's exotic beauty and wants to support her study in the U.S. But at the same time, as a sort of informal representative of the U.S., he gets into a heated conversation with Pyŏngjik and Hwasun, who is a female reporter of left-wing "A Newspaper" and who thinks of the U.S. as an another greedy empire. Hwasun makes a verbal attack on Baker by bluntly saying, "It seems you don't know how much tungsten and red ginseng are shipped to America? Red ginseng was taken by *Mitsui* (三井) in the Japanese colonial time, wasn't it? Which 'American Mitsui' is coming this time?"[27]

Though Baker is an embodiment of the USAMGIK perspective in the novel, he is described as gradually learning about the reality of American relations with the Korean people as he gets closer to the two women, Hyeran and Hwasun, over the course of the novel. After talking to Hwasun, Baker tells Hyeran that "if all Korean wives and mothers were the same as Miss Hwasun, American merchants would not have sold a piece of candy, a pound of sugar or milk powder and I could not have earned my own bread here in Korea. She is upset about treating Korea as a market for U.S. commodities. She refuses any aid from the U.S.—neither nice nor appreciated—and just want us to leave immediately."[28] But Hyeran too agrees with Hwasun's accusation in a joking way: "A guest should be treated poorly if he stays longer than the host wants."[29] Even for Hyeran, who regards them rather favorably, Americans are unwanted guests that missed the right time to leave. Hyeran herself sometimes makes mention of social problems

[27] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 112.

[28] Ibid., 170.

[29] Ibid.

in conversations with Baker. For instance, "Scared! I'm scared of the soldiers of your country! Especially in a car!" says Hyeran half-jokingly to him.[30] But this might not have been read by contemporary Koreans as a simple joke, given that a large number of crimes were committed by American soldiers during the U.S. military occupation of Korea, and many of them were reported to occur in public transportation like buses and trains.[31]

Considering that Koreans had been under a long-running and oppressive colonial rule, the new external power in Korea was inevitably compared to the former Japanese imperialist regime. In 1946, the USAMGIK analysis of public opinion trends was already reporting that Koreans' anti-American sentiment was growing.[32] In surveys of public opinion carried out from April to May of 1946, one question asked if the person surveyed preferred the American military government to the former Japanese administration.[33] It is less surprising that on average approximately 50 percent of the respondents preferred the American military government to the Japanese colonial government (however, 63 percent of Seoul residents did so) after less than a year of occupation than the very fact that the USAMGIK had to insert such question at all into the survey. The USAMGIK seemed to be sharply conscious of the critiques and complaints of Korean public toward them, regardless of whether they made any attempt to resolve those complaints or not. The majority of those who answered "don't know"—up to 36 percent, depending on the region—might be those who even never thought of comparing American

[30] Ibid., 73.

[31] "Criticism of U.S. Forces in Korea," Box No. 21, USAFIK, RG 554.

[32] See G-2 Weekly Summary, No. 97.

[33] USAMGIK, Bureau of Public Information, "Effectiveness of Japanese and Soviet propaganda in the Provinces and in Seoul," in *Mi kunjŏnggi chŏngbo charyojip: Simin soyo, yŏron chosa pogosŏ, 1945.9–1948.6*. [Intelligence Reports of the U.S. Military Occupation in Korea, September 1945–June 1948], vol. 2 (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim Taehakkyo Asia Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1995), 438–43.

military government and the former Japanese colonial government by the time they were asked the question.

For the masses, judgment of the administration was likely to be based on whether there had been any improvement in their standard of living. Economic issues, such as the price of rice and availability of housing, were the most critical factors in the evaluation of the American military occupation in postliberation Korea in comparison to the previous Japanese administration. Along with these economic factors, shifts in culture and customs could have had a significant effect on the life of the masses. *Dawn Wind* provides meticulous depictions of the cultural changes under the U.S. occupation, even including the appearance of a new type of restaurant and changes in women's fashion styles.

Among the various cultural transformations, *Dawn Wind* acutely captures the change in the status of language as power, one of the most influential transformations in postliberation Korean society. The depreciation of the Japanese language and the rise of the English language and English speakers are repeatedly highlighted throughout the entire novel. Kaneko never speaks her mother tongue. Only Baker, who while in the U.S. Army had been stationed in Okinawa and thus can speak fluent Japanese, speaks that language, which "Hyeran has never heard anywhere since liberation, even from Kaneko."[34] The fact that Baker can speak Japanese makes Hyeran feel closer to him. Only Americans seem to be able to speak Japanese without the hesitation or unease that a former colonial subject may feel. What makes Baker or Hyeran's boss Chinsŏk admires her is her fluent English proficiency, as well as her beauty. On the other hand, one who does not have the language ability desperately wants it: "Kaneko could not laugh along with them because she couldn't understand their conversation, and glanced at Hyeran's lips with

[34] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 71.

a jealous eye."[35] She thinks, "if she spoke English like Hyeran did in this situation in this era, how wonderfully she was able to use the language skill to the fullest and do anything that she wanted to do."[36] The gap in social status between Hyeran and Kaneko results not only from Kaneko being a daughter of the fallen empire but also from her inability to speak English, the language of the new empire. Hyeran had learned English at a girl's school and taught it at her alma mater after graduation, and thanks to her fluency she became a manager of Chinsŏk's antique shop, which catered to mostly wealthy Americans.

The privilege associated with being an English speaker in postliberation Korea was greater than that of being a Japanese speaker in the colonial time because of its rarity. The majority of Koreans could not converse with their ruling authorities due to the language barrier. During the conversation with Baker briefly quoted above, the protagonists of the novel had to speak Japanese in order to communicate with Baker. Kaneko's speaking Japanese also seems to be allowed only when she communicates with Baker. Then, the author shows how the Japanese language mediates between these two groups, which is a small but significant detail about the cultural legacy of the former empire. As Theodore Hughes appropriately points out, the USAMGIK has often been called a "government by translation."[37] *Dawn Wind* shows not only that English was the language of power but also that the Japanese language was a mediator between Americans and Koreans. Japanese as a mediator or translator brings to mind the fact that as soon as the USAMGIK advanced to the Korean peninsula after liberation, they employed the officials and translators of the former Japanese Government-General without much consideration

[35] Ibid., 36.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 87.

of Koreans' antipathy toward Japanese. The old colonial power seems to get closer to the new power as Koreans do through the medium of language.

Contrary to Kaneko's straightforward envy of those who can speak English, there is a person who feels shame at his appropriation of the English language for a living. Hyeran's old school English teacher, Mr. Chang, has quit teaching and now works as a translator and broker for a businessman, Chinsŏk. Mr. Chang is ashamed of having been reduced to the status of a broker in front of his former student Hyeran and she also feels sorry for him. Their discomfort at using their English proficiency to make a living is based on the thought that privilege is improperly accorded to English speakers. In those years, there were upstarts who took advantage of the language barrier between the U.S. occupation force and the masses. In addition, the value of Korean currency was ridiculously low in relation to the U.S. dollar, and thus if one worked for Americans, he was able to make a huge profit.[38]

Yŏm Sangsŏp's critical eye on the privilege of the English language and the U.S. currency are resonant with the discussion about neocolonialism as the American stage of colonialism. The so-called "Third World" intellectuals and activists, such as Kwame Nkrumah and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, call into question economic and cultural domination of neocolonial power on the "Third World," and especially of a colonial language like English.[39] In the late 1940s postliberation Korea, terminology like "neocolonialism" had not been used. However, some people believed the U.S. was another empire following Japan as one of the main protagonists, Hwasun, juxtaposes *Mitsui* and "American *Mitsui*" in the above conversations, and

[38] Ch'ae Mansik's 1946 short story "Mr. Pang" ("Misŭt'ŏ Pang") devastatingly satirizes American profiteering off the Korean economy and the privileging of proficiency in English in postliberation Korea.

[39] See Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1966); Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature," *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), 4–33.

the author keenly grasps the moments of exploitative U.S. dominance on the Korean economy and culture.

Labeling Communists, or Claiming to be Neutrals

Then, how did the USAMGIK respond to Koreans' accusation that it was a neocolonial enterprise? In order to answer the question, let me go back to Hwasun's judgment of "American Mitsui" in the conversation briefly mentioned above. Baker is not surprised at all when Hwasun, not only a passionate leftist journalist but also someone likely to head north across the thirty-eighth parallel (and who in fact later does), blames the U.S. for exploiting Korean resources just as the former Japanese empire did. But he is surprised when even Pyŏngjik breaks in by saying, "What Miss Ch'oe [Hwasun]'s just said is indeed what all Koreans think."[40] Baker asks back in surprise if all Koreans really agree with the opinion of Miss Ch'oe who is affiliated with the "A Newspaper." His astonishment is due to this unexpected critique by Pyŏngjik, a journalist with the "B Newspaper." As far as Baker knows, "B Newspaper, needless to say, takes the American side, always supporting the military occupation government."[41] In response to Baker's surprise, Pyŏngjik replies, "You may think I, like Miss Ch'oe, or all Korean people want to go north, but it's not true. But you should know Koreans were united under Japanese rule, without distinction between the left and the right. About that which Miss Ch'oe has just said, all leftists and rightists are in agreement." In Pyŏngjik's claim, it is emphasized that the critique of imperialistic American policies was made not just by the left wing, but by all Koreans.

[40] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 113.

[41] Ibid.

Baker's initial assumption that all critical comments on the U.S. occupation were merely leftist propaganda precisely reflects the USAMGIK's perception. The USAMGIK seemed to have an almost blind belief that the USSR was behind all criticism of the U.S. occupation government, and behind the riots and mass uprisings that occurred as well. Regarding the specific charge of the imperialistic nature of the U.S. occupation, a 1947 G-2 Weekly Summary voices a similar interpretation, saying that every criticism in southern Korea toward American imperialism was nothing more than veiled Soviet propaganda:

> The charge that the U.S. is imperialistic has been made repeatedly in Soviet-inspired propaganda emanating from Moscow, Pyongyang, and Seoul, and the charge of colonization is familiar to anyone conversant with Soviet-Communist strategy in Korea. Riots, disorders and other incidents calculated to embarrass and discredit the American Occupation and Military Government in the eyes of the Korean people have been proven to have been planned and carried out by organizations which have the approval and backing of the Soviets. Vilification of the leaders of the conservative elements in South Korea has been very bitter and intense.[42]

As Bruce Cuming has earlier emphasized in *The Origins of the Korean War*, however, "Koreans in the south who resisted American policies," were "not controlled by the Russians or by communists in the north,"[43] but were rather "spontaneous and widely supported revolutionary force[s]."[44] Pyŏngjik's argument in *Dawn Wind* points up the widespread public dissatisfaction with the U.S. military government and a refutation of the USAMGIK's belief in the backing of the Soviets for that matter, which was an irresponsible excuse for the maladministration of southern Korea and the misjudgment of Korean public opinion.

Having previously worked at "A Newspaper Company pegged as left-wing," the protagonist Pyŏngjik switches to the B Newspaper, known to support the U.S. occupation

[42] G-2 Weekly Summary, No. 93.

[43] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 212.

[44] Ibid., 239.

government. Hwasun—the third party of the love triangle with Pyŏngjik and Hyeran—is an old colleague of Pyŏngjik from his A Newspaper years. His time at A Newspaper has caused him to be labeled as left-wing, and made his father and friends worry about him. Pyŏngjik does not join the right-wing youth organization that his father has supported, which later results in him being assaulted by right-wingers on the street. But "the attack did not occur because Pyŏngjik is a hack lefty. These days, there are young men as progressive as him lining the streets, and there is no way he was targeted for that reason."[45] In other words, Pyŏngjik is progressive for a rightist, but is not an outstanding leftist figure nor does he have a mature leftist ideology. In spite of this ambiguity, he is labeled as a Red anyway, and this bad reputation even caused his fiancé Hyeran to be fired from her school. A rumor that she was "seeing a journalist working at a Red newspaper" or would marry him soon seems to be the pretext for firing her.[46] The assault against Pyŏngjik and the loss of Hyeran's teaching position are direct results of them being falsely accused of being leftists.

Although the reason why Pyŏngjik moves to B Newspaper Company is not made clear in the novel, from his dispute with Baker readers can guess that he does not agree either with the rightist thought to which B Newspaper adheres:

> "Mr. Baker. It is a failure of the U.S. military occupation government that it is not even supported by the right wing. We cannot but call the U.S. to account for causing a schism even among the right wing. Further, if there is fear of the communization of southern Korea, it is a complete failure of yours."
> "On the contrary, isn't there any responsibility of Korean's own faults?"
> "It's not like we don't know. We should reflect about ourselves, but you should not blame Koreans for the reason that all Koreans are not blindly following or willingly submitting to the U.S. authorities."

[45] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 183.

[46] Ibid., 5.

> "Then, do you mean it is a failure in the end because the U.S. occupational force only willingly has contact with its followers and those who are favorable to it, wanting to benefit from it?"
> "Of course! I think they don't want to hear *true public opinions* or pretend not to hear the people's voice because they don't like it, although they could hear…?"
> "That can't be right! Probably they might be confused as to what the *true public opinion* is."
> "Are you saying that there is no *true public opinion* in Korea then? I know that it is confusing though…"
> "I don't mean that there isn't a true public opinion, but isn't it mostly led by Reds?"
> *"It's a failure that even somebody like you cannot distinguish Reds from the essence of the public opinion!* We refuse Proletariat Dictatorship, but our true intent is also to deny Dictatorship of the Bourgeois, lacking in national capital, or One-party Dictatorship. Then how are we called Reds? Do you think something is wrong here?"[47]

From the quotations, it is clear that Pyŏngjik distinguishes between his thinking and that of the leftists. Also, he makes an attempt to elaborate the rightist stance by pointing out that recently the right wing was also divided. In other words, he does not identify with any of the typically defined dichotomous ideological stances. In referring to the Korean public as "we," he represents the "true public opinion" and the "essence of the public opinion." What he emphasizes here is that the critique of the USAMGIK comes from a majority of ordinary masses, not from communists. As Baker's response has demonstrated, however, the USAMGIK did not have the ability or generosity to understand and embrace the differences in ideological perspectives. As a consequence, all criticisms of the military government are considered left-wing. Taking a look at a G-2 Weekly Summary or a newspaper translation filed during the U.S. occupation of Korea, each Korean newspaper is classified as left-wing, moderate right-wing, or right-wing, and the content of their editorials regarding U.S. policies are predetermined by the three simple classifications above. The outlook of these U.S. military documents is very transparent: Left-

[47] Ibid., 114–5. Italics are mine.

wing newspapers criticized the USAMGIK policies "as expected," and try to agitate the masses in such and such regions "as they used to do."

In *Dawn Wind*, the writer Yŏm Sangsŏp elaborately attempts to criticize the extreme division and the simple dichotomy of the USAMGIK viewpoint. Pyŏngjik's political position mirrors the perspective of the author Yŏm Sangsŏp, who was labeled a "left-wing editor" for being sharply critical of the separate general election of South Korea, but he himself had never supported communism. During the colonial period, he did not join the Korean leftist writers' association (KAPF), nor was he considered one of the writers with a sympathetic attitude toward leftists (*tongbanja chakka*), as he kept casting a critical eye on socialist and communist ideologies. But, regardless of his ideological position, Yŏm levels sharp criticism at the colonial regime. He had been once detained during the thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule, when he joined the March First Movement in Japan where he spent his college years. His second arrest was the very incident under the U.S. occupation I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter.

Besides the main protagonist Pyŏngjik, there is another character who actualizes Yŏm's "neutral" position in the novel: a former female scientist and currently a bar proprietor, Mrs. Cho. She is one of the most fascinating characters in the novel. Mrs. Cho's neutral quality is humorously said to come from her amiable and unbiased characteristics, which makes it hard for her to love only one side. Yet this intriguing fictional character at the same time satirizes the stubborn ideologue who "completely covers one ear."[48] She, instead, "hear[s] both from the left and from the right" because she has two ears.[49] When left-wing figures that frequent her shop are arrested and her business is in danger of being shutdown, she shows a broad-minded attitude by

[48] Ibid., 53.

[49] Ibid.

laughing away the unfair restriction. Cho, like Pyŏngjik, reveals a different type of person who is critical of the USAMGIK but is not ideologically rigid. They keep their distance from the current authorities but do not support the North Korean regime. They want to be a critical force within the South Korean regime. They are the author's fictional persona, heading down to the south but not keeping silent about the maladministration of the U.S. occupation government.

As the story moves forward, Mrs. Cho is arrested twice because she is on intimate terms with the protagonist trio—Pyŏngjik, Hyeran and Hwasun—the last of whom is suspected of involvement with wanted rebellious leftists. In the southern part of the liberated Korean peninsula, there is no place for a neutral, or as she calls herself, a "broad-minded soul." To the U.S. Military authorities, she is a leftist. What forced a large number of Koreans to become rebellious leftist ideologues in southern Korea? What made the writer Yŏm Sangsŏp, who had never been a leftist or leftist sympathizer even during the entire colonial times, "left-wing"? Yŏm's depiction of Mrs. Cho's personality and her arrests evokes these questions.

Crossing the Thirty-eighth Parallel as Resistance against the Imposed Demarcation

The biggest conflict in *Dawn Wind* comes to the surface when Pyŏngjik suddenly disappears to cross the thirty-eighth parallel following Hwasun. Up to the moment, in opposition to society's labeling of him as a Red, he has made clear his distance from the right- and left-wing as typically defined and seems to love Hyeran more than Hwasun. Accordingly, his abrupt choice to head north surprises readers as well as the novel's characters, including his lover Hyeran.

From the outset, the leftist Hwasun's decision to go north is impulsive rather than premeditated. While at Mrs. Cho's bar with Pyŏngjik and Hyeran, all of them happened to get

caught up in the escape of a wanted leftist activist and arrested. At that point Hwasun made up her mind to cross the thirty-eighth parallel: "One night's and one day's experience at the police station for the first time in her life seemed to agitate her thought as well as excite her emotionally."[50] She seems "like a different person from yesterday's Hwasun," as seen from her assertion she would go north and try to take Pyŏngjik with her."[51] It also cannot be denied here that Hwasun's decision is partly due to her worry about losing Pyŏngjik to Hyeran if they remain in the south: "Being very excited, she also feels desperately lonely. The more she thinks that the man [Pyŏngjik] is about to leave her and that he no longer has any feelings for her, the more she becomes jealous of Hyeran"[52] She is portrayed pestering Pyŏngjik to go north with her, "acting like a baby," in spite of her rival Hyeran's presence. Hwasun here appears to be a very whimsical, emotional young girl who does not want to lose her lover, rather than a serious leftist ideologue heading north; such a critical life decision is made on a whim, with there is no serious ideological inner conflict revealed in her mind. Certainly, Yŏm Sangsŏp does not favorably portray Hwasun's spur-of-the-moment and self-centered decision to cross the border. The portrait of her character reflects Yŏm's critical point of view concerning female leftist figures who advocated "free love." She resembles Yŏm's earlier female characters in his 1920s–30s literature, whose sexual laxity is disparagingly depicted and who usually meets with a tragic ending, a point that requires an additional essay of its own.

Pyŏngjik's choice to head north as well as Hyeran's response to, and understanding of, his resolution are more worthy of attention than Hwasun's decision to head north. Why did

[50] Ibid., 82.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

Pyŏngjik make up his mind to cross the thirty-eighth parallel, following Hwasun, although he did not agree with her ideological position nor love her? Pyŏngjik's motive to cross the border is not clearly stated in the novel. One scholar offers the interpretation that the author's arrest may have daunted him into recounting the crossing of the border in full detail.[53] Yet, considering that the narrative of *Dawn Wind* is largely, although not entirely, focalized through Hyeran (rather than Pyŏngjik), it is natural for the narrator to explain less about Pyŏngjik's internal thoughts. Rather I think, regardless of the arrested experience, the author may not have intended to write the denouement in which Pyŏngjik goes north while the heroine remains in the south. It could be inferred that the current ending of *Dawn Wind*, in which Pyŏngjik returns to Seoul, was intended as the denouement of the story from the outset. Heading north is, in the beginning, imagined not as a permanent move, but as intended to be followed by a return to the south. The line of the thirty-eighth parallel at that time was not yet a completely rigid border but was rather flexible, temporary, and uncertain, and thus crossing the border was more easily imagined. The temporariness or flexibility of the thirty-eighth parallel is well demonstrated in the following sentences. After Hwasun asks Pyŏngjik to go north with her, Hyeran runs into him:

> "So, you don't really intend to follow after her, do you?"
> *"I want to give it a try, to go once just to look around…"*
> "What's wrong with you? Are you teasing me?" cried Hyeran, scolding him.
> "But the meaning is different from why Hwasun's going. I am not going to follow after Hwasun either…"
> Hyeran's brother, who leads a right-wing youth organization, sometimes says that wanting to go north comes out of wanting to observe what northern Korea really looks like. Hyeran thinks that *this may be a common sentiment or common wish of today's young people*.[54]

[53] See Kim Chaeyong, "Comment on *Dawn Wind*," 365.

[54] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 85. Italics are mine.

Borrowing Hyeran's voice, the author opines that heading north is what the young people in the Korea of his time commonly dream about. This shared dream of young people in southern Korea grows out of the fact that there was no official channel through which to hear what is going on in northern Korea, only hearsay from those who come down from the north. Listening to the news from the north was regarded as a subversive and thus risk-taking behavior. The news in southern Korea regarding the north was no more than the USAMGIK's anticommunist propaganda. In those days, press releases from the USAMGIK often contained statements by General Hodge to the Korean public that referenced current rumors as being untrue or due to misreporting. It was the era of rumors from the north. The desire to head north therefore testifies to the public's disbelief in the USAMGIK. The decision to head north does not at all reflect a preference for the North Korean regime over that of the South. It merely stems from an interest in seeing for oneself how northern Korea was really doing.

The wish to learn about the other side of the thirty-eighth parallel was not restricted to southern Korea. Similar attempts can be found as well in literature produced in northern Korea. For instance, "Dust," a short story published in 1950, after the formal establishment of North and South Korea as separate nations, by Yi T'aejun, who had been a well-established Korean writer since the 1930s and who all of a sudden departed to the north in 1946, delineates a main protagonist's heading south across the thirty-eighth parallel only because he could never believe what newspapers said about the south. This story is set in 1948, after the separate South Korean general election was held and around the time when the South Korean government was established. It exactly coincides with the temporal setting of *Dawn Wind*, and in particular when Yŏm Sangsŏp was embroiled in the crackdown of left-wing newspapers. The main protagonist of

"Dust," Mr. Hanmoe, is well aware that "the political line of North Korea is right."[55] But he does not believe the South Korean situations that have been reported in North Korean newspapers. It is because "he has not seen them with his own eyes."[56] Hence, he risks crossing the thirty-eighth parallel to go down to visit his daughter's family, who is living in the southern part of Korea.

The short story is certainly intended to deliver a bitter critique of the U.S. occupation of southern Korea and to legitimate the North Korean political regime. What Hanmoe finds in Seoul is economic anomie, marked by skyrocketing prices and the devaluation of Korean money caused by the inflow of dollars, as well as serious political unrest resulting from the people's strong resistance against the USAMGIK and its harsh methods of suppressing dissent. On top of that, the scene of *Kyŏngbok* Palace, which is packed with American soldiers, reminds him of the Japanese colonial period. The story's political stance, according to which southern Korea is again being colonized, this time by the U.S., is easily anticipated, considering the writer Yi's affiliation with the northern regime. In spite of the strong political message, however, the fact that Mr. Hanmoe was initially curious about the reality in South Korea can be read as a refutation or mistrust of North Korean propaganda. For this reason, this short story was called into a question later in the process of purging writers who were affiliated with South Korean Labor Party (*Nam-Chosŏn nodongdang*) in 1953. A North Korean literary history, which was written in 1994, still considers Yi T'aejun as a reactionary for depicting the protagonist in "Dust" as someone who did not completely believe that North Korea was better than South because he had not seen so for himself.[57]

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[55] Yi T'aejun, "Mŏnji" [Dust], *Yi T'aejun munhak chŏnjip* [Yi T'aejun's Complete Works], vol. 4 (Seoul: Kip'ŭn saem, 1984), 340. Originally published in *Munhak yesul* in March 1950.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Kim Chaeyong, "Wolbuk ihu Yi T'aejun ŭi munhak hwaldong kwa 'Mŏnji' ŭi munjesŏng" [Yi T'aejun's Literary Works after Going to the North and the Controversy over "Dust"], in *Yi T'aejun munhak ŭi chaeinsik* [A New

These two literary works, *Dawn Wind* and "Dust,"—one by a writer who went to the south across the thirty-eighth parallel, and the other by a writer who went to the north—together suggest that the complete severing of exchanges between the two Koreas caused the border crossings in both directions, and more importantly, that there was a lack of trust between the authorities and the Korean masses in both the north and the south in the postliberation period.

It should be certainly noted that in real life going to the north/south across the thirty-eighth parallel was the one and only way to escape economic or political impasses. People who were badly off in the north went down to the south in hopes of better material conditions, and people having a hard time because of high prices in the south crossed the border, anticipating that the land reforms undertaken in northern Korea would make for a better situation. Yŏm Sangsŏp's 1948 short story "Meeting and Parting" also deals with practical problems that made the protagonist a border transgressor. The main protagonist settles down in northern Korea first, having returned from Manchuria after the 1945 liberation, and decides to head south across the thirty-eighth parallel to go to his hometown after staying in the north for more than a year, which exactly mirrors the author Yŏm's very personal experience. The protagonist delays his border crossing because "even if this was not his hometown, he was fortunate enough to easily settle down and it is a pity to leave behind all his properties."[58] But when his social status as a school teacher was threatened, he finally leaves his place to cross the border and does not even bring his wife and younger daughter with him. What made him stay longer in the north was the property he had obtained through luck. But because of his repeated quarrels with his wife, a "famous

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Understanding of Yi T'aejun's Literature] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004), 71–91. Yi T'aejun and his whereabouts after the migration to north are discussed at length in Chapter Three.

[58] Yŏm Sangsŏp, "Ihap" [Meeting and Parting], *Yŏm Sangsŏp chŏnjip* [Yŏm Sangsŏp's Complete Works], vol. 10 (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1987), 98.

fighter for women's liberation," a rumor spreads that he is reactionary and feudalist in his thinking. The fear of being accused of being a reactionary causes him to leave his wife and head down to the south. The decision to make a border crossing is finally reached in a difficult situation in which he may come to harm.

In the world of the fictional *Dawn Wind*, however, Pyŏngjik's act of crossing the thirty-eighth parallel is not motivated by such practical concerns. In his case, it results from a curiosity and idealism as one of "today's youth" who is searching for a better future for the nation. To Hyeran's demand that he makes clear his stand on the other woman—Hwasun—as well as on the matter of heading north, Pyŏngjik responds: "I just want to build a small temple on the thirty-eighth parallel and, both you and I will be sitting there reading a book."[59] By "on the thirty-eighth parallel," Pyŏngjik expresses his clear intention not to choose any side between the north and the south. The carefree desire to build a temple and pass time reading a book is only possible in a peaceful time, that is to say, after the thirty-eighth parallel becomes a relic of history. It should be pointed out that heading north in Yŏm's novel is not to legitimate the North Korean regime over that of the South, or the other way round. In "Dust," Yi T'aejun's short story briefly introduced above, the protagonist who comes to the south observes all the corruption and disorder of South Korean society and proves North Korean legitimacy "with his own eyes." In *Dawn Wind*, however, the author does not make any attempt to discredit the North Korean regime. As I have stressed, his strong criticism is aimed at the U.S. military government and the various types of opportunistic people—including former pro-Japanese collaborators—easily found in southern Korea.

[59] Yŏm Sangsŏp, *Dawn Wind*, 172.

Hyeran's response to her lover's abrupt decision to go north, which can be regarded as reckless, also has a peculiar feature. She has not given up on him, even though he did, in fact, follow the other girl, and makes every effort to trace his whereabouts and regain him through help from his father and her own brother. Her effort to find him is more desperate than even his father's. Hyeran "unconditionally forgave and embraced him."[60] But it is distinct from something like forgiving a lover's betrayal. Hyeran believes that "she knows Pyŏngjik's ideology or personality better than anyone else."[61] As a consequence, before getting jealous of his relationship with Hwasun or blaming the two, she would like to be generous with him, understanding that "young people of the time could not help doing as Pyŏngjik has done."[62] I do not think that the author tried to depict Hyeran's character as a merely nice and compliant female figure who is forgiving of a man's puerility. Her understanding results from the recognition, mentioned above, that "today's young people" have a shared dream of understanding how and where northern Korea is going. She is not a passionate activist like Hwasun; rather, she is portrayed as being similar to Pyŏngjik, deeply understanding the Korean situation and Korean people's wish.

Now let me examine further Korean youths' idealistic solution for the nation's future that *Dawn Wind* proposes. While people are searching for Pyŏngjik, Baker, who is getting closer to Hyeran, suggests that she study in the United States. Baker expects that anyone would be as "strongly attracted by the suggestion of going to the U.S. as if one were being invited to heaven."[63] But Hyeran nicely declines his invitation. Later, when Baker suggests the same thing

[60] Ibid., 226.

[61] Ibid., 227.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 281.

again, she takes it as a joke, saying, "Everyone should go if anyone could become a great doctor or a minister after studying in the U.S. But I'll go when the Korean *won* is exchanged one-to-one with the U.S. dollar."[64] Baker "opens his eyes wide with surprise at her incredible confidence." Hyeran's answer surprises her father, too: "Why not? Girls are also crazy about going to the U.S. nowadays."[65] But her refusal seems to satisfy him. In the contemporary atmosphere, in which all people were anxious to go to the U.S., her nonchalant attitude, marked by "incredible confidence," toward Baker's suggestion is extraordinary. It is also echoed in Pyŏngjik's words after he returns home, having failed to cross the thirty-eighth parallel. He speaks with Hyeran's father, his future father-in-law.

> "I heard you went to Moscow. When did you get back?"
> "Not to Moscow, I just returned from my way north."
> "Go again! My daughter is supposed to go Washington, D.C."
> "There is no need to go Washington or Moscow. … There are so many things to do in Korea. What would she do in such a far-off country? If we study, it is enough to study here in Korea, although in the case of science it would be different. Would it require a lifetime to pursue Korean studies?"
> "When did you become such an extreme nationalist (*kuksu chuŭija*)?"
> "Not at all! *I'm only a patriot. My 'ism' is to live in Korea, not go anywhere like Moscow or Washington, D.C.*"
> "Then, what are you going to do now?"
> "I am going to study."[66]

We can note that the "Korea" (*Chosŏn* in the original language) Pyŏngjik mentions here is ambiguous in the sense of which side he is referring to. He intentionally or unintentionally blurs the border of the thirty-eighth parallel in this conversation. He claims to stay in the un-divided Korea. This ending of *Dawn Wind* makes an interesting contrast with the ending of Yi Kwangsu's first modern Korean novel *The Heartless*, which was published in 1917. The

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 331.

[66] Ibid., 335. Italics are mine.

protagonists of *The Heartless* believed that studying in the U.S. was the only way for the Korean nation to free itself from its colonial state. Hyeran's mockery, "if anyone could become a great doctor or a minister after studying in the U.S.," targets these naïve Korean elites of 1917, who sincerely believed that advanced Western knowledge and technology would save Korea. As is well-known, the gloomy self-reflection that Korea had become subject to Japan because it was not civilized enough gave rise to anxious efforts to imitate Western civilizations and pursue "enlightenment" blindly and uncritically. It might have been the only thought that Koreans could envision when they faced the reality of colonization, which was completely beyond their will or ability to change. But one can now clearly know that the end of the blind enlightenmentalism was to accept their own colonization as their destiny as a weaker nation and to make an effort to assimilate with their more civilized, powerful colonizers.

Koreans in the postliberation period who had experienced their nation as a colonial state came to realize that their country would never rise above second-rate status as long as they followed the lead of advanced Western civilizations. Therefore, the North and South Conference was an important attempt for Koreans to solve their own problems without intervention from external powers. Many Koreans thus thought the two nationalist leaders, Kim Ku and Kim Kyu Sik, in heading to the north, were "real patriots," as shown earlier in the example of a newspaper. Yŏm Sangsŏp's protagonist, Pyŏngjik, shares a similar thought: instead of going elsewhere, such as Moscow or Washington, D.C., he is going to study in Korea and find an indigenous way out of the national division in Korea. The heroine Hyeran's "incredible confidence," which earlier surprised Baker, is a significant quality that the author wanted to value. Such confidence was something that colonial Koreans had not had for a long time—but it was ridiculously groundless, realistically speaking.

It was not until later that postcolonial Koreans realized that from the beginning there had been no opportunity to voluntarily choose any ideology or any solution for the Korean peninsula, which was liberated by the Allied Powers. What Pyŏngjik first wants to study, at the end of the novel, is "how to blow up the thirty-eighth parallel without any thundering noise."[67] But less than two years after completing *Dawn Wind* in November 1948, the thirty-eighth parallel did explode with a thundering crash. With only groundless "incredible confidence," he could not find an answer to overcome the second national impasse. This was again beyond the will or ability of anyone residing in the Korean peninsula. Although history proves Yŏm Sangsŏp's presupposition that "there certainly is a way for the two worlds to survive together" was wrong,[68] the attempt to keep one's balance in the divided world, without slanting to one side, was not completely worthless. By employing the trope of "border crossing" in his literature, Yŏm expresses his sympathy with the supporters of the North and South Conference, the idealistic nationalists, who are often considered to have failed to accurately read the contemporary international situation. Also, he makes a strong political statement: criticism of the USAMGIK that represents, and imposes, the Cold War order. For him, the writing of *Dawn Wind* is a literary refutation of the Cold War binaries, and also homage to the contemporary failed nationalists. His solution to avoid re-colonization of Korean peninsula may be idealistic and ridiculously naïve, but this idealism certainly shows a passion for decolonization that the ex-colonized subjects share.

Conclusion

[67] Ibid., 336.

[68] Ibid.

In postliberation Korea, writers, as well as ordinary people to elite intellectuals, were amateur political pundits and ideologues, as well as literary figures. In these heady days of political passion, the genre of newspaper serial novel was likely used to evade the attention of the U.S. military government and hence expressed writers' political perspectives without the severe restriction of censorship. A newspaper serial novel was a political fiction, in which leading Korean writers exerted their efforts to grapple with the issues of their time. By serializing novel *Dawn Wind* in 1948, Yŏm Sangsŏp, a leading writer and newspaper editor, was fully engaged in the discussion regarding the contemporary political impasse of the Korean peninsula.

In this chapter, I have examined Korean popular recognition of the colonial past and the U.S.-occupied present of Korea, legacies of the former Japanese Empire, and critiques of the U.S. military government in *Dawn Wind*, along with the U.S. military documents under the occupation. By doing so, I have explored the moments of conflict and negotiation between the Korean public and the U.S. occupation forces. In *Dawn Wind*, Yŏm Sangsŏp gives a devastating critique of the USAMGIK's neocolonial nature and the convenient, false understanding that all criticisms of the U.S. emanated from the leftists and the Soviet Union. Also, he elaborately creates a neutral force that does not belong to either side of the ideological dichotomy, does not legitimate one regime over the other, but keeps a critical eye on the USAMGIK. This reflects his own political stance, as he opposed the separate election of southern Korea and supported the North and South Conference, which resulted in his arrest for a week. In *Dawn Wind*, the act of border crossing reveals public disbelief in the USAMGIK and repeatedly evokes the north beyond the border, which should not be mentioned or visited. *Dawn Wind* is a literary refutation of the USAMGIK's anticommunism, and homage to the idealistic, failed efforts to unify the two

Koreas. The efforts without a realistic recognition of the irreversible Cold War anticipated the failure from the outset, but even a failed effort is not completely meaningless.

Chapter Three
From 1946 Seoul to 1949 Pyongyang:
Yi T'aejun's Postliberation Migration and Revision of "Before and After Liberation"

Yi T'aejun's Before and After Liberation, Effaced Writer or Effaced Text

Yi T'aejun (李泰俊, 1904–?), a renowned modernist writer in colonial Korea, is one of those who could not fit into either of the two Koreas post-1945 and was effaced from both histories for a long time. As noted, his leaving for the north in late 1946 made his literature invisible in South Korea by the late 1980s.[1] In North Korea, Yi was purged with South Korean Labor Party members after the Korean War and his writings consequently obliterated from literary history up to the present. The sudden and voluntary heading north of Yi T'aejun, who had never been a socialist writer or even a sympathizer, and whose literary inclination was notable for so-called pure literature, was a surprising event in the postliberation Korean literary scene. Regarding his abrupt migration to the north, Yi's contemporary writers or early literary critics tended to consider it a spur-of-moment choice based on a personal acquaintance, romanticist nature, or misunderstanding of the Socialist ideology and the North Korean situation, rather than based on rational judgment.[2] On the other hand, recent research on Yi T'aejun and his post-1945 literature regards his decision to go north as his ideological conversion to the left or a reflection of his political affiliation, and examines its theoretical motivation.[3]

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[1] In 1988, the South Korean government lifted the ban of books written by writers who had gone to North Korea after 1945. Theodore Hughes nicely analyzes the invisibility in the South Korean literary scene of those writers who went north. Theodore Hughes, *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier* (New York: Columbia University, 2012).

[2] Cho Yongman, "Yi T'aejun hoesanggi: ch'ago chajonsim kanghan sosŏlga" [Recollection of Yi T'aejun: A Novelist with Poise and Pride] *Sanghŏ hakpo* 1 (1993): 409–15; Kang Chinho, "Tonggyŏng kwa chwajŏl ŭi mihak" [Aesthetics of Longing and Frustration], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 1 (1993): 103–27; Kang Hŏn'guk, "Wŏlbuk ŭi ŭimi: Yi T'aejun ŭi kyŏng'u" [The Meaning of Going North: The Case of Yi T'aejun], *Pip'yŏng munhak* 18 (2004): 7–30.

[3] Pae Kaehwa, "Yi T'aejun, haebanggi chungganp'a munhakja ŭi p'yosang" [Yi T'aejun, a Portrait of the Neutral Writer in the Postliberation Period], *Han'guk hyŏndae munhak yŏn'gu* 32 (2010): 473–513; Kim Chunhyŏn,

When focusing on Yi T'aejun's transformation of thought since the 1945 liberation, "Before and After Liberation" ("Haebang chŏnhu," 1946), his autobiographical fiction, comes to loom large as a valuable literary testimony. It finely captures the inner thoughts and conflicts of the main protagonist Hyŏn—the author Yi's fictional persona—including self-reflection and shame over being a colonial intellectual, keen critiques of and frustration with current sociopolitical situations, and his shifting perspective on leftist thought, all of which reveal significant moments of sudden participation in politics and his subsequent border-crossing.[4] Therefore, Yi's political stance and his circumstances in real life complement scholarly interpretations of the text "Before and After Liberation," and the other way around, as well.

In spite of great academic interest in Yi T'aejun's "Before and After Liberation," however, it is seldom known that Yi T'aejun redacted his original version when he included it in his first North Korean short story collection *The First Combat* (*Ch'ŏt chŏnt'u*) in 1949. A South Korean collection of Yi T'aejun's literary works compiled in 1995 includes all the stories from *The First Combat*, but in case of "Before and After Liberation," the complete collection understandably incorporates the original text published in southern Korea in 1946. Hence, the 1949 book edition of "Before and After Liberation" has never been published or referred to in South Korea. Since the revision is not drastic enough to affect the entire narrative, it is understandable that it was not introduced to South Korean readers. But it is hard to understand why the South Korean publishers of the complete works did not even mention this redaction of the story at all. Even in a new edition of Yi T'aejun's complete works recently published in 2015,

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"Haebanggi munhak chang ŭi chaep'yŏn kwa Yi T'aejun" [The Reconstruction of Literary Space in the Postliberation Period and Yi T'aejun], *Ŏmun nonjip* 64 (2011): 217–40; Yu Imha, "Wŏlbuk ihu Yi T'aejun munhak kwa '48-nyŏn chilsŏ:' 'Mŏnji' (1950) rŭl chungsim ŭro" [Yi T'aejun's Literature after His Migration North and "the 1948 System:" A Focus on "Dust" (1950)], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 39 (2013): 13–42.

[4] The autobiographical features of "Before and After Liberation" have been discussed in Chapter One.

there is no mention of the 1949 reprint. It is different from the case of the title piece "The First Combat," which a scholar briefly introduces the difference between the original publication in a literary journal and the book version.[5] South Korean scholars take consistent interest in writers' redactions of their literary texts—for instance, Yi T'aejun's post-1945 redaction of a colonial period novel, *Moonlit Night of Contemplation* (*Sasang ŭi wŏrya*), or North Korean redactions of Han Sŏrya's and Yi Kiyŏng's masterpieces. Therefore, it is worth noting that the redaction of "Before and After Liberation" has been completely excluded from South Korean literary studies.

Regarding the absence of an exploration of the 1949 redaction, one possibility for the omission is that the scholars who participated in compiling the texts missed the revisions because the 1949 edition keeps the entire original narrative of the same, and the addition, deletion, and revision are done only in parts. Another possibility is that the editors were aware of the revision but regarded it as merely minor changes to be ignored. If the latter is the case, it requires more discussion as to the reason for judging it unworthy of exploration. The second possibility is related to, again, the fact that the revisions are minor, or that the 1949 text merely mirrors the political, ideological tendency of North Korea. As I will examine below, some revisions clearly reflect the new political condition of North Korea or use crude, stereotypical expressions from North Korean propaganda. In this sense, the redaction of "Before and After Liberation" could be read as damaging a fine work, which was already critically acclaimed in 1946. If "Before and After Liberation" had to be revised for some political reason in 1949, the judgment to ignore the revision could be a political one, too. Material absence of the North Korean edition in South Korea and its political ramifications strongly suggest that the influence of the Cold War has

[5] Pae Kaewha, "Ongŏnhan inmin minjujuŭi ŭi kihoek kwa kŭ silp'ae: pukhan esŏ ŭi Yi T'aejun munhak" [The project and Failure of Moderate People's Democracy: Yi T'aejun's Literature in North Korea], *Yi T'aejun chŏnjip*, vol. 4 (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2015), 310–11.

extended not only to the author Yi T'aejun in the postliberation period but also to the actual reading of his text in contemporary Korean literary studies.

Although the 1949 edition of "Before and After Liberation" does not have a change in its overall narrative, the amount of rewriting is considerable; it is not at all minimal enough to be completely overlooked. Rather, the revision is worth pondering in order to discern the anxieties and conflicts the author faced after his border-crossing, which are rarely known to South Korean readers, as well as his experience of and difficulty in writing in North Korea during the tumultuous time from 1946 to 1949.

This chapter explores Yi T'aejun—not only his literary text but also his biography, especially his life decision to go north—as a postcolonial text to demonstrate a Korean writer's frustration, conflict, negotiation, and struggle in the interstice between decolonization and the Cold War. First, I discuss the circumstances of Yi T'aejun's migration to the north across the thirty-eighth parallel (*wŏlbuk*; 越北 in Korean), and to what extent we can interpret an act of *wŏlbuk* as an ideological decision in the postliberation period. Then, I briefly investigate the transformation of North Korean literary policy around 1947, when the Party started to impose guidelines for literature. Finally, for the most of the chapter, I conduct a comparative reading of the two editions of "Before and After Liberation." Three major characteristics of the 1949 redaction, which are the subjects of analysis, are the reflection of the North Korean political stance, the changes in colonial memory—especially relating to the author's experience of colonial collaboration—and the depiction of a major character Mr. Kim, an obsolete Confucian scholar. While the first rewriting of the contemporary political situation is easily predictable, the latter two deserve more attention as they display the author's conflicts and choices in writing.

By doing so, I argue that the revision of "Before and After Liberation" testifies to the moments in which the solidifying state system of the Cold War inflected the memory and representation of collaboration. I aim to complicate the discussions of the memory of collaboration by paying attention to the ruptures and anxieties created in the process of distorting memories, rather than merely criticizing the distortion and self-justification.

Yi T'aejun's Crossing of the Thirty-eighth Parallel

Yi T'aejun's active engagement in the Korean Writers' Alliance, which followed the political line of Pak Hŏnyŏng and the South Korean Labor Party, is often given as an answer to his *wŏlbuk* among Korean literary scholars. His deep involvement in the Pak Hŏnyŏng line clearly would have affected his decision to go north. But I regard Yi T'aejun's abrupt dedication to political issues in post-1945 and the following *wŏlbuk* as a more complex result of various factors—not only his political affiliation but also, as revealed in "Before and After Liberation," more personal conflicts like a sense of shame and self-reflection over his inactivity during the colonial period as a colonial intellectual, hope for a new system after his travel to the USSR, and the deteriorated external circumstances of southern Korea after his return from the USSR, among other things. As literary scholar Kim Chunhyŏn recently, and properly, points out, a study of Yi T'aejun in the postliberation era and his motivation to *wŏlbuk* is fundamentally within the domain of speculation and inference.[6] However, it does not mean that the study of post-1945 Yi T'aejun is meaningless but rather that, I believe, such study carefully reads the multilayered and delicate movements of mind, complicated contexts, and unspoken circumstances.

[6] Kim Chunhyŏn, "Haebang iranŭn han'guk munhak yŏn'gu ŭi kyŏnggye wa Yi T'aejun" [Liberation as a Boundary of Korean Literary Studies and Yi T'aejun], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 42 (2014): 124.

According to Kim Chaeyong, Korean literary historian, Yi T'aejun did not intend to leave for the north permanently when he departed, but merely planned to accompany a delegation of the Korean-Soviet Culture Society (*Cho-Sso munhwa hyŏphoe*) to visit the Soviet Union. He was already intended to be a delegate to the Soviet Union in July 1946, but it was not the kind of issue to make public beforehand. Thus, he lied that he had to go to Anhyŏp—a small town north of the thirty-eighth parallel, where he stayed during the late colonial period—in order to dispose of the household he had abandoned there at liberation. When he returned to Pyongyang from the Soviet Union in October 1946, however, Seoul was in a turbulent situation later deemed the October Uprising. A large number of leftists had already migrated north or had to go underground. This acute situation seemed to make him decide to remain at Pyongyang rather than return to Seoul.[7] It was in the November 1946 issue that his letter from Pyongyang, "To My Friends of the Writers' Alliance in Seoul," was published in *Literature*, the organ of the Korean Writers' Alliance, of which Yi was one of the major founding members.

As revealed above in Yi's incidental decision to go to and stay north, his sudden border crossing was, thus, not a decisive irreversible decision to choose the northern regime over the south. Rather, it should be noted that crossing the thirty-eighth parallel was not considered to be as significant for people of the time as it is today. Yi T'aejun would have merely wanted to tour and observe (in Korean, *kyŏnhak*; 見學) the Soviet Union, the perfect model of the Socialist nations. Such a "study trip" assumes here that a subject wants to reform by learning from an advanced model.

One who lived through the postliberation period was not able to anticipate the division of North and South to be permanent, as we have experienced today. It is one of the most common

[7] See Kim Chaeyong, *Yi T'aejun munhak ŭi chaeinsik* [A New Understanding of Yi T'aejun's Literature], ed. Munhak kwa sasang yŏn'guhoe (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004), 74–6.

mistakes for contemporary scholars to forget about such a simple and important fact in understanding the literature and actors in the postliberation period. The weight of *wŏlbuk*, which we perhaps ascribe too heavily to that time, was arguably much lighter than the weight we now ascribe after decades of direct and indirect encounters with the Cold War and the long division between North and South Korea up until now. I do not intend to downplay the gravity of the dangerous decision of border-crossing by those who risked their lives to cross the thirty-eighth parallel. But I argue that the act of *wŏlbuk* depends upon a more varied and uncertain spectrum of life, and by itself is regarded as an ongoing act rather than a completed, one-time act with conviction. We can see various cases—either one did not seriously recognize the importance of the decision to choose one political regime over the other, or one was not able to return after leaving with an intention to come back shortly, and so forth.[8] I do not intend to deny accumulative studies of the theoretical background and internal reasoning of Yi T'aejun's *wŏlbuk* and return to the initial tendency to determine it merely an incidental decision. The attempts to interpret Yi T'aejun's life and literature in the postliberation period with a certain "ism" tend to be based on current scholars' strong hindsight bias of the Cold War. The stance to designate Yi T'aejun as a "neutral" is still within the ideological binary between left and right in the sense that it presumes the Cold War binary and a third point somewhere in between. While our study can, and should, take us beyond the Cold War, it is hard to imagine a Korean peninsula on which the Cold War does not predominate.

A more decisive, unforeseen problem for border crossers is that they did not anticipate how challenging living under the new regime would be after crossing the thirty-eighth parallel.

[8] In Chapter Two, I have discussed other cases of practical motivations for crossing the thirty-eighth parallel, with a focus on Yŏm Sangsŏp's short stories—based on the author's experience of border crossing from North to South, which in this opposite case is called *wŏllam* (越南) in Korean.

After crossing the border, they had to continuously prove that they would be loyal members of the new regime. Yi T'aejun's literature after his *wŏlbuk* shows both repeated commitments to and conflicts with the regime. Most of his literary works in North Korea are close to the committed Party literature (e.g. his travelogue, *A Journey to the Soviet Union*, and short stories in his short story collections *Farmland* and *The First Combat*), but there is a different stream of works revealing the author's conflict and uncertainty, which is at odds with the Party's doctrine (e.g. a short story, "Dust"). The reprinted edition of "Before and After Liberation" in 1949 is another rare example of the latter case.

Literature of Commitment and Uncertain Writers: North Korean Literature in 1945–1950

When Yi T'aejun decided to remain in the north at the end of 1946 after his visit to the Soviet Union, North Korean cultural policies had not yet entered the stage of the state-guided socialist realism, which Charles Armstrong designates "its own Zhdanovist phase," named after the USSR's period of Zhdanovism wherein strict party guidelines controlled cultural creation.[9] According to Armstrong, until the spring of 1947 "a considerable degree of artistic freedom" was guaranteed above the thirty-eighth parallel.[10] Unfortunately for Yi T'aejun, the freedom of thought and art that would have influenced his decision to stay or leave did not last even a couple months.

There have been few studies on writers' organizations in northern Korea compared to those in the south. But immediately after liberation, there also were efforts similar to those in

[9] Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945–1950," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 1 (2003): 82.

[10] Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 167.

south for organizing writers' groups north of the thirty-eighth parallel with the city of Pyongyang as its center.[11] First organized was the apolitical Pyongyang Culture and Art Association (*Pyongyang munhwa yesul hyŏphoe*), and second, in response to this non-political organization, the leftist Proletariat Art Federation at Pyongyang (*Pyongyang chigu p'ŭrollet'aria yesul tongmaeng*) followed.[12] The first group was rather like a friendly society that included various nonpartisan writers. The latter also does not seem to have been an assembly among established writers, even though it appointed established ones, first Han Sŏrya then Yi Kiyŏng, as its chairmen *in absentia*.[13] There seem to have been only a few influential writers in the north at the time. This is not surprising considering that the center of the literary world was always Seoul during the entire colonial period.

When the North Korean Interim People's Committee (NKIPC) was founded with Kim Il Sung as the chairman in February 1946, the two literary organizations were united into the North Korean Federation of Literature and Art (*Pukchosŏn munhak yesul ch'ongdongmaeng*; hereafter, abbreviated as NKFLA). It was at that time that the oppositional political lines of the north and south clearly came to the surface and the literary world fell under political influence. The organ of the NKFLA, *Cultural Front*, was published in July 1946 alongside *Literature* of the Korean Writers' Alliance in the south.

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[11] I have relied on previous scholarship regarding North Korea's literary organizations and literary policies including Kim Il Sung's speeches as well as the two incidents described below. Brian Myers, *Han Sŏrya and North Korean Literature: The Failure of Socialist Realism in the DPRK* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1994); Sin Hyŏnggi, O Sŏngho, *Pukhan munhaksa* [A History of North Korean Literature] (Seoul: P'yŏngminsa, 2000); Tatiana Gabroussenko, *Soldiers on the Cultural Front: Developments in the Early History of North Korean Literature and Literary Policy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), among other things.

[12] See Myers, *Han Sŏrya and North Korean Literature*, 35–71. Myers argues that the latter group received financial support from Soviet officials. Although this was highly possible, he did not provide further evidence except for O Yŏngjin's 1952 memoir, whose reliability is problematic because it was published by a South Korean government organization for wartime propaganda.

[13] Ibid., 36.

With the establishment of the consolidated literary organization, North Korean literature converges into Party literature. The palpable signal of the change was Kim Il Sung's guiding principles released in May 1946, which demanded that every person in the field of culture was to be a soldier of the cultural front. NKFLA banned an anthology of poems entitled *Hidden Fragrance* (*Ŭnghyang*) for the reason of its decadent and reactionary themes, which is the famous "*Ŭnghyang* incident" in January 1947. An ideological review of the poets and their practice of public self-criticism followed. There was another similar "incident," called the "*Kwansŏ* collection of poems incident," in which some poems in the collection were openly denounced for their lack of ideology as well as their political indifference.[14] Those incidents demonstrate the ways in which bureaucratic restrictions against literary freedom started being imposed in North Korea.[15] South Korean literary historians regard the "*Ŭnghyang* incident" as the first moment of the Party's censorship and control in North Korean literature.[16]

Then, in his 1947 New Year's address, Kim Il Sung declared the future direction of literature to "produce lofty works ideologically, politically, and artistically," that is, so-called "lofty realism (*kosanghan riŏllijŭm*)." The gist of the address lies in that people are born with "loftiness," which should be developed through practice and awakening.[17] Therefore, literature ought to present positive examples and to enlighten the masses instead of merely reflecting the

[14] O Ch'angŭn, "Haebanggi pukchosŏn simunhak kwa mihak ŭi chŏngch'isŏng" [North Korean Poetry in the Postliberation Period and the Politics of Aesthetics], Nambuk munhak yesul yŏn'guhoe ed., *Haebanggi Pukhan munhak yesul ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chŏngae* [Formation and Development of North Korean Literature and Art in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Yŏngnak, 2012), 109–17.

[15] Sin Hyŏnggi, O Sŏngho, *A History of North Korean Literature*, 73.

[16] Yu Imha, "Pukhan ch'ogi munhak kwa "Soryŏn" iranŭn ch'amjojŏm" [Early North Korean Literature and its Reference of the Soviet Union], *Formation and Development of North Korean Literature*, 58.

[17] Sin Hyŏnggi, O Sŏngho, *A History of North Korean Literature*, 89–90.

aspects and relations of objective reality.[18] In this sense, literature should portray heroic efforts of the people and the glory of struggles and victories, rather than gloomy, pessimistic, and sentimental things.

The Party's guiding principles of literature are clearly to dampen various directions and attempts in early North Korean literature, such as the artistic experiment of the poets of *Ŭnghyang*. The Party's control of literature even reaches to the degree to specify a work to be written, that is, a so-called "task piece" (*kwaŏp chakp'um*). A poet, Pak Namsu, who lived in the north and crossed the border south (*wŏllam*) during the Korean War recollects how much he and his colleague poets were perplexed by being commanded to write a work with land reform as its theme. According to his memoir, the themes of a task poem could be anything related to, for instance, May Day, elections, or gender equality laws. In addition, the theme was quite predetermined—not merely to write about elections, for example, but to have someone write a piece supporting a certain political stance such as the Democratic Unification Front before the election, or to have someone write about the joy of voting on election day.[19] Considering the political inclination of Pak's memoir, published by the National Guidance Service (*Kungmin sasang chidowŏn*), a South Korean government organization for war propaganda during the war, one should take his possible political intentions into consideration. It seems to be true, however, that the Party's very specific instructions about writing literature did indeed exist, such as the aforementioned assignment of task pieces.

Taking a glimpse at several books published in Pyongyang between 1945 and 1950, some anthologies with an obvious propagandistic purpose can be easily found. For instance, an

[18] See Myers, *Han Sŏrya and North Korean Literature*, 35–71.

[19] Hyŏn Su (Pak Namsu), *Chŏkch'i yuk-nyŏn ŭi pukhan mundan* [The North Korean Literary World Under Six Years of Enemy Control] (Seoul: Pogosa, 1999), 99–110.

anthology for commemorating the Soviet Army's farewell ceremony was published in February 1949. A collection of farmer's fiction was published by the Central Committee of Farmers' Alliance in April 1949, including short stories, like Yi T'aejun's "Tiger Grandma" and Ch'ŏe Myŏng'ik's "The Kongdungp'ul Island," all of which were written in January of the same year. Two months after the outbreak of the war, Yi Kiyŏng, Han Sŏrya, Yi T'aejun, An Hamgwang, and Han Hyo—all famous literary figures from the colonial era—published their belligerent essays in a warfront anthology, *Under the Glorious Flag*. A large number of noted writers were mobilized to write their works following a given theme.[20]

It is well known that the Soviet literary policy of doctrinaire literature heavily affected the active regulations of North Korean literature in its formative years. In northern Korea, the liberation came with the Soviet Army advance and since then the Soviet influence was immense over the realms of politics, the economic system, society, and culture.[21] People's Democracy in the Soviet Union was regarded as an alternative to an old political structure, overcoming Western capitalist democracy.[22] Note Yi T'aejun's great admiration of politics, society, culture, and science, expressed in his travelogue *A Journey to the Soviet Union* (*Ssoryŏn kihaeng*, 1947). He envisions a bright future for Korea after watching and extolling the Soviet system. The "lofty realism" that North Korean Labor Party declared was certainly under the great influence of the USSR's socialist realism.

[20] The publications listed here are found in the North Korean Documents captured by the U.S. Military Army during the Korean War, which is currently housed at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. Record Group 242, Korean-Language Records Captured at Pyongyang and its Vicinity, SA 2012, Container 1112 (Box 1).

[21] Scholars consider the early years of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the late 1940s and the 1950s to be "the Soviet era." See Gabroussenko, *Soldiers on the Cultural Front*, 1 and footnote 2.

[22] Sin Hyŏnggi, O Sŏngho, *A History of North Korean Literature*, 105.

Cultural exchange with the USSR in a broader and more popular sense started to be encouraged earlier than the direct control of literature in 1947. It was already November 1945 when the Korean-Soviet Culture Society was established for the purpose of learning and accepting the Soviet culture. The main activities of the organization were to translate and introduce various Soviet books into North Korea, as well as to arrange writers' trips to the Soviet Union, as well demonstrated in the case of Yi T'aejun's travels.

The organ of the Korean-Soviet Culture Society, *Korean-Soviet Friendship* (*Cho-Sso ch'insŏn*), published a large number of literary works, most of which deals with a Korean protagonist's personal friendship with Russians—a doctor, scientist, engineer, or soldier—and the protagonist becomes deeply moved by the Russian's sincere heart toward Korean people, and strict and noble work ethics, among other things. An unfavorable portrait of Russians was not allowed. It is a notable incident that Han Sŏrya's short story "The Hat" ("Moja," 1946) had to be revised due to its negative portrayal of a Russian soldier. The story's main theme is obvious—encouraging friendly relations between Korea and the Soviet Union. Han describes a Russian soldier who suffers from a traumatic war experience and becomes the good friend of a Korean who gradually melts his frozen heart. In the first half of the story, however, the soldier is portrayed as a troubled character who is mentally unstable and ends up firing a gun at Korean civilians in a frenzy, and the Soviet Army complained about the work. In Han Sŏrya's anthology, published in 1960, the parts at issue were all effaced or revised.[23]

Reading the 1949 Revision of "Before and After Liberation"

[23] Armstrong also briefly discusses the short story, "The Hat," in *The North Korean Revolution*, 43–44. For more details related to the publication of "The Hat," see Nam Wŏnjin, "Han Sŏrya ŭi 'Moja' wa haebanggi soryŏn insik" [Han Sŏrya's "The Hat" and the Recognition of the Soviet Union during the Postliberation Period], *Formation and Development of North Korean Literature*, 211–36.

The redacted version of Han Sŏrya's "The Hat," which is currently available, was reprinted in 1960, fourteen years after the original print in 1946. Hence, we are limited in discerning the changes in the state's direction for literary creation because of the relatively long time span between versions of this work. But in case of Yi T'aejun's "Before and After Liberation," there currently are two extant editions, one of which was first published in Seoul in 1946 and the other in Pyongyang in 1949. Thus, it is possible to explore the relatively drastic changes during a short time span and between the two adversarial regions by comparing the two editions.[24]

I focus on the three most prominent revisions from the 1949 redaction: the reflection of the North Korean political stance, the changes in the description of colonial experience, and the depiction of a major character Mr. Kim, a Confucian scholar. While the first revision related to the contemporary political situation is easily predictable, the latter two deserve more attention as they let us infer what the author went through in the North Korean literary environment by carefully examining his revision and non-revision.

First, the 1949 edition explicitly mirrors the North Korean political position. Below I briefly introduce conspicuous changes in description, such as of the ally versus the enemy during the Pacific War. American troops, as the first ally defeating the Imperial Army, are all replaced by "the Allied Forces (*yŏnhapkun*)," and nearly always added is "USSR (*Ssoryŏn*)"—which was hardly referred to in the 1946 original. Animosity toward Syngman Rhee and the United States

[24] The bibliographical information of the two different editions are as follows respectively: Yi T'aejun, "Haebang chŏnhu: han chakka ŭi sugi" [Before and After Liberation: A Writer's Memoir], *Munhak* 1 (1946); Yi T'aejun, "Haebang chŏnhu: han chakka ŭi sugi" [Before and After Liberation: A Writer's Memoir] *Ch'ŏt chŏnt'u* [*The First Combat*] (Pyongyang: Munhwa chŏnsŏnsa, 1949), In Record Group 242, Korean-Language Records Captured at Pyongyang and its Vicinity, SA 2012, Container 1100 (Formerly, Box 1, Item 11). All translations are mine. From now on, page numbers for all quotations from these two editions are indicated in the text with the year of the publication.

becomes obvious—for instance, from "Dr. Syngman Rhee arrived to the rapturous acclaim of the people" (1946/27) to "Syngman Rhee arrived from America with only his briefcase" (1949/52).

A comparison between the Soviet-occupied North and the U.S.-occupied South is one of the noticeable features of the 1949 redaction. Observing that "pro-Japanese national betrayers" were "appointed as high-officials of the USAMGIK and took the lead in oppressing the people's committees," the protagonist Hyŏn laments by saying "this is the repetition of the Japanese empire, isn't it?" (1949/52)—the same as the typical North Korean rhetoric employed up to the present. Regarding the American occupation as a repetition of the Japanese colonial rule is similarly found in Yi T'aejun's contemporary short story, "Dust" ("Mŏnji," 1950). Hyŏn says to a Confucian scholar Kim, who is about to leave for his hometown that is located north of the thirty-eighth parallel, "because the Soviet Army was stationed there [at the hometown] and people's committees held the power under the guidance of General Kim Il Sung, now it must be different there than here" (1949/65).

In the second half of the story dealing with post-1945 Korean circumstances, Hyŏn was described in the 1946 original as concerned about the leftist prevalence throughout the Korean peninsula. In Hyŏn's small speech for trusteeship of Korea, although it is identical with the contemporary communist standpoint, he does not lean toward one side and maintains objectivity. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that Hyŏn committed "conversion to the left" even if he was working with leftist writers affiliated with the Central Council for the Construction of Korean Culture (abbreviated to *munhyŏp* in the text). In the 1949 version however, Hyŏn withdraws his wariness and shifts his position to criticize his former colleagues who are right-wing inclined. He deems leftist writers of *munhyŏp* to have a constructive, scientific worldview in contrast to the sentimental perspective of his old (rightest) friends who were not changed at all from the

colonial era. For him, "the constructive, scientific worldview can provide an appropriate prospect for the Korean nation and Korean culture" (1949/46). Such phrases explicitly show early North Korean rhetoric criticizing sentimentality and pursuing scientific knowledge. The skepticism about another leftist group, the Korean Proletariat Art Federation (*p'ŭro yemaeng*), which was "leaning toward extreme leftism," is altered as well. The radical leftists of this group and Hyŏn's moderate left-wing colleagues are portrayed to "make a rigorous effort to cooperate with each other," despite "the derision of a sardonic [right-wing] group of people" (1949/51). These subjoined parts to reveal his faith in leftist writers and political stance are often at odds with unmodified phrases—the expressions of Hyŏn's remaining doubt or concern about leftists such as "for Hyŏn, a group member's act of distributing red flags on the rooftop" seems to be "premature"(1949/48). From the discrepancies, it seems that the author selectively, or hastily, rewrote some parts related to his negative judgment of leftist writers, which he probably thought would cause a problem, rather than carefully rewrite the entire part for consistency.

Collaboration Vanished, Resistance Exaggerated

While reflections of the North Korean political situation and the change of the narrator's political standpoint are easily anticipated considering the place of publication, the depictions of the colonial period and the Japanese colonial policy requires more careful attention. It can be a valuable text to help us figure out the North Korean perspective on the colonial period and its differences from the South Korean one, although it is based on conjectures. The 1949 edition of "Before and After Liberation" shows considerable differences in depicting the colonial experience, the narrator's colonial collaboration, and his self-evaluation of his own literary career during the colonial period.

The revisions about the colonial period are mostly related to how to write about colonial collaboration. It is noticeable that Hyŏn's translation of *A History of the Great East Asian War* (*Taedonga chŏn'gi*), of which he was ashamed of and frustrated by his cowardice in working on the translation, is simply left out. The circumstance that Hyŏn had to reluctantly volunteer for the translation is also effaced. Instead, the 1949 edition describes the control of the Government General over Korean writers as being more coercive. See the subtle nuance of the revised parts below.

> Several executive members of the Patriotic Association of Writers *arranged* a dinner for seven or eight established writers, who were not willing to cooperate with the imperial policies, with the director of the Information Bureau. Since Hyŏn *did not participate* in that night's dinner… (1946/21–22, Italics are mine).
>
> Several executive members of the Patriotic Association of Writers *dragged out* seven or eight established writers, who were not willing to cooperate with the imperial policies, and *forced them to join* the dinner with the director of the Information Bureau at Myŏngwŏlgwan. Since Hyŏn *was not caught* at the time… (1949/19, Italics are mine).

The quotation above reveals how the author slightly changes the tone in describing the Japanese rule as more high-handed. Korean writers who attended a dinner with the director of the Information Bureau in the original were now "dragged out" or "forced to join the dinner." Hyŏn "did not participate" in the dinner in the 1946 edition, but he fortunately "was not caught" for dinner in the 1949 redaction. With the Japanese rule's coerciveness, Hyŏn's unwillingness is conspicuously revealed. The attitude of Japanese police and officials toward Hyŏn is more authoritative, as well. In the 1946 edition, a Japanese policeman, Tsuruda, has respect for Hyŏn, but in the 1949 version, Tsuruda speaks to him with half-informal linguistic forms. Also, Tsuruda's threatening words are explicit in the redaction: "this conversation will be your last chance. Next time it won't be like this, just summoning you and asking what you did, what you're going to do. You better do whatever you do" (1949/9). The executive director of the

Patriotic Association of Writers (*Munin pogukhoe*) even directs what Hyŏn has to say in his speech at the writers' rally. In short, the 1949 redaction does not deal with Hyŏn's acts that seem to be willingly cooperative with the Japanese rule, and if it deals with them, their forced circumstances are exaggerated.

Yi T'aejun also expurgates a long description of writers, whom Hyŏn meets at the writers' rally, as part of his long stream of consciousness while listening to the speeches of all participants from every region of the empire. More than a page criticizes contemporary Japanese writers who became the puppets of barbarous Japanese officials and asks of Japanese writers whether no conscience of true men of culture remained, while also noting conscientious Japanese intellectuals, like Yanagi Muneyoshi, who criticized Japanese militarism. The effacement of the existence of conscientious Japanese intellectuals, in spite of the critical intentions of his descriptions, makes the national binary more black and white. By eliminating the statement that there exist Japanese who criticize Japanese imperialism, the national contrast between evil Japanese and suffering Koreans becomes more distinctive.

The revisions I have shown above serve the purpose to make Japanese colonial rule seem more evil and emphasize the hardship of poor Koreans. Correspondingly, Hyŏn's animosity toward the Japanese empire has more straightforward language:

> "I'll survive! Survive no matter what! I'll see how long you bastards hold out! I'll survive till your collapse. Even if I leave Seoul and go to the countryside gnashing my teeth, I'll survive until the day when the Japanese collapse."
> Hyŏn wanted to live. He wanted to endure in order to see their ruins with his own eyes at last, although only a passive way. If he saw it, there would be no lingering regret even in his death, as if he achieved every goal (1949/9).

It is interesting to see that relatively short sentences from the original—"Hyŏn really wanted to live. He wanted to live his life to the last rather than just breathe"—grows into these direct expressions of strong wrath toward Japan. The intense enmity toward Japanese, "you bastards,"

is typical of postliberation literature in North Korea. We are now familiar with such strong expressions in North Korean literature cursing the so-called U.S. imperialists and their South Korean allies or puppets. But these now-typical phrases charged with hostility are incongruent with Hyŏn's narration throughout the entire story, which is indecisive, considerate, and often timid.

The apparent binary between the good and the bad, Koreans who resist for the nation versus the oppressor Japan, shows an interesting variation when Hyŏn defines the characteristics of his literary world. The appraisal of his own literature, begun with the sentence "his literature so far has mainly dealt with his personal life" (1946/15) in the original, turns around with the sentence "his literature so far was not about the personal life" (1949/27). According to the 1946 edition, "he was more keen to the sorrow of the Korean nation than class issues, and at odds with left-wing leanings toward class issues." Also, "under the harsh censorship," he has written, "he couldn't but endure and thus, the only way open for him is to accept the world with resignation" (1946/15).

Strictly speaking, the two editions talk about the same characteristics of Hyŏn's literature; severe censorship made him write about personal life. But in the redacted version, he makes an emphasis on the nationalistic and rebellious aspects of his "personal literature" by adding the sentence above with the completely opposite meaning in the beginning and by claiming how writing about personal life is related to fighting against the Japanese policy to obliterate the Korean language. Hyŏn resisted against the annihilation of Korean language by writing in the Korean language as much as possible, which is a sort of self-defense for his literary practices during the colonial period. Hyŏn's statement that he tried to use and spread Korean at every

opportunity in order to protect the language is exactly same as Yi T'aejun's stance in the dispute with Kim Saryang immediately after liberation.[25]

Furthermore, it is newly added that Hyŏn's first work was resistant enough to have the editor risk the fate of the journal. Here let me explain the circumstances of the author Yi T'aejun's first work. His first short story "Omongnyŏ" was published in *Sidae Daily* instead of *Chosŏn mundan*, a literary magazine which selected his work as a winner of the prize given to new writers. It seems that "Omongnyŏ" was not published in *Chosŏn mundan* due to self-censorship of the editor. Therefore, it is partly true that the publication of this work "ha[d] the editor risk."[26] But Hyŏn's saying, "the work was destined not to be included in his first book," needs more accurate explanation. "Omongnyŏ" was indeed included in Yi T'aejun's short story collection published in 1938. It should be noted that in the book version, Yi T'aejun made a considerable revision of this work and erased all negative portraits of the Japanese police, including their violence and murders.[27] The fact that publication of the work was possible after making the revisions indicates that the colonial censorship policy was severe: either the revisions were made due to direct pressure from the censorship authorities or were due to the author's internal censorship. But there is a clear difference between the confession that he had to revise the work because of censorship and the equivocation that the work was "destined not to be" published because of severe censorship. We do not know if Yi T'aejun would consider the acts

[25] Kim Yunsik, *Haebang kongganŭi munhaksa ron* [Literary History in the Liberation Space] (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1989), 96–103.

[26] The protagonist Hyŏn's bibliographical details, including published literary works, are identical to the author Yi T'aejun's. Thus, the readers are likely to assume the identity between the protagonist and the author. Again, for the autobiographical characteristics of "Before and After Liberation," see Chapter One.

[27] Regarding the process in which "Omongnyŏ" was published in *Sidae Daily* and its later revision, see Kim Yŏngmin, "Yi T'aejun ŭi tŭngdan kwajŏng kwa "Omongnyŏ" yŏn'gu" [Yi T'aejun's Literary Beginnings and the Reading of "Omongnyŏ"], *Yi T'aejun munhak ŭi chaeinsik* (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004), 13–43.

of erasing and revising the parts that might cause a problem to be a compromise with the colonial policy. But what he does with the explanation of the first work is to erase his compromise and to emphasize that his writings were resistant enough to be banned for publication by colonial censorship.

The revision of "Before and After Liberation" examined above resembles the nationalist narrative in South Korean (and North Korean) literary history, which has focused on Korean writers' strong nationalism and resistance to the Japanese empire. I do not aim to denounce Yi T'aejun, who was forced to participate in collaborative acts to some degree due to repeated pressures from the colonial authorities, for minimizing or justifying his collaboration—although it was minor in the first place—through the writing and rewriting of "Before and After Liberation." Except for some exceptional cases, judgment on colonial collaboration is clouded with ambiguity and as such, it is difficult to draw an easy conclusion. But it is clear that compared with the 1946 original published in Seoul, the 1949 reprint loses its painful sense of shame and self-reflection about the author's colonial past, diminishes what he did during the colonial period, and embellishes his past with more rebellious acts. As a result, the revisions work to reinforce a simple binary between the empire and resistance. Considering that one of the literary values of "Before and After Liberation" was based on the thorough depiction of the protagonist's subtle state of mind facing the vortex of Korean history, the 1949 redaction works to efface the very strength of the work.

In the original edition, "Before and After Liberation" well reflects the uncertainty and anxiety in Korea's darkest time right before liberation. Because Koreans were ignorant of the war situation, uneasiness overflowed among them. Hyŏn believed "Japan to be defeated shortly, but let alone writing, his mind does not allow him to read what others wrote" (1946/15). Such an

indecisive state of mind is an honest depiction of anxiety. But the expression of anxiety, such as "because he didn't have any information about the war situation, everything was vague and insecure" (1946/28), is effaced in the revision. When he says to his family, "let's wait and see how it goes" (1946/15), it is followed by the conviction that "it [Japan's defeat] is not long" (1949/6). The anxiety, doubt, or helplessness that a colonial intellectual or any sensible ordinary human being living through wartime would probably have nearly disappears and all that is left is a man with a baseless conviction.

In regard to the erasure of uncertainty and ambiguity, the moment that Hyŏn first learned of liberation, while riding in a bus, deserves attention. In the original, the scene is quite impressive because it portrays only helpless and tired Korean people even despite the news of liberation. Hyŏn feels sadness about the "vacuous faces of miserable fellowmen" (1946/34). It is easy to write that everyone leaped with jubilation at the news of liberation. It is difficult to write, however, without similar actual experience, that the countrymen he met did not have any excitement or response to the news. This anecdote makes an interesting case demonstrating that the joy of liberation, which all Koreans experienced together, was as a matter of fact constructed later as the national narrative. The 1949 book edition, however, exactly meets the expectation of the typical national narrative: when Hyŏn looks around, "eyes sparkling with tears met each other." "Now we are liberated!" cries Hyŏn. "People in the bus burst out crying" (1949/41–42). The moment of liberation had to be dramatic. People should not be helpless or doubt the defeat of the enemy as they were portrayed in the 1946 version, and rather, should be hopeful, convinced Koreans. By rewriting this scene, "Before and After Liberation" becomes one of those typical narratives about the joy of liberation.

"A Hat" as a Token for Non-collaboration

A writer's collaboration during the Japanese colonial period mainly consists of writing and giving lectures. But Hyŏn's lecture in "Before and After Liberation" ironically stresses his resistance. Below I closely look at the writers' rally scene.

At the writers' rally, organized by the Patriotic Association of Writers, Hyŏn leaves early without making an arranged speech. Even without realizing he had left behind his hat, "he sneaked out of the hall, in which all eyes seemed to be casting nets in his direction" (1946/13). He hid himself in a stinky toilet for a while, and "being bareheaded," he "ran to his friend's house at Sŏngbuk-dong where is far from downtown Seoul" (1946/13). Hyŏn does not join in the parade of writers making speeches such as "Japan and Korea are One Body" and "Becoming an Imperial Subject" with the passionate language of empire, even if he was mobilized to attend the rally. It is kind of his last defense to not collaborate with Japanese imperial policy, unlike the other writers at the rally.

The North Korean reprint in 1949 shows a difference from the original in expressing the protagonist's repeated anxieties about punishment or reprehension for leaving the event early. As I briefly showed above, the remark that Hyŏn left his hat behind at the hall was really a trivial detail in the original edition. The 1949 edition refers to "the hat" once again.

> Hyŏn was anxious about whether or not an order to come look for the hat he left at the Civic Center would be given to him from Seoul, either from the News Bureau of the Army, the Police Bureau of the Government General, or from the Patriotic Association of Writers (1949/24).

There is no way that "the News Bureau of the Army" or "the Police Bureau of the Government General" would be involved in managing lost and found items from an event organized by the Patriotic Association of Writers. Thus, Hyŏn's concern about "an order to come look for the hat he left" is absurd. But for Hyŏn personally, it may be a worrisome disobedience to have run

away from the "splendid rally," a gathering of high-ranking officials, without fulfilling his responsibilities. The quotation suggests that the colonial authorities were dreadful for the colonized to the extent that one's small wrongdoing made him immediately fear of the colonial authorities of the News Bureau of the Army or the Police Bureau of the Government General.

The anxiety added in the 1949 edition is not a one-time thing. Before long, Hyŏn is summoned to the police station: "he went to the station concerned about whether it was about the Civic Center Incident" (1949/30). Hyŏn's leaving the Civic Center without giving a speech is here designated as "the Civic Center Incident" as if it were a considerable act of resistance against the order to collaborate. But the reason why the police station summons him is not related at all to the so-called "Civic Center Incident," which is, apparently, not a thing to be labeled as an incident—serious enough to be known to Hyŏn's small country town. Again, he expresses a farfetched concern, "What if the Civic Center Incident came to be a problem now after a good month?" (1949/39), when he receives a telegram hurrying him to come to Seoul, which later turns out to be the news of liberation. The added sentences about his forgotten hat may appear insignificant throughout the entire story. But when reading the 1949 edition, Hyŏn's obsessive anxiety about "the hat" and "the Civic Center Incident" seems to be too overblown and even ridiculous. In the rewritten parts, we find the author's state of mind too meticulous. What made the writer so meticulously obsess about this small detail? Why did he add those sentences that look insignificant and awkward? Clearly, if they are really meaningless, there is no need to add those sentences.

First, the added parts convey the anxiety of the writer who did not cooperate with the Japanese policy and resisted, albeit only in a passive way. His uneasiness is about the colonial rule. But it is less important to note the meticulous anxiety about Japanese colonial power than

the reason why the author expressed it in the revision after three years. The hat Hyŏn left at the hall is minute but tangible evidence of his leaving the event without delivering a congratulatory speech for the Imperial Army. "The Civic Center Incident" Hyŏn labeled indicates the event that Hyŏn attended but with which he did not collaborate to the very last. As a trivial token for his non-collaboration, this Civic Center Incident is repeated in the story. Under the author's uneasiness about the colonial authorities is the hint of his desperation to emphasize his non-collaboration. Why in 1949 did he need to make such revisions to diminish his collaboration acts and emphasize non-collaboration (or resistance)?

It is important here to examine Yi's contemporary discussion about colonial collaboration written in North Korea and its effects on literary creation. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find concrete evidence to confirm to what extent the North Korean policy of punishing former collaborators influenced the cultural policy, or if there were specific guidelines for writing about collaborators in literature. There are only a few studies about the process, north of the thirty-eight parallel, of purging collaborators.[28] It has been widely known among the South Korean public that while South Korea failed to deal with collaboration due to the sabotage of the Syngman Rhee regime, North Korea was successful.[29] On the other hand, there are objections arguing that coming to terms with colonial collaboration in North Korea was not thorough and selectively performed depending upon the political agendas among factions or because of a shortage of certain professions such as scientists and teachers. Such stances on both sides are

[28] Chŏn hyŏnsu, "Haebang chikhu pukhan ŭi kwagŏ ch'ŏngsan (1945~1948)" [Cleansing of the Past in the Immediate After Liberation], *T'aegu sahak* 69 (2002): 1 –28; Kim Chaeung, "Haebang hu pukhan ŭi ch'inilp'a wa ilche yusan ch'ŏkkyŏl" [Eradication of the Pro-Japanese Forces and Japanese Colonial Legacies in Postliberation North Korea], *Han'guk kŭndaesa yŏn'gu* 66 (2013): 182–222; Sin hyŏnggi, "Kigo: kungmin swaesin kyuyul rosŏŭi kwagŏ ch'ŏngsan kwajŏng ŭl pomyŏ" [Opinion: Observing the Process of Cleansing the Past as a Rule for Reforming the Nation], *Tangdae pip'yŏng* (December 2004): 254–71.

[29] For instance, Sŏ Hyŏnmi, "Sisa ch'ojŏm: Namhan e pihae ch'ŏljŏhaettŏn ch'inilp'a chŏngsan" [Current Focus: More Thorough Coming to Terms with the Pro-Japanese Forces in North Korea], *T'ong'il han'guk* (2004): 79–81.

mostly based on journalism and mass media rather than rigorous academic research, which undoubtedly is called for.

In his recent study, Kim Chaeung closely examines the process of making legal regulations regarding punishment of collaborators based on extensive readings of *Sourcebook of the Korean Communist Party* and *Sourcebook on North Korean Relations*. He demonstrates that there were debates and conflicts among North Korean politicians over how to treat former collaborators and it took over a year to enact the law. Also, North Korean definition and punishment of "pro-Japanese" were more generous than ones enacted in South Korea by the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in 1947 or by the National Assembly in 1948.[30] The common assumption that leftists had stricter standards for coming to terms with collaborators needs a careful reexamination. In her book describing North Korean society and everyday life, Suzy Kim points out North Korea's "generous" understanding, owing to some practical considerations, of the coercive nature of the late colonial years. For instance, teachers were forgiven for their problematic past roles involving the colonial apparatus through a narrative of self-criticism because of the shortage of teachers in the workforce.[31]

Studies on the purge of collaborators in North Korea mostly focus on the legal, institutional aspects of the policies—including the definition, punishment, and rehabilitation of collaborators—and their effects, such as social and economic reforms, for example. A sociology of literature should further investigate the influence of the political, legal issues of purging collaborators on cultural policies and practices, as well as how North Korean writers discussed and responded to the purge of collaborators. North Korean literature and film in the

[30] Kim Chaeung, "Eradication of the Pro-Japanese Forces," 196; Chŏn hyŏnsu, "Cleansing of the Past," 45.

[31] Suzy Kim, *Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution*, 1945–1950 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013), 162.

postliberation period customarily portray vicious villains of pro-Japanese forces—landlords and capitalist bourgeoisie exploiting peasant farmers—and have schematic narratives in which awakened people finally defeat the villains.[32] The redaction of Yi T'aejun's "Before and After Liberation," which is quite distinct from those typical narratives, is thus a very rare case to show the progression of changes in the recognition and memory of the colonial period.

The revision of "Before and After Liberation" hints that early North Korean literature took a similar nationalist mode as South Korean literature in reconstructing colonial memory—minimizing colonial collaboration and creating a narrative of resistance. By making a slight change in writing about collaboration and strengthening the nationalist dichotomy between suffering Koreans and Japanese oppressors, such literary representation works to support the myth of North Korean success in dealing with collaboration. The problem of collaboration becomes a simple matter that is only applied to a small number of collaborator-villains.

On a Fine Line Between Feudality and Anticolonial Nationalism

The last feature of the 1949 revision lies in the portrait of a character, Mr. Kim. Kim is an old-fashioned Confucian scholar, "still having a topknot in a traditional Korean style" (1946/8). He is a figure of the *ancien regime*, who wants to serve a king from Yi Dynasty again, and thus falls behind the violently changing postcolonial time. But Kim is favorably described as a patriot and a man of noble character, who has been loyal to the old Chosŏn Korea and declined to follow the colonial policies in spite of hardship in prison and the threats from the Japanese police during the colonial era. Mr. Kim has "never come to Seoul, where the Japanese Government-

[32] Yi T'aejun's "Farmland" (1948) and Yi Kiyŏng's "Earth" (1949) are examples of these typical narratives. In addition to literary works, *My Hometown* (1949)—the first North Korean feature film since liberation—and *Flower Girl* (1972), one of the most famous North Korean revolutionary operas, show the similar narrative structures.

General is located, of his own will since Chosŏn ended except the one time he was dragged to the jail in Seoul during the March First Movement" (1946/20).

Hyŏn's affection and respect for this faithful, old-fashioned man who is falling behind history are conspicuous throughout the story. As represented well in his colonial period work "Taedong River is Frozen" ("P'aegangnaeng," 1938), Yi T'aejun's literature is characterized by a bittersweet nostalgia for the vanishing beauty of the old and a critique of the complicity of the colonial rule and modernization, which give rise to the destruction of the old Korean tradition.[33] In the last scene of "Before and After Liberation," Kim is compared to a scholar of the Qing Dynasty, Wang Guowei, who did not lose his loyalty to the collapsing dynasty to the last. There is plaintive beauty in the portrait of "Kim's peculiar figure, dimly sinking down, like a speck of dust, in the tremendous wave of world history" (1946/34). Although admitting Kim's lofty fidelity, Hyŏn laments that it does not aim for a "greater meaning of life" and the "bigger truth" of revolution, and thereby breaks with Kim who represents Korea's Confucian past. Observing Kim sinking down, the ending of "Before and After Liberation" achieves a critical distance from him, a feudalist and monarchist. The ending shows the author Yi T'aejun's change in thought throughout the entire story and his political activity in solidarity with leftist writers.

The 1949 edition does not show a big change in the affectionate portrait of Mr. Kim. His characteristic personality, such as upright fidelity and spirit and monarchist desire for another King from the Yi Dynasty, remains the same in the redaction. From the leftist perspective, Yi T'aejun's favorable stance toward the feudalistic figure is worrisome. When "Before and After Liberation" was granted a literary award by the Korean Writers' Alliance in 1946, the reviewers

[33] For a significant recent study on Yi T'aejun's antiquarianism, see Janet Poole, *When the Future Disappears: The Modernist Imagination in Late Colonial Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 85–113.

expressed concern about Yi's devotion to pursuing "disappearing things that the author thinks beautiful," which is, in their view, "appearing as a destructive enemy violating freedom of the people as well as Korean literature in a real world."[34] The traditional beauty that Yi pursues is regarded as a destructive enemy threatening the freedom of the people, that is, a feudal legacy to be abolished.

According to North Korean literary policy as discussed above, such nostalgic sentiment about the past, often called feudalism, is to be rejected. Since Kim Il Sung elucidated "lofty realism," literature ought not deal with the gloomy, the pessimistic, and the sentimental. The portrait of a Confucian scholar of the old Chosŏn Dynasty like Kim in "Before and After Liberation" is distinctive from other contemporary literary works found in North Korea—which mostly depict the heroic awakening of workers and farmers, struggles with the Japanese colonial power or landlord classes, and social reforms including land reform. I have demonstrated how Yi T'aejun revised post-1945 narratives in his fiction depending on the political perspective and values of the new North Korean regime. In a similar manner, the author *could* criticize Mr. Kim's anachronistic feudalism, but does not.

Indeed, Yi T'aejun did not relinquish his positive perspective on Kim. Instead, he appends a detailed explanation to the part in which Kim is taken into custody for disobeying the county governor's order to cut off his topknot and attend a lecture propagating the colonial policy of imperialization.

> Who would laugh at his topknot for falling behind the times? A topknot or a traditional *kat* is not an awful thing. *For this old man, a topknot and a kat were the symbols of his lofty fidelity, not compromising with the Japanese rule to the last, albeit in a passive way.* Hyŏn advised Kim to follow their orders, their frantic last-ditch efforts, if only to survive.

[34] The 1946 literary award selection committee of the Korean Writers' Alliance, "1946-nyŏndo munhaksang simsa kyŏngwi kŭp kyŏljŏng iyu" [The Review Process and Grounds for Decision of the 1946 Literary Award], *Munhak* 3 (1947): 55.

> But even as he said this, Hyŏn could not imagine Kim's figure lowering his head, having his headband untied and his topknot cut off in police station yard (1949/37, Italics mine).

The quotation above is the only part that Yi T'aejun rewrote regarding his direct appreciation of Kim. Instead of giving a convenient critique of this obsolete feudalist, the author makes it explicit that the premodern marks of "a topknot or a traditional *kat*" are "the symbols of his lofty fidelity, not compromising with the Japanese rule to the last." In this sense, the author's expression of affection and respect for this old-fashioned man is not a defense for feudality or sentimentality to be denied under the new regime, but an admiration of his noble anti-Japanese spirit to be praised. The author chooses to directly explain the meaning of Kim's anachronistic style to the reader over relinquishing his sincere respect for this man with noble traditional values. I suggest that Yi T'aejun could not compromise his long pursued literary ideal from the colonial period—the beauty of disappearing old values behind history—even if this ideal is at odds with North Korean cultural values. Therefore, he tries to avoid a possible criticism from the state guidelines for the intimations of a feudal legacy, indeed, a relic of a disowned history, by emphasizing a strong nationalist implication to the potential object of criticism.

While the author's favorable tone in depicting Kim has not changed in the revision, he makes his protagonist speak with a more active, didactic, and critical tone toward Kim in the North Korean edition:

> "Sir? I'm sorry to say but your topknot was honorable when you confronted the Japanese. But today we don't need such sentimentality. We should achieve civilization and we should be scientific. Politics should be based on scientific observations and methodologies as in pathological and clinical sciences, not the politics of noble thoughts (1949/61).

With this phrase, I would like to reiterate Hyŏn's last words to Kim, returning to his hometown which happens to be located to the north of the thirty-eighth parallel, "the Soviet Army was stationed there and people's committees held the power under the guidance of General Kim Il

Sung, now it must be different there than here. You will understand when you actually see" (1949/65). Note Hyŏn's phrases, embedded to the last scene, such as "we don't need such sentimentality," "we should achieve civilization," "we should be scientific," "scientific observations and methodologies," "the guidance of General Kim Il Sung," and "people's committees," and so on. I do not need to accentuate how incongruent the conspicuous propagandistic words spoken in front of Kim sound, who is still living in the imagination of Chosŏn Korea, worshipping the Yi Dynasty. The words merely list North Korean clichés. While keeping the description of Mr. Kim unchanged, Hyŏn, as the fictional persona of the author, is described as more active in his critical intent to enlighten Kim. But given the numerous North Korean clichés, Hyŏn's propagandistic speech for the regime is more akin to a mask of propaganda than a sincere effort to persuade.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how a solidifying Cold War state system worked on literary creation by exploring Yi T'aejun's physical border crossing and his two different versions of "Before and After Liberation," published respectively on both sides of the thirty-eighth parallel. Yi T'aejun's subtle recalibration in this autobiographical fiction testifies to the state pressure working on a writer's mind, literature, and in particular, the representation of colonial collaboration and resistance. Also, through the revisions of "Before and After Liberation," Yi shows an effort to continue pursuing his long-held literary ideal, the beauty of disappearing old values, that is at odds with the North Korean literary policy, while adapting to state policy at the same time.

Through this chapter, I have aimed to show the ways in which contemporary scholars of Korean literature project our perception of the Cold War to reading and interpreting the postliberation period, its literature, and everyday people's lives. In an era of strict state control, a writer like Yi T'aejun challenged the rigid guidelines through his subtle writings, and even at the instances when he was unable to do so, the ruptures and anxieties found in the texts reveal the internal conflicts Yi, and writers like him, faced.

Chapter Four
Myths of Collaboration, Communist Spies, and Red Love: Dubious Portraits of New National Enemies in Early South Korean Literature

From Collaborators to Communists: The Making of New National Enemies

Since its formation on May 10, 1948, the South Korean Constitutional Assembly quickly launched to legislate the punishment of "pro-Japanese collaborators and national betrayers." The reemergence of the issue of punishing collaborators reflects the extent to which Koreans thought it was necessary to deal with the colonial past in the nation-building process. The Anti-National Acts Law, promulgated in September of the year, called for the organization of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts (*Panminjok haengwi t'ŭkpyŏl chosa wiwŏnhoe*), thereby having independent authority of its own investigations and prosecution.[1] As I have discussed in the Introduction, however, the activities of the Special Committee faced obstacles orchestrated by the Syngman Rhee government, whose institutions consisted of a large number of former colonial personnel. The gist of the sabotage was to label the assemblymen who worked for the Special Committee as communists, who agitated Korean society. While aggressive anticommunist campaigns got underway, the Special Committed was incapacitated de facto in mid 1949.

It was June 1949 when the violent anticommunist crackdown reached its peak, which a Korean historian has called the "June Blitz" (*yuwŏl kongse*).[2] It is important to note a separate event that happened during the June Blitz. Simultaneous to the state-led, aggressive obstruction

[1] As for the detailed process of enacting the Anti-National Acts Law, Yi Kangsu, *Panmin tŭgwi yŏn'gu* [A Study of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts] (Seoul: Nanam ch'ulp'an, 2003); Hŏ Chong, *Panmin tŭgwi ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong* [Organization and Activities of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts] (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004).

[2] Pak Myŏngnim, *Han'guk chŏnjaeng ŭi palbal kwa kiwŏn* [The Outbreak and Origin of the Korean War] vol. 2 (Seoul: Nanam ch'ulp'an, 1996).

of the Special Committee's activities, the National Guidance Alliance (*Kungmin podo yŏnmaeng;* NGA) was organized. The NGA was designed to supervise and direct former communists who recanted and to embrace them as citizens of the nation. Since organizing the NGA in June 1949, strong encouragement of recantation followed, including advertisements of the so-called "self-surrender period" (*chasu chugan*) aimed at South Korean Labor Party members in October 1949.[3] Continuing massive anticommunist propaganda and state thought-control drew public attention from the issue of collaboration to the recantation of communists and the state's bringing them back into the fold. Those who had once affiliated with a communist organization were reconsidered to be those "who are too ashamed to face people in public," which was previously used to describe pro-Japanese collaborators immediately after liberation.

The formation and dissolution of these separate organizations, the Special Committee and the NGA, happened promptly after the 1948 founding of South Korea, in which "pro-Japanese collaborators" as the national enemy since liberation had been replaced by the new enemy of "communists" and by which the new anticommunist South Korean regime was established.

This chapter focuses on the literary representation of the transition of the national enemies: the disappearance of "pro-Japanese" collaborators and the emergence of the communist villains. In the immediate postliberation Korea, "pro-Japanese" figures often played a major villain role in literary and cultural products. As the issue of coming to terms with collaborators came to lose its significance after the 1949 cessation of the legal procedures on collaborators, did the portrait of "pro-Japanese" characters vanish from literature and the public sphere? Or, if the issue of collaborators had been still dealt with, what were the intentions and ways of depicting the already bygone subject for the moment? Also, in what ways did literature start portraying the

[3] Kim Kyŏngmi, "Tanchŏng surip hu chŏnhyang changch'i wa chŏnhyangjadŭl ŭi naerŏt'ibŭ" [Devices and Narratives of Conversion after the Establishment of Republic of Korea], *Pan'gyo ŏmun yŏn'gu* 34 (2013): 283–318.

new enemy, communists? In order to answer these questions, I pay attention to the two canonized writers in South Korean literary history: Kim Tongni and Yi Kwangsu. I look at how these authors made national enemies of the past and present vanish or stand out through their literary works. The canonization of the two writers implies not only their literary achievements, but also the nation's approval of their political inclinations—corresponding with the anticommunist state ideology or having no affiliation with communism at all. Did these writers, who received literary and political acknowledgement in South Korean history, smoothly and successfully limn the emerging national enemy as this forced ideological transition proceeded?

In this chapter, I trace the discrepancies and tension in the literary description of two subject matters: colonial collaboration, or the colonial past, which had to be forgotten; and anticommunism, a pressing task to achieve. The main subjects of analysis are two newspaper serial novels, *Liberation* (*Haebang*, September 1, 1949–February 16, 1950) by Kim Tongni and *Seoul* (*Sŏul*, 1950; exact dates unknown) by Yi Kwangsu, both of which had been forgotten in Korean literary studies until very recently. I will demonstrate that early South Korean writers did not know how to describe anticommunist themes and tried to find a proper way to portray communist villains. In the process, the unclear portraits of the national enemies often conflicted or distorted the apparent anticommunist theme.

Kim Tongni (金東里; 1913–1995) is one of the most influential writers and literary critics in the South Korean literary world and was a well-known proponent of so-called pure literature. As a budding writer, Kim did not tarnish his name by collaborating with Japan in the late colonial period, and was able to play a leading role in the postliberation literary world. This was in contrast to many other former leading writers who were not free from the accusation of being collaborators. Kim participated in founding the Writers' Youth Association (*Ch'ŏngnyŏn*

munhakka hyŏphoe), which took the lead in the South Korean literary world after 1948, when many noted writers affiliated with the Chosŏn Writers' Alliance (*Chosŏn munhakka tongmaeng*)—allegedly a group of communist writers due to its connection with SKLP—and fled north or recanted by joining in the NGA. Kim argues for the revival of pure creative passion for literature, which had been long suffocated by politics. However, Kim Tongni's pure literature functions to support and conform to the anticommunist logic against the (mostly leftist) critique of the government.[4]

While advocating pure literature, Kim Tongni started serializing a new novel *Liberation* in the *Tong-a Daily*, which was quite unlike pure literature in the sense that the novel fully elaborates contemporary political events as its main conflict—antagonism between the left- and right-wing youth organizations and the resultant murder cases. For some reason, *Liberation* had never been published in book form nor discussed in academia until literary scholar Kim Chuhyŏn discovered and republished it in 2002. In his annotations, Kim Chuhyŏn points out that Kim Tongni's "psychological pressure" to publish the novel as a book after completing serialization was possibly due to the fact that the novel "takes a close-up at sensitive contemporary issues of coming to terms with pro-Japanese collaborators, and division and contestation between leftists and the conservatives."[5] It is more accurate to say that the hesitation to republish *Liberation* lies in how ambiguously, or questionably, the contemporary political issues are dealt with in the work rather than in the sensitivity of the issues.

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[4] Yi Wŏnjo, Kim Tongni's contemporary critic, earlier pointed out the political features of Kim's pure literature, as did later literary scholars like Sin Hyŏnggi. Yi Wŏnjo, "Hŏgu wa chinsil" [Fiction and Truth], *Seoul Daily*, September 1, 1946; Sin Hyŏnggi, "Sunsu ŭi chŏngch'e: haebanggi ŭi Kim Tongni" [The True Meaning of Pure Literature: Kim Tongni in the Postliberation Period], *Haebanggi sosŏl yŏn'gu* [A Study of Novels in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 1992), 185–205.

[5] Kim Chuhyŏn, "Charyo sogae: "Haebang" i chinin ŭimi" [Introduction: The Significance of *Liberation*], *Ŏmun nonch'ong* 37 (2002): 253–4.

Yi Kwangsu (李光洙; 1892–1950?), who was acclaimed as the founder of modern Korean literature and as one of the most famous nationalist leaders in the early colonial period, ended up gaining fame as one of the most passionate pro-Japanese intellectuals in modern Korean history. In his autobiography *My Confession* published in 1948, Yi expressed both repentance and justification of his collaboration.[6] After its publication Yi was under the investigation by the Special Committee. However, Yi was not prosecuted because the Special Committee stopped functioning in due course. Yi's novel, *Seoul*, which he started writing after he cleared his name as a national criminal, completely effaces his past problem of collaboration and nicely works on making a new enemy of communists. But the serialization of *Seoul* was suspended for an unknown reason and the novel was never discussed in literary scholarship, except in a couple of essays written after 2010.[7] The early termination of the serial is an apparent reason for the oblivion of the work. But more importantly, I will demonstrate how Yi's anticommunism is presented in an undesirable way that betrayed the original state creed.

By reading the two under-researched novels, I will trace how literature aimed to accommodate the Cold War and state ideology but failed to do so. I first examine the ways in which the issue of coming to terms with former collaborators and the colonial experience are represented (or not) in those works. Then, I focus on the ambiguous representations of communists, mainly as related to their sexuality, as both dangerous and attractive. I show the difficulties and confusions that the writers experienced in the transitional period of nation-

[6] For further discussion, see Chapter One.

[7] Since *Sun Daily*, or *T'aeyang sinmun*, is currently not available, the exact time and duration of the serialization of *Seoul* are unknown. In this chapter, I use a version from *Yi Kwangsu chŏnjip* [*The Complete Works of Yi Kwangsu*] (Seoul: Samjungdang, 1971) as the main text for analysis.

building and how the failures, or ambiguities, of portraying desirable characters effaced the novels from South Korean literary history, despite the writers' reputation.

Constructing a Myth of Collaboration and Its Discontent: Kim Tongni's *Liberation*

Yi Chang-u, the main protagonist of *Liberation*, is a professor at a women's college and a leader and mentor for younger members of the Association of Korean Youth (Taehan ch'ŏngnyŏn hoe), a right-wing youth organization that actually existed in the early years of South Korea. The narrative begins with him answering a midnight phone call informing him that the president of the association, his friend U Sŏnggŭn, had been killed. A left-wing organization is immediately identified as the group behind the murder, and thus the members of the organization vow to take revenge. Eventually, they capture one of the alleged killers who was involved in one of the leftist groups. During their interrogation, unfortunately, the suspect is accidentally died as the result of a heart attack. The novel ends with a scene in which Yi, who is not responsible for the death but in charge as a leader, appears before the police surrounding the association's headquarters. Setting the serious conflict between the left- and right-wing youth organizations as its main event, Kim Tongni weaves the stories of Chang-u and the people around him: the best friend of his adolescent years and his current ideological rival, Ha Yunch'ŏl; Ha's sister and Chang-u's old lover Mikyŏng; the father-in-law of the late U and an infamous pro-Japanese collaborator Sim Chaeyŏng; and a weekly newspaper publisher and villainous swindler Sin Ch'ŏlsu, among others. I pay particular attention to the latter two antagonists—Sim Chaeyŏng and Sin Ch'ŏlsu—because they are the characters who best display the author's strategic purpose of justifying colonial collaboration.

One of the peculiar features of *Liberation*, compared to other contemporary Korean novels, is that it takes considerable time to excuse those who were accused of collaboration with Japan. As I have discussed earlier in Chapter One, it was not unusual for a writer's fictional persona to disclose his uncomfortable state of mind, mixed with penitence and justification, in autobiographical writings mostly by those who had formerly collaborated with Japan's colonial policies. But no one among these former collaborators in autobiographical writings was as immensely influential as was Sim Chaeyŏng as portrayed in *Liberation*. Sim is a figure who once "achieved a brilliant name as a nationalist thinker and public leader."[8] Playing an active role as a respected national leader and a prime member of the Korean independence movement, he was arrested by the Imperial Japanese Police for supplying military chest to the Korean Provisional Government (1919–1945) located in Shanghai. He then betrayed the nation in prison and ascended to the high position of the "chairman of the Korean League for Total National Mobilization (*Kungmin ch'ongnyŏk yŏnmaeng* in Korean; *Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen renmei* in Japanese) and the president of Patriotic Association for Writers (*Munin pogukhoe*)."[9] Among actual historical figures, Sim could be almost comparable with a figure like Ch'oe Rin or Yi Kwangsu, both of whom were respected nationalist leaders and some of the prime proponents of the March First Movement in 1919, but became ardent collaborators in the late colonial years. Sim's acts of collaboration are dramatically described to the degree of "having been diligently published a statement of repentance, an oath for the society, and confession of other crimes," and finally declared a statement of conversion.[10] Since such statements of conversion were mostly

[8] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 11, 1949.

[9] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 13, 1949.

[10] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 12, 1949.

announced by leading communist figures who were imprisoned in colonial Korea, a right-wing nationalist like Sim in *Liberation* would not typically have published such a thing. Sim is definitely a fictional character who provides all types of examples of colonial collaboration in Korean history in the most extreme and dramatic way, regardless of ideological inclination.

When Sim first meets the protagonist Yi Chang-u, he tells Yi, "Everybody may call me pro-Japanese," but "there was not a single day when I did not think of my country and my compatriots."[11] After Korea's liberation, Sim wants to "do anything to help this nation and national independence" and invests money in founding the college where Yi works.[12] The narrator raises reasonable questions of "how one could wholeheartedly think of the nation today, although he chanted something like *naesŏn ilch'e* (*naisen ittai*; Japan and Korea are one body) or *kukch'e myŏngjing (kokutai meichō*; clarifying the Japanese national body) just until yesterday? How sincere were his *naesŏn ilch'e* and *kukch'e myŏngjing* were, and how sincere is his wish for the nation and independence now?"[13] The narrator does not answer the questions and merely adds "I leave these questions to philosophers studying human nature." He confirms, however, that "Sim's [current] wish to help the nation and the national independence is genuine."[14]

There have been two different arguments since 1945 to redefine former fervent collaborators with the Japanese empire as actual nationalists. The first such argument was made to show that collaboration was an inevitable choice for the Korean nation even if it turned out to be a misjudgment or failure later. The speeches of Yi Kwangsu and other leading intellectuals to encourage young Korean students to volunteer for the Imperial Army make the case of arguing

[11] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 29, 1949.

[12] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 19, 1949.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

for collaboration for the nation. It is a claim that students ought to volunteer in order to achieve a glorious status and equal rights for Koreans as imperial subjects. This paradoxical logic of collaboration for the nation is what Timothy Brook designates "collaborationist nationalism" in the context of the occupied wartime China.[15] Brook sees the collaboration for national salvation as one of the ideological claims of Chinese nationalism, which failed to compete with the nationalism of resistance.[16]

The second apologia for collaboration was made to emphasize its forced nature and accordingly argue that it was not a genuine collaboration but a disguised one. By foregrounding forced and coercive situations, this argument appeals to popular sympathy and appeases public indignation more than the first, rather audacious, claim of collaboration for the nation. Sim Chaeyŏng's depiction in *Liberation*, which is "a man crying 'Long live the Emperor' who had never forgotten Korean people for a moment and who loved Korea in his heart,"[17] is closer to making a belated excuse for a disguised collaboration rather making a bold claim of nationalism that a figure like Yi Kwangsu claimed.

The discussion of collaboration in this novel, interestingly and problematically, does not merely continue as a passive, apologetic appeal to sympathy. This novel further makes an argument that all Koreans under colonial rule were collaborators and, therefore, did not have the right to condemn someone else. This is what I call a collaboration myth corresponding to the "resistantialist myth," French historian Henry Rousso called in his study of postwar France and Nazi collaboration.

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[15] Timothy Brook, "Collaborationist Nationalism in Occupied Wartime China," in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, ed. Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 159–190.

[16] Ibid., 186.

[17] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, January 5, 1950.

> "People talk a lot about a pro-Japanese, but who could accuse a pro-Japanese? … Who didn't collaborate with Japan directly or indirectly among those who had remained in Korea, and who could guarantee that people who came back from oversea were all immaculate? If a punishment was to be conducted, it should be a death penalty for the gravest case and should be a six-month probation for the lightest. Then, only people who are not sentenced to the six-month probation could participate in founding a nation. *Is it possible to found a nation only with ten or twenty people?"*[18]

Sim's claim that nearly all Koreans (except perhaps ten or twenty people) directly or indirectly collaborated with the Japanese empire is an exact antipode of the myth that all colonized Koreans had bravely resisted the brutal Japanese rule to the end. However, both are merely the flipsides of a simplified nationalist dichotomy that does not take into consideration ambiguities and complexities of the binary of collaboration and resistance.

Henry Rousso designates the tendency to exaggerate the number and scope of the occupied French people who resisted the Nazis as a "resistantialist myth."[19] As is well-known, public education in contemporary Korea demonstrates a prolonged attempt to circulate such resistantialist myth. In Korean historiography and public discourse, there has been a persistent dichotomy between a majority of good Koreans who suffered under brutal Japanese colonialism and resisted it to the last, and a very small number of evil, morally corrupt collaborators. It was not until the late 1990s that scholars started challenging this simple dichotomy of resistance and collaboration and paying attention to the gray areas in everyday life during the colonial period.[20]

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[18] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, December 30, 1949. Italics are mine.

[19] Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[20] There have been variety and number of cultural studies since 2000 that share this critical stance on the strong nationalist binarism in Korean historiography. One of those trends is an academic interest in colonial modernity and everyday life in colonial Korea. See Kwŏn Bodrae, *Yŏnae ŭi sidae: 1920-yŏndae ch'oban ŭi munhwa wa yuhaeng* [The Age of Love: Culture and Trend in the Early 1920s] (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏn'gu, 2003); Ch'ŏn Chŏnghwan, *Kŭndae ŭi ch'aek ilkki: tokcha ŭi t'ansaeng kwa Han'guk kŭndae munhak* [Reading in the Modern Time: The Origin of Modern Readers and Modern Korean Literature] (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2003); and Yi Kyŏnghun, *Oppa ŭi t'ansaeng: Han'guk kŭndae munhak ŭi p'ungsoksa* [The Origin of "Oppa": Cultural History of Modern Korean Literature] (Seoul: Munhak kwa chisŏngsa, 2003), to name a few.

As much as it cannot be true that Koreans' colonial experiences were homogeneous—all were resistant against the colonization—a myth of collaboration also has no credibility. A resistantialist myth clearly aims to restore national dignity and stability by erasing the "shameful" national past.[21] A myth of collaboration, on the other hand, intends to belittle differences in degree and ambiguity of what is called collaboration. The attempt to overlook past wrongdoings has been often embellished in the name of unifying the Korean nation in the critical time of nation-building.

The mythmaking through Sim Chaeyŏng's apologetic, later rather defiant, voice further argues that acts of collaboration are, as a matter of fact, ironical evidence of great nationalists:

> There is a person who truly loved the nation and became a collaborator without enduring the abominably cruel torture. On the other hand, there is a person who was eager to collaborate but didn't have a proper opportunity. Or, a person had immensely collaborated but his collaboration was not known to public because he was a nobody. These cases are not just one or two, but everywhere in real life. Then how could we decide to purge a collaborator *based on only a few ostensible standards?* … What if those who were severely tortured by the police were mostly the previous patriots and nationalists? … What if they were tortured for the very reason that they were patriots and nationalists? If one condemns those who became living corpses due to torture, I think it is because *s/he doesn't understand the true nature of this problem.*[22]

In the quotation above, Sim claims that people do not know "the true nature of the problem" of defining or purging collaborators. Since he repeatedly uses the contrasting words of true and ostensible, his claim is likely to give an impression that there is something true underneath the surface of this issue that people easily overlook. But what Sim says under the rhetoric of the true nature of the problem is no more than an emphasis of the fact that he was formerly an enthusiastic independence movement activist, and hence he was forced to collaborate under the

[21] Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe," *Daedalus* 121, no. 4 (1992): 83-118.

[22] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, January 5, 1950. Italics are mine.

brutal violence. The "true nature of the problem" is, he argues, that collaborators were formerly patriots. It is partly true that there were quite a few cases, among previously independence movement leaders, which ended up being "national betrayers," even vehement ones, under the coercion. However, it can never be concluded that all nationalist leaders who were arrested betrayed the nation.

In order to downplay his own transgressions and embellish his own national past, Sim further argues that most ordinary Korean people who did not collaborate merely did not have a proper chance to do so or they were not important people whose acts were known to public. This kind of argument could not be claimed easily by former collaborators, considering the possibility of indignant response from the public. Those who are accused for being collaborators usually lower themselves and seek forgiveness and sympathy in their narratives of repentance, as I have previously shown several examples. Kim Tongni's own personal history—that is free from the accusation of collaboration—make it possible for him to write such a brazen claim. Yet I leave further conjectures about the relevance of the author's personal history to this unusual argumentation to the readers, because it is not a sort of thing to be proved.

In *Liberation*, ordinary Korean masses are described as opportunists who secretly desire collaboration with Japan. They first "seethed with condemnation and derision of Sim's defection."[23] But as many start going down the same road (of collaboration), they easily follow Sim, "competing with each other to win the trust of the Japanese," and "power struggles arose even over collaboration."[24] Later, as the signs of Japan's defeat become apparent, people try to wash their hands by denouncing Sim again. While all were busy withdrawing themselves, Sim

[23] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 12, 1949.

[24] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 13, 1949.

kept walking the road to self-destruction waving the flag of the Imperial Japanese Army, which made readers feel the ongoing tragedy and pity his impending collapse.

Lastly, the completion of a collaboration myth in the novel is achieved by discrediting the criticism of collaborators. The most villainous antagonist in *Liberation* is not the notorious former collaborator Sim but Sin Ch'ŏlsu, the editor in chief of *Liberation Weekly* (*Haebang chubo*). He is a character who wants to join a left-wing association for the purpose of seeing as many women as possible, even trying to rape a woman (Mikyŏng, Chang-u's old lover) by intimidating her about disclosing her brother's crime. His weekly newspaper has a good reputation and is sold out because its content meets the "popular demand for purging pro-Japanese national betrayers and disclosing wicked profiteers."[25] Sin makes his first publication a special edition of a pro-Japanese entrepreneur who was being interrogated by the police at the moment. The special edition "aims to disclose and denounce national betrayers and wicked profiteers on the surface, however its genuine goal is not like that."[26] Sin's "true purpose" of writing a critique of collaborators is to threaten or blackmail other collaborators who are afraid that Sin's next target for critique will be them and to make them donate money to his newspaper in the name of "cultural and social business, or helping refugees or whatever."[27] Sin is known as a promising journalist pursuing social justice outwardly, but actually he is no more than a swindler. The negative portrait of Sin suggests a possibility that the true purpose of critique of collaboration does not lie in the righteous and ethical causes usually argued, such as coming to terms with the colonial past and restoring proud national consciousness. By raising doubt about

[25] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, November 6, 1949.

[26] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, November 16, 1949.

[27] Ibid.

the critical force toward former collaborators, the novel works to discredit the critique of collaborators. Not only by defending collaborators' stance borrowed from Sim's voice but also by damaging the intention of the critique of collaboration, this novel strengthens the myth of collaboration, which ultimately argues that no one is qualified to punish others for collaboration.

But the mythmaking, which has been conducted in several ways as discussed above, repeatedly confronts resistance and repulsion against it in the very novel. Resistance appears through the responses of the protagonist Yi Chang-u to the myth. Having a fastidious and righteous nature, Yi is a well-respected leader of right-wing youths, an ideal figure of postliberation Korean society, which the author Kim Tongni elaborately creates. Although he is associated with a right-wing group, his belief is neither blind nor based on merely friendly relations, as in the case of other right-wing figures in the novel. His judgment is based more on rational thinking and humanism rather than merely on ideological leanings.

Yi's main conflict in the narrative is caused by the favors shown him by the collaborator Sim, such as inviting Yi to dinner through Sim's son-in-law U, proposing to provide a residence for bachelor Yi in Sim's fine house, and suggesting to be on friendly terms with Sim's youngest daughter. Reluctantly visiting Sim's house because of his close friend U's last request that has made before he died, Yi cannot focus on the conversation with Sim. Yi is "fretting about his positioning in a relationship with a former collaborator rather than listening to what Sim is saying to him. The problem is whether he should accept or refuse Sim's kindness." The thing is that "he feels uncomfortable for being indebted to a collaborator like Sim."[28] Yi wonders whether "he should have refused Sim's offer on the spot if a collaborator would be such an

[28] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 29, 1949.

unforgivable villain. He shouldn't have come to his house in the beginning."[29] As in the above phrases, Yi feels immensely uncomfortable from the outset as to why this infamous collaborator wants to meet him. Even Sim's son-in-law, U, similarly feels this uncomfortable state of mind when he first delivers Sim's suggestion to Yi. About Sim's offer for staying at his house, Yi makes up his mind not to accept Sim's offer: "The act [to move to Sim's house] would first give a social disadvantage to Yi, and is not an honorable thing to do in terms of the greater cause."[30] There is no further specific comment on what a possible disadvantage is or the cause he considers here, but the reader can assume that a former colonial collaborator like Sim is a pariah among the Korean society then and such treatment of a former collaborator is accepted as a righteous thing to do.

Here, Yi's feelings about Sim are described ambiguously and as hard to judge rather than based on clear judgment or emotions, such as instant repulsion or hatred. He feels "deep sympathy for Sim's humane aspects but there is something doubtful in his mind."[31] Yi's response to this famous collaborator shows mixed feelings with sympathy, discontent, and concerns for other people's judgment or the violation of the social honor. The doubt about Sim bothers Yi throughout the entire narrative and makes him reach the careful decision that it is not right to move into Sim's house—although he later impulsively changes his mind.

In their second meeting, Yi and Sim have a long discussion, spanning five serializations (117–121), on the current issue of collaborators, in most of which Sim elucidates his apologetic and argumentative stance on the collaborators that I have previously discussed. Up to the

[29] Ibid.

[30] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, December 22, 1949.

[31] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, September 29, 1949.

moment of the discussion, Yi Chang-u has had difficulty firmly refusing Sim's suggestion, feeling both doubt and pity at the same time. But when he hears Sim's claim—how it is possible to do state business when only ten or twenty people are not guilty of collaboration—his doubt grows.

> Whenever the issue of the so-called pro-Japanese collaborators were brought into question, they have often said that there was no one who was not a collaborator as one who remained within the country, that people who paid taxes to the Japan's colonial authorities were alike to collaborate with them, that therefore there would be no one remained if we punish collaborators in a proper way, and that there would be remained only small number of people who returned from overseas, something like that. Those who speak such things are all intent to deny punishing collaborators. … Yi doesn't want to agree with such opinions that all Koreans have to be punished if proper punishment should be inflicted because all Koreans were collaborators. Yi firmly believes the fact that all Koreans were under the Japanese rule has to discern from the saying that all Koreans voluntarily, and actively, dreamed personal success in their lives by flattering, collaborating with, and contributing to the Japanese colonial force. How could it be same to unwillingly pretend to collaborate under oppression and threat as to voluntarily collaborate in order for one's own status and power? Besides, Yi might understand if apologists made an excuse or give generous interpretation for the collaborators, but how dare they who are so-called commonly recognized collaborators say such thing themselves? Whenever he hears one saying that there was not much difference among people, and there would be remained only ten or twenty or so that are qualified to attend to the nation building, Yi is used to feel indignation and hostility toward them.[32]

The long citation above demonstrates to what extent Yi is seriously pondering how to deal with the collaborators. First, ambiguously expressed emotions of qualms, doubts, uneasiness become "indignation and hostility" when "collaborators" justify themselves. Yi casts doubt on Sim's argument that he pretended to collaborate due to torture: "How someone could tell a lie in such an active and passionate way if he was only forced to do so?"[33] On the other hand, Yi thinks that "there is no reason to despise and censure him not to mention to take pity upon him."[34] What Yi

[32] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, January 1, 1950.

[33] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, January 7, 1950.

[34] Ibid.

feels—the difficulty to judge, the strong antipathy to the collaboration myth, and his qualms, uneasiness, and pity—represents the process of thought among Korean public facing the conundrum of the former collaborators since the 1945 liberation.

In the novel, Yi does not reach the complete forgiveness and embracement of former collaborators to the end. In his final thought on the matter, Yi "felt intolerably heavy in the chest." He laments, "Ah, fragile man, pity man! Complicated, subtle, cruel, heartless, ugly, but beautiful, precious, and heartrending human!"[35] In a tight balance between indictment and forgiveness toward collaborators, he decides to avoid a firm conclusion. However, by underlining the fragile, pathetic human nature, the narrative portrays him as leaning toward embracing the collaborators who made such errors because they were fragile, imperfect human beings. Although Yi does not show any such embracement outwardly, his forgiving stance is insinuated in the narrative through the emphasis of double human natures—beautiful and precious on the one hand, and fragile and weak on the other.

However, I should point out that in spite of the inclination to forgive in the narrative and the amount of space for dedicated to claiming the unavoidability of collaboration, the protagonist's continuous repulsion and doubts over collaboration make readers hesitate to fully forgive Sim. The collaboration myth, which the novel has constructed throughout the entire narrative, is questioned by the protagonist's unresolved doubts. The author intends to portray Yi as a considerate, humane, and ideal character, not as ideologically-driven. By making his qualms appear in the narrative repeatedly and by revealing his continuous resistance to acceptance of the myth, the narrative fails to endorse complete forgiveness and reconciliation for the collaborators.

[35] Ibid.

Remapping Asia: Effacing Japan and Fraternizing China in *Seoul*

Now I turn to my attention to Yi Kwangsu's newspaper serial novel, *Seoul*, one of the contemporary novels to Kim Tongni's *Liberation*, which started to be serialized after the de facto dissolution of the Special Committee, and look into how the issues of the colonial past and collaboration construct the narrative. Yi Kwangsu spoke about his acts of collaboration in his autobiography, *My Confession*, which was written in August 1948 and published in December of the same year. The legislation of the Anti-National Acts Law was discussed and enacted in September 1948. According to a writer who was Yi's contemporary, there was "a public voice or request wishing to hear repentance or confession of collaboration" at the time, and because the title sounded like such a popularly-anticipated confession, the book was "sold like hot cakes."[36] Yi Kwangsu was arrested for anti-nationalist activities on February 7, 1949. But eventually the Special Committee decided not to prosecute him in August 1949, which is after the Committee was incapacitated.

Yi started writing *Seoul*, serialized in the *Sun Daily* in 1950, after he was exonerated of treason. The novel makes clear its chronological setting as the period immediately after Shanghai's fall to the Chinese Communist Party in May 1949 during the Chinese Civil War. Thus, it is apparently set just after the founding of the South Korean regime. However, by designating the contemporary time as only vaguely "since liberation," the novel does not recognize a clear demarcation of the time before and after the establishment of Republic of Korea.

[36] Kim Tong'in, "Ch'unwŏn ŭi 'Na'" [On Yi Kwangu's Autobiography], *Sinch'ŏnji* (March 1948): 120–22. See also Yi Chungyŏn, *Ch'aek, sasŭl esŏ p'ulida: haebanggi ch'aek ŭi munhwasa* [Books, Unshackled: A Cultural History of Books in the Postliberation Period] (Seoul: Hyean, 2005), 340–45.

Seoul is an incomplete novel, having been suspended after being serialized about fifty times, even before the development of its main fictional events. But the work fully reveals the drastic changes of culture and morals and the rise and fall of classes in the postliberation city of Seoul. It also illustrates the author Yi Kwangsu's critical stance on the changes. Throughout the novel, Yi's critical voice mainly targets the contemporary inclination toward Western cultures shown by one of the heroines, Insun, and her friends. In contrast to the cultural tendency, a sincere and ideal brother and sister among the friends—Kyuwŏn and Ŭmjŏn—and their father, a respected college professor Hanjong, strongly advocate indigenous, authentic Korean culture. A group of young college students gather for a Christmas party, which is negatively depicted by the narrator as one of the typical examples of new, rootless, foreign culture. At the party, they meet some interesting people, such as a Korean-Chinese refugee Sŏ Pyŏngdal, who soon turns out to be a communist spy, a Chinese woman Ho Sogŏm, both of whom came to Seoul from Shanghai right before its fall under to communist control, and two Korean women, celebrities of society, who are well educated and westernized but pursue Korean culture and spirit after the realization of the value of the Korean tradition. Through conversations and subsequent acquaintance with them, the Korean youths come to develop a consciousness of precious Korean tradition and culture.

To the young generation portrayed in *Seoul*, which is keenly conscious of the current sociopolitical situations of the peninsula, the old empire of Japan never looms large. The issue of collaboration, which was of great importance just a year ago to postcolonial Korean public as well as the author Yi personally, is absent from the narrative. In addition to the absence of attention to collaboration, the colonial experience itself is rarely narrated and only in such as way

that it emphasizes the oppression of Korean culture and the painstaking efforts needed to protect the cultural traditions.[37]

The colonial experience is brought up in the novel in several episodes. A self-introduction of a female student at the party is applauded by the audience: "I'm learning Korean literature at Y University. I chose Korean literature because I wanted to learn and use Korean, which we desperately wanted to do but couldn't during the Japanese colonial period."[38] The audience is sincerely moved by her remark, since "all of them have experienced being punished for using our language or at least have seen a friend being punished at school."[39] These bitter recollections of the cultural oppression by the brutal Japanese rule are again emphasized in the scene in which two main protagonists perform a traditional Korean dance. The traditional dance that the female protagonist, Ŭmjŏn, and her brother, Kyuwŏn, learned from their father, Hanjong, has "grand and bitter taste," hides "the sadness of the loss of the nation," and reflects "the influence of the time [the colonial rule]."[40] Hanjong "secretly strives to preserve national arts that were withering under Japanese rule." He learned to play Korean traditional zither, to dance, and to sing, and taught these things to his children. "It was also an assiduous effort then."[41] The colonial period is viewed as a time when Korean tradition had been lost, and the viewpoint works to stress a recurring theme of the novel—the importance of Korean tradition and a warning about the infiltration of Western cultures. Colonized Koreans are always identified with

[37] Other than that, there are some references on the Japanese style in ways of speaking or culture like "vowing in a Japanese style," etc.

[38] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," *Yi Kwangsu chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Yi Kwangsu] vol. 7 (Seoul: Samchungdang, 1971), 518.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 562.

[41] Ibid., 563.

those who suffered from a loss of the culture and language and yet struggled to protect them. Political or economic exploitation (other than in cultural fields), or any other colonial memories, never appear in the narrative.

The "invasion of Japan [to the Korean peninsula]" has been mentioned only once for an obvious purpose—in order to highlight Korea's camaraderie with China: "Koreans have had respect and affection for the Chinese from olden times. In the memory of our nation, the Chinese have always had fine culture and kind hearts."[42] Or, "all the more, the Chinese have been our best friends among any others in the world for about forty years since we were invaded by Japan." The Chinese and Koreans feel each other are "friends who are able to open our hearts" even "at a subconscious levels."[43] The favorable description of China and Chinese people in *Seoul* may surprise those who know the author's stance on China during the colonial period. For more than fifty years since Chosŏn Korea's transition to the modern era in the late nineteenth century, through the first decade of the twentieth century—also known as the age of the Enlightenment—to the Japanese colonial period, Korean intellectuals pursuing western civilizations wanted to imitate and learn from Japan, the symbol of the success in the early westernization. In the shift of the hegemonic center from China to Japan in Asia, China, whose cultural influence predominated in the pre-modern period, was newly considered to be behind in terms of the advances of modern civilization. As Andre Schmid points out, China became an example of a nation lacking civilization in the process of decentering the old Asian configuration and remapping of Asia.[44]

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[42] Ibid., 536.

[43] Ibid.

[44] See Andre Schmid, "Decentering the Middle Kingdom and Realigning the East," *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 56–60.

The noticeable change of Yi Kwangsu's viewpoint on China and the Chinese in *Seoul* shows that there was a postliberation shift in China's status again in the process of decentering Japan. Reclaiming China's crucial status comes with an emphasis on Korean tradition. By bringing up the history of the cultural exchanges between China and Korea that had long been ignored, respect for and intimacy with China were restored.

The speeches of the main fictional characters in *Seoul* are there to emphasize Chinese and Korean solidarity. A Christmas party of Korean college students unexpectedly includes a couple of table speeches by two guests from China and a response to them from a Korean female student. A Korean-Chinese Sŏ Pyŏngdal says "China is my warm second homeland and Chinese are my beloved, second compatriots."[45] This consciousness of brotherhood, based on Asia's communal historical experience, expands to include an argument for Asian solidarity in the future. A Chinese woman named Ho Sogŏm, who was invited to the party with Sŏ, also calls Korean youth "comrades" and contends that "our Chinese and Koreans had shared culture and fate in the past and will share our national fates and work together in the future."[46] She further requests an audience for imagining a bigger picture of Asia:

> Asia! Asia! Draw a map in your mind. Your nation Korea breaks in two by the thirty-eighth parallel. In our China, the civil war has continued for forty years. Our neighbor Vietnam is split into the Ho Chi Minh and Bao Dai forces, and sheds blood between brothers. What about the case of Malay, India, Burma, Indonesia, and Palestine, the west end of Asia? All are split in two, fighting and killing each other. Why are we doing this among our comrades? Because of whom?[47]

The interpellation of Asians in a broad sense from East to West Asia grounds on their shared experience of the colonial rule and national liberation struggles. In postliberation Korea,

[45] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," 536.

[46] Ibid., 537.

[47] Ibid., 538.

intellectuals often displayed their consciousness of and solidarity with other nation-states that had become newly independent from empires during the first half of the twentieth-century or with nations that were currently involved in liberation struggles. Several poems have been written about the communal resistance experience and the joy of independence by addressing other Asian nations such as the Philippines and Indonesia.[48]

In Ho's speech, who, or what, should be held responsible for the Asian misfortunes is not directly pointed out, but presented in the way that one easily assumes:

> Sogŏm didn't mention who made Asia into its current unfortunate state, *but Truman, Stalin, the flag with stars and stripes, the flag with a hammer and sickle, atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, and Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek came to mind…* Haven't we seen Hiroshima and Nagasaki with our own eyes? Who would not be dumbfounded that a hydrogen bomb is a thousand times more powerful than the two bombs dropped on the two cities? Wouldn't we see the end of humanity?[49]

The fictional character holds that the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which gave rise to the present state of the Cold War, are responsible for Asian fates, not past imperialism. Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek are brought up here because they are thought to wage the war that caused suffering of the Chinese masses.

Considering the background of this novel after the Chinese communist regime was established, the sustaining sense of solidarity with China is worth notice. Since the communist regime took over China through the years of 1948–1949, the status and portrait of China had to be reconsidered in South Korea. In *Seoul*, written in 1950, however, a strong sense of

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[48] For instance, Pak Inhwan's "A Poem Dedicated to Indonesian People" (*Sinch'ŏnji*, February 1948) and "A South Wind" (*Sinch'ŏnji*, July 1947). As for the sense of Asian solidarity that was widely shared at that time, I have referred to Chang Sejin, *Sŭlp'ŭn asia: Han'guk chisigin dŭl ŭi asia kihaeng (1945~1966)* [Sad Asia: Travels to the Asia of the Korean Intellectuals] (Seoul: P'urŭn yŏksa, 2012); Kim Yerim, "Naengjŏn-gi asia sangsang kwa pan'gong chŏngch'esŏng ŭi wisanghak" [Topology of the Cold War Asian Imagination and Anticommunist Identity], *Naengjŏn asia ŭi munhwa p'unggyŏng 1: 1940–1950 nyŏndae* [Cultural Landscape of Cold War Asia], ed. Sŏnggonghoedae tong asia yŏn'guso (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏn'gu, 2008), 92.

[49] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," 538. Italics are mine.

comradeship with China still exists. Thus, the tension with the state's anticommunist campaign could be anticipated, which I will discuss more in the next section.

With the sudden emergence of China as a comrade, the ambiguous description of Japan as an old Asian empire also deserves attention. Japan, the former imperial oppressor, cannot be included in descriptions of solidarity among the newly independent Asian nation-states. But, on the other hand, Japan appears to be one of the unfortunate Asian examples by using the metonymy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which were destroyed by western science and civilization. In *Seoul*, therefore, Japan has neither Asian nor non-Asian status. This ambiguity of Japan's status in the novel reflects Yi Kwangsu's—and perhaps other Korean intellectuals'—ambiguous stance toward Japan in the post-1945 intellectual landscape. Korean intellectuals had been greatly influenced by Japanese thought, including Asian modernity as an alternative to Western modernity during the colonial period, but those thoughts needed to be erased after 1945.

Asian solidarity and the restoration of Korean tradition and spirits, which the author Yi Kwangsu advocates in *Seoul*, are paradoxically read both as part of the nationalist theme for the newly independent nation and as reminiscence or restoration of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere propagated by the former Japanese empire. It is more so that Yi Kwangsu was notably a passionate proponent of Japan's imperialist scheme. Imperial Japanese discourse of Overcoming Modernity was grounded in a sense of anxiety over the loss of cultural identity in Japan, and set its goal to restore the cultural identity of true Japan, *Kokutai*.[50] Thus, Yi Kwangsu's Asianism and emphasis on Korean tradition in the novel cannot be merely simplified as his own nationalist idea of the process of the new nation-state building. It is not considerably

[50] See Richard F. Calichman, *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

different from the imperial discourse by which Yi was captivated in the late colonial era except in its replacement of Japan with Korea.

Staggering Anticommunist Propaganda: Communist or Americanized?

Yi Kwangsu's Asianism in *Seoul*, highlighting solidarity with China, runs the risk of conflicting with the anticommunist cause of the South Korean regime after the People's Republic of China was proclaimed in October 1949. With the communization of mainland China, South Korea's recognition and reception of China had to be newly defined. In her study of Korean intellectual discourse on Asia, Kim Yerim has shown that political change in Chinese society in 1948–1949 caused a transformation in how Korean government policy makers and intellectuals imagined Asia.[51] South Korean intellectuals reclaimed their sense of solidarity with China. Since Southeast Asia was also exposed to a potential danger of communization after the Chinese revolution, Korean intellectuals came to retract the existing feelings of friendliness and solidarity from those regions as well.[52] Consequently, discourse on Asia in the initial years of South Korea, Kim argues, shifted into the interest in the Pacific, one of which devised to make an anticommunist alliance around the Pacific Rim with the United States as its center.[53]

As examined above, however, Yi Kwangsu's 1950 novel *Seoul* does not retract the sense of solidarity and intimacy with China. Because the fall of Shanghai is directly referred to in the novel, it is neither that the author was unaware of the historical event nor that the novel was written before it happened. While claiming China as Korea's precious comrade, this work is also

[51] Kim Yerim, "The Cold War Asian Imagination," 83–123.

[52] Ibid., 95.

[53] Ibid. As for the expansion of the Korean intellectual thought to the Pacific, also see Chang Sejin, "Haebanggi konggan sangsangryŏk ŭi chŏni wa "t'aep'yŏngyang" ŭi munhwa chŏngch'ihak" [The Transition of Spatial Imagination and Cultural Politics of "The Pacific" in the Postliberation Period], *Sanghŏ hakbo* 26 (2009): 103–49.

loyal to the South Korean state ideology of anticommunism; *Seoul* presents a critique of Chinese communism. Therefore, simultaneously upholding the state anticommunist cause and advocating for solidarity with China result in inconsistency and tension in the novel. It is why the apparent anticommunist theme of *Seoul* needs to be more carefully read.[54] Below I reveal the ways in which *Seoul* expresses an anticommunist theme, which results in blurring the very idea of anticommunism.

Sŏ Pyŏngdal, by whom Korean college students were fascinated at the party, is a grandson of a respected Korean independent movement leader who was in action in China. To people's surprise, for less than a year since Sŏ left Shanghai for Seoul (by his own ship rather than on a refugee boat), he was able to take possession of a Western-style house, which was previously owned by a Japanese mine owner. Sŏ socializes with influential figures in politics, business, and academia. He is said to be a trader through whom Chinese merchants request to negotiate with the Korean government. In addition, with his background of studies in the United States as well as in Beijing and Shanghai, he gratuitously teaches both Chinese literature and English conversation at colleges. He becomes a celebrity, winning people's attention and respect, but "there was no single person who knows his true identity."[55]

His unaccounted for wealth and easy attainment of a strong reputation first arouse the doubt of an officer of the Information Bureau, who questions if he is a secret emissary from Moscow or an agent of the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, the exact moment of Sŏ's exile looms large because "he must be a communist spy if he left [Shanghai] after the fall of Shanghai

[54] *Seoul* has hardly been discussed except for a couple of essays recently published since 2010. In the pre-2010 bibliographical study of Yi Kwangsu, Kim Yunsik briefly refers to the explicit anticommunism in *Seoul*. Kim Yunsik, *Yi Kwangsu wa kŭ ŭi sidae* [Yi Kwangsu and His Age] vol. 2 (Seoul: Sol, 1999), 458–64.

[55] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," 536.

into the communist rule, but he wouldn't be if he left right before the fall."[56] The suspicion of his identity is cleared up when it turns out that he escaped from the Red Army right before the fall. Then there is nothing to stop him from becoming a celebrity in Seoul with his fortune, political capacity, and charming personality.

However, he is indeed a spy dispatched by the Chinese Communist Party, for the purpose of "disturbing Korean society and undermining the South Korean regime before its infrastructure has been firmly established."[57] Getting acquainted with people, Pyŏngdal is now waiting for a right chance. He "does not show his real intention" and "wears a mask of a nationalism and patriotism." He "pretends to be a decent scholar, a Christian, and a gentleman educated in America." By doing so, "he earns the trust of the people he gets to know in Seoul."[58]

Spy novels in colonial Korea were popular from the time of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. They mostly depicted foreign (Chinese, Russian, British or American) spies from enemy countries of imperial Japan, who intend to cause the social disturbance or steal military secrets.[59] After liberation, spy narratives prevailed but this time the villains were mostly Japanese spies and pro-Japanese collaborators who betray the nation. Often set in the Pacific War, American anti-espionage vis-à-vis Japanese or German spies was introduced in the Korean media. The main trends of these postliberation spy narratives—both fiction and nonfiction—are, of course, the stories of valorous activities of Koreans for national liberation and the interference

[56] Ibid., 544.

[57] Ibid., 552.

[58] Ibid., 554.

[59] As for how popular spy discourse within the Japanese empire draws a strict line between the enemy and us, and the nation and the anti-nation, see Kwŏn Myŏnga, "Ch'onghu puin, sin yŏsŏng, kŭrigo sŭp'ai" [Women in the Rear, New Women, and Spies], *Sanghŏ hakbo* 10 (2003): 251–80.

by Japanese spies and pro-Japanese collaborators.[60] In the postliberation period, with the heroic narratives of anticolonial struggles as the main content, the immediate colonial past was widely reproduced and consumed by the public.

The spy narrative as a reflection of Cold War ideology seemed to appear after the establishment of South Korean regime. Im Chongmyŏng, Korean literary scholar, provides an interesting case study of an anticommunist, anti-North Korean spy narrative, which the South Korean government—accurately, the Minister of Home Affairs—sponsored for publication and circulation.[61] In the late 1940s, while popular fictions deal with Japanese spies yet, anticommunist, anti-North propaganda is intentionally disseminated by the state. Spy narratives also proceed to follow the direction of shifting the national enemies from collaborators to communists, which I have pointed out in the beginning of this chapter.

But the portrait of the spy, Sŏ, in *Seoul* is different from portraits found in state-sponsored spy narratives. While he was born and educated in China, Sŏ appears to be struggling with his national identity as an ethnic Korean. Being a descendant of a family that is dedicated to the Korean independence movement can be a precursor for his possibility to be a "good Korean." Having a firm faith in transnational class solidarity, Sŏ is the kind of person who says, without hesitation, that his country is the Soviet Union and his compatriots are the proletariat of the world. But in his mind, he continuously struggles against his nationalist consciousness regarding Korea. Although it is impossible to prove due to the incompletion of the novel, it seems the

[60] As for spy narratives in the postliberation era, two essays by Im Chongmyŏng are worth noting: Im Chongmyŏng, "Haebang konggan ŭi sŭp'ai iyagi wa chŏngch'ichŏk hamŭi" [Spy Narratives and Their Political Implications in the Postliberation Period], *Yŏksahak yŏn'gu* 41 (2011): 127–60; Im Chongmyŏng, "Ch'ogi Taehanminguk che kanch'ŏp iyagi ŭi sŏsa wa hŭngmisŏng: "Han'guk esŏ ch'oech'o ro palsaenghan kukche kanch'ŏp sagŏn" ŭl chungsim ŭro" [The Narrative and Popularity in Spy Stories Made in Republic of Korea: Focusing on "The First International Espionage Case in Korea"], *Yŏksa yŏn'gu* 22 (2012): 11–57.

[61] Im Chongmyŏng, "Spy Stories Made in Republic of Korea," 11–57.

ending would have involved the communist spy, Sŏ, realizing his true Korean identity and recanting communism. Setting up one of main protagonists as a communist spy and introducing to his scheme and ideology, thus, do not contradict with the author's well-known sustained pursuit of nationalist ideals. A detailed depiction of a communist spy's thought and activity is devised as a denouncement of communist ideology and further promotes the author's nationalist intentions by putting emphasis on values of Korean culture and spirit.

But the problem in the novel, in spite of the appearance of a communist spy who has perhaps been converted to Korean nationalism from communism, lies in the fact that its anticommunist theme often strays from its original intention. The critique of Chinese communism in *Seoul* is based on two factors. First, Chinese communists deceived the Chinese masses by pretending that communism naturally and historically developed from China's indigenous, original tradition. Although communists claim Chinese communism to be communism with Asian characteristics, for Yi, communism merely imitates Western thought, which reflects Yi's critical stance on Western culture and his stress on indigenous Asian traditions. Second, the narrator casts a critical eye on young communists—particularly their unyoked love and sex life. The critique of communists in the novel is mostly based on the perceived free sex of young communists and the resultant corruption of morals. The recognition of communist sexual laxity has a long history, starting with the 1920s New Woman discourse. In short, the main critique of communism is grounded in the recognition that the foreign thought of communism is imported to Asia, corrupts innocent domestic youths, and ruins a pure traditional culture.

The critique of communism as an extraneous ideology reflects Yi's emphasis of Korean traditional culture—including Chinese cultural tradition, which has long contributed to

constructing Korean culture—the author proposed via the nationalist voices of several fictional protagonists. China and Korea are parts of one Asian community vis-à-vis the West rather than extraneous to each other. In this vein, anticommunism results in the negation of "the West," which means "America" in 1940s–1950s South Korea. We can see that a criticism of the communist spy in *Seoul* is equivalent to a critique of American culture and customs.

From his first appearance, the description of Sŏ Pyŏngdal, albeit his Chinese background, is full of signifiers designating Western, that is, Americanized styles. He is tall, and his striped, double-breasted suit, which "does not seem to be made in Seoul,"[62] makes him look taller. His well slicked-back hair, a triangle folded white handkerchief in his breast pocket, his manner of slightly nodding to the people, of shaking hands and greeting people, everything with him is all Western style, and naturally performed.[63] In contrast to other Korean men, who feel and look awkward when they sit at a party table next to women, he is comfortable with sitting by and flirting with women next to him. When it is time to dance, Sŏ adeptly leads his partner, while others just know that they have to dance at Christmas because everyone dances in the West. "Dancing gains an authority because it is what Westerners do."[64] The narrator mentions whom Sŏ dances with and in what order and how many times he is doing so. Sŏ's Western background, appearance, clothing, and manners are described in great detail in the Christmas party scenes. In order to "win people's hearts," Sŏ performs as "a gentleman who received American education."[65]

[62] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," 512–13.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., 515.

[65] Ibid., 554.

It is interesting to note that the narrator's criticism is directed at Sŏ's natural American style rather than at his pretension to have such a style. In other words, the communist spy is bad not because he is a spy or because he is deceiving people, but because he pursues Western culture, through which he fascinates Korean youths and corrupts their morals. It seems that the author tries to criticize communism, but does not know yet on what grounds communism should be criticized. The portrait of the totally Americanized spy weakens or confuses the anticommunist cause. Anticommunist claims of the eradication of foreign thoughts makes the line between communist and American cultural influence ambiguous. In this regard, both communism and American influence are considered to degenerate Koreanness and disregard Korean cultural tradition. The opposite of foreign thought is thought from Korea, China, and the whole of Asia, despite the communization of China. Not knowing how to denounce communist ideology, Yi Kwangsu's nationalist thought unwantedly goes a wrong direction by blurring the border between American cultures and communism.

It is interesting to speculate about the suspension of publishing *Seoul* in the newspaper with the blurring of this line in mind. There has been no clear answer why the serialization of *Seoul* was suspended. Instead, we can find several relevant excerpts from writers' recollections of the literary world or in encyclopedic editions of literature. From them, interestingly, we are able to get two completely opposing answers to the question about the cancellation of the serial. According to an article of the *Sun Daily* in *Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture*, the newspaper used to receive warnings of suspension from the Bureau of Public Information for the reason that the content of *Seoul* propagated communist ideology and agitated [Korean people and society].[66] The article further explains, "The novel day-by-day kept portraying the scenes in

[66] Pak Chŏnggyu, "T'aeyang sinmun" [Sun Daily], *Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture*, vol. 23 (Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si: Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1991), 64–5.

which college students participated in active underground activities of a communist youth organization for about fifty times serializations or so." This phrase is directly quoted from "Suffering History of Korean Newspapers," a 1959 essay written by Kim Kijin, a contemporary writer of Yi Kwangsu.[67] This is quite an exaggeration compared to what *Seoul* really portrays. Yet it is hard to argue that the concern of the Information Bureau for "propagating communist ideology" is completely groundless. Undeniably, *Seoul* depicts a group of communists as its main characters and details their thoughts and arguments. It describes an anecdote about Sŏ Pyŏngdal's thought education in China, relationships with other CCP members, and how he was selected to be sent to Seoul. In the eyes of a rigid state organization, the detailed description of communist groups could be problematic, regardless of the purpose of the description.

On the other hand, the *Dictionary of the Modern Korean Novel* provides a different explanation for the serial's suspension. The newspaper staff, who had leftist inclinations, suspended *Seoul*: "It is said that there was a pressure from leftist-leaning newspaper executive members."[68] The source of this explanation seems to be one of the early commentaries in *The Complete Works of Yi Kwangsu*, compiled in 1971. Yi Hyŏnggi, a poet and the author of the commentary, writes that the novel was discontinued by the newspaper staff after a month of serialization. According to the poet's memory, Yi Kwangsu received serious criticism from leftist figures for the novel's anticommunist and nationalist content.[69] However, it is highly doubtful that the newspaper staff, who would have known Yi's strong nationalist and rightist stance, did not expect the direction of Yi's novel, let alone that it was hard for leftist figures to

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[67] Ibid., 65.

[68] Song Hach'un, *Dictionary of the Modern Korean Novels, 1917–1950* (Seoul: Koryŏ taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2013), 244.

[69] Yi Hyŏnggi, "Miwan sosŏl," *The Complete Works of Yi Kwangsu*, 665.

remain and promote their thoughts in South Korea in 1950. I think that the prejudice against the author Yi Kwangsu—his right-wing disposition and long-pursued nationalist theme—makes the commentary writer read *Seoul* as an indisputable vessel for anticommunism. However, as I have discussed above, the anticommunist theme in *Seoul* is quite ambiguous and often may be read as a critique of the United States.

The symbol of a communist spy was a popular element—one that was employed even by the government, as in the case of the international spy story—as a device for catching public attention. But the problem is that not everyone agreed on exactly what the symbol meant. Therefore, in case of Yi Kwangsu's *Seoul*, a communist spy's foreignness and sexual laxity—both of which taint the national culture and spirit—are devised for criticizing communism. But the first causes an effect of blurring the border between communism and Americanization. Now I turn to discuss the latter criticism—for communist sexuality—in the last section below.

The Ground for Anticommunism: Communist Sexuality

Captivated by Sŏ Pyŏngdal's personal and masculine charm, Insun and other young college girls in *Seoul* often visit his house under the pretext of learning foreign languages from his sister and Ho Sogŏm, the Chinese woman and Sŏ's friend. Insun, a pretty girl who is popular with Korean men, experiences a sexual awakening by making contact with a man's body during a dance and through Sŏ's kiss on the way home. Although he let the girls visit his house, Sŏ is actually already Ho's lover. Sŏ is "infected with communism"[70] at Ho's father's summerhouse at Suzhou, which was a secret place for leftist gatherings, and learned revolutionary theories under the guise of Christian religious meetings. Sŏ and his friends were deeply interested in the secrecy

[70] Yi Kwangsu, "Seoul," 545.

of the gathering, and had "limitless confidence and hope as a creator and hero of the new era." While arguing that they destroy the existing order and existing authority because they are bad, "they become [blind] believers, and slaves, of the new order and the new authority."[71]

The narrator's critical viewpoint—from the perspective of the older generation worrying about undermining the existing authority and order—is conspicuous when he writes about the philosophy and manner of love of those young communists. Their attraction to communism is described as being based on "free relations between man and woman and sexual pleasure without qualms of conscience."[72] They could escape from "any moral restraints under one word of *tongzhi* (comrade)." For them, "morality is only a feudal legacy," and "female chastity is nothing."[73] Describing communist studies in China and how Sŏ was selected to come to Seoul—which the Bureau of Public Information in South Korea would problematize for the reason that it introduces communist perspective in detail—is mostly dedicated to portraying promiscuous sexual morality and the freewheeling sex life of communists. Undermining sexual morality seems to be almost the only decisive reason for anticommunism. From Yi Kwangsu's perspective, communism is almost tautological to sexual freedom.

Such caution and criticism of communist love—satisfying sexual pleasure and neglecting the moral and social system—was not completely new in early 1950s Korea. When the New Women discourse emerged by way of Japan in the early 1920s, Kollontai's *Red Love* was one of the most popular reference books for the New Women generation. On the other hand, Korean male intellectuals, including Yi Kwangsu, worried about the emergence of the New Women and

[71] Ibid., 546.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

their request for individuality and free love for the reason that such revolutionary thought among women would undermine Korean morality and the existing patriarchal social order.[74] Communist love, which Yi Kwangsu depicts in *Seoul*, does not show any further understanding or difference from this 1920s–30s discursive trend on New Women and free love. This is not unique to Yi Kwangsu; *Liberation* by Kim Tongni also portrays the love of a (pseudo-) communist in a similar way.

In *Liberation*, a journal editor and villain, Sin Ch'ŏlsu, pretends to be interested in joining a communist youth group in order to meet women who are sexually open-minded. He first approaches Pak Sŏnju, who is the most progressive, active, and sexually unrestrained woman in the group. With her as stepping-stone, he meets girls one-by-one. Sin's character shows the author's clear stance toward communists: a criticism of their dissipated morality. In the meantime, Yun Chŏnghye, an innocent girl falling in love with Sin, is distressed and jealous about his wanton relationships with other women. She is split between her learnings from communist thought that she ought not to be dominated by old concepts like chastity or morality and her own thoughts—suffering from Sin's polygamous relationships. She laments that she is not progressive enough to ignore such old morals.[75] In the end, Yun, who reluctantly gives her virginity to Sin, is only exploited by his sexual desire and later abandoned by him. Her rush to join the communist group is portrayed as only resulting in tragedy for her even against her true, girlish mind.

[74] As for New Women discourse and the male intellectuals' concerns about this new trend, see the essays on New Women compiled in *New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook*, compiled and trans. Hyaeweol Choi (London and New York: Routledge: 2013): 26–47.

[75] Kim Tongni, "Liberation," *Tong-A Daily*, December 1, 1949.

What is distinctive in the works *Liberation* and *Seoul* is a portrait of a dangerous communist man who seduces an innocent woman. Since the 1920s, male characters have always been portrayed as seducers, usually as shallow businessmen or capitalists. But in these anticommunist novels, communists play the villainous roles of corrupting female characters. By focusing on portraying these attractive antagonists and women as being victimized, the narratives focus less on women's subjectivity. In the 1920s New Women discourse, a feminist request for women as individual human beings emerged along with their desire for free love. Thus, literature tended to investigate this new area—a woman's interiority and desire. But in *Liberation* and *Seoul*, female desire tends to be described as a passive one. Women have neither a subjective sexual desire nor a communist awakening. It seems that these male writers were backwards in portraying female characters, compared to writers of 1920s literature.[76] But I cannot argue that anticommunist thought in postliberation Korea is more conservative than the 1920s discussions of female sexuality, which would require further study.

In these anticommunist stories published in South Korea, anticommunism as a critique of sexual laxity ends up strengthening the popularity of the novels. In case of *Liberation*, the novel dedicates a considerable space to portraying how Sin conquers fellow female communists and even tries to rape a woman he desires. This is clearly a characteristic of newspaper serial novels, which are written in a sensational way. While these novels take a critical tone toward the decadent sex of communists, as a consequence, they gain more attention from readers by depicting their love in detail and a popular way. When anticommunist literature focuses on its communist characters' pursuit of sexual pleasure, popular interest in communists may increase. This is another unexpected effect anticommunist novels had in the early years of South Korea.

[76] Here I mean Na Hyesŏk's and Kang Kyŏngae's works, as well as in some works of noted male socialist writers, including Han Sŏrya and Cho Myŏnghŭi, among others.

Conclusion

A series of state-led incidents that happened around June 1949—including the dissolution of the Special Investigative Committee for Anti-National Acts and the organization of the National Guidance Alliance—led to the oppression of discourse on decolonization, which is related to purge former colonial collaborators, and shifted the focus to the purge of communists. This chapter has focused on the state-schemed shift of the national enemy from collaborators to communists, and how literature portrayed the sociopolitical changes and yet grappled with the issue of decolonization in portraits of the new national villains.

Kim Tongni's novel, *Liberation*, meticulously elaborates an ambivalent, conflicted perspective on former collaborators and persistent public reluctance and resistance to exonerating them, although the narrative leans toward forgiveness under the name of humanism as well as the myth of collaboration. Yi Kwangsu's *Seoul* shows an attempt to explore Koreanness and reconstruct a sense of Asian solidarity, which is reminiscent of Yi's notorious colonial assimilation with imperial Japan, but this time, with China. The novel's Asianism shook the state's anticommunist creed by walking a fine line between the accentuation of the solidarity with contemporary China—which was already communized then—and the denunciation of Chinese communism. Also, by depicting a womanizing communist spy who corrupts innocent Korean youth with his charming, Americanized characteristics, Yi shows reservations about American culture more so than about communist ones.

Both Kim's attention to redressing the contemporary view on collaborators and Yi's emphasis on indigenous Korean/Asian cultural traditions demonstrate their ongoing efforts for decolonization and result in an unexpected distortion of their anticommunist critiques. Both

novels agree on the description of villainous communists, but the grounds for their critiques are based on their sexual dissipation and the possible depravity of innocent Korean women, which was not further developed after the 1920s discussion and male writers' concern for Red Love and New Women. Especially for Yi Kwangsu, communism was no more than a dangerous extraneous thought, which is the same as the dominant American cultural influence. Therefore, anticommunism in the novels is often ambiguous and does not hit its intended mark. Finally, both Kim and Yi strengthen the myth of communist sexuality to create a strategic distance from communism, but this could invite readers' interest rather than criticism of communism. In this chapter, I have demonstrated the ways in which early South Korean literature confronted difficulties and confusions in portraying the good and bad in state ideology and have often not been read as they should have been in the process of grappling with matters like nationalism, anticommunism, and Americanization.

CONCLUSION

Immediately after the 1945 liberation from the Japanese empire, Korean society engaged in active discussions regarding the establishment of a new independent nation and its possible leaders. Not only were major figures of society, such as nationalist leaders, politicians, and intellectuals, passionate about politics, but ordinary masses also gathered to discuss political issues. In a 1947 short story, writer Ch'oe Chŏnghŭi limns a scene of a small country village, people "having fun discussing affairs of the nation under an old shade tree in the middle of the village."[1] Although villagers were ignorant of the world and thus their conversation was "only a trifling matter on par with a political leader's gossip at best," they talked about Yŏ Unhyŏng, who was then regarded by the masses as a prospective leader of the new nation, his People's Republic (*Chosŏn Inmin konghwaguk*; a Korean autonomous political organization established before foreign military armies advanced to the Korean peninsula), scary American soldiers, Dr. Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, communism and democracy, and so on, "even if no one knew what they mean."[2] The era was as such filled with optimistic prospects for the future nation and a strong interest in politics. Explaining the explosion of political participation in this period, Bruce Cumings writes, "In these heady days it was possible to believe that truth and justice would triumph, indeed had triumphed."[3]

Attempts to construct a new national literature and culture also required consideration of their political roles for the nation. Im Hwa, a leading literary critic and poet of the time, argues

[1] Ch'ŏe Chŏnghŭi, "P'ungnyu chaep'inŭn maul" [A Music-Playing Village], *Paengmin* 3, no. 5 (1947): 68.

[2] Ibid., 68–71.

[3] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 74.

that literature ought not to stand outside of the domain of politics.[4] Ch'oe Wŏnsik, a current literary historian, considers the political passions of postliberation writers to be fueled by an illusion of subjectivity, in spite of their minor or peripheral positions in political parties or affiliations.[5] Film was also required to play the role of "guiding the masses," and to align itself with contemporary political issues for the sake of the edification of viewers.[6] The following episode demonstrates that the political task of cultural production was even extended to people in the theater business. In December 1945, when discussions about the joint trusteeship over the Korean peninsula began among the Great Powers and an anti-trusteeship movement emerged nationwide, movie theaters hung signs stating that they would close in protest against the trusteeship until complete independence was achieved. "We will keep in step with the masses," said Hong Ch'an, the president of Seoul Theatre Association.[7] The voluntary cessation from work merely happened for two days, but the response of solidarity with a national concern attests to a shared desire for an independent nation.

The popular, and perhaps rather naïve, wish for autonomy in nation building was, however, shortly thwarted in several regards as I discuss in previous chapters. The unexpected and unwanted national division and the foreign occupation that seemed to be an eerie repetition of the Japanese colonial experience for Koreans, one from which they had just been liberated,

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[4] Im Hwa, "Hyŏnha ŭi chŏngse wa munhwa undong ŭi tangmyŏn immu" [Current Situations and Pressing Tasks of the Cultural Movement], *Munhwa Chŏnsŏn* 1 (1945).

[5] Ch'oe Wŏnsik, "Ch'ongnon: Nara mandŭlgi, uri munindŭl ŭi sŏnt'aek" [Introduction: Nation-Building and Korean Writers' Decisions], in *Haebang chŏnhu, uri munhak ŭi kil ch'atki* [Before and After Liberation, Finding a Way for Korean Literature], ed. Yŏm Muung, Ch'oe Wŏnsik (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2005), 11.

[6] An Sŏkju, "Yŏnghwa nŭn minjok kwa hamkke" [Film Along with the Nation], *Chung'ang Sinmun*, December 4, 1946. Han'guk yŏngsang charyowon, ed., *Sinmun kisaro pon Han'guk yŏnghwa, 1945-1957* [Korean Cinema through Newspaper Articles, 1945-1957] (Seoul: Konggan kwa saramdŭl, 2004), 18. Citations below from the newspapers of the postliberation period are from this book.

[7] "Wanjŏn tongnip i toelttae kkaji kŭkjang kwa yorijŏm ŭn hyuŏp" [The Voluntary Closing of Theaters and Restaurants until the Achievement of Complete Independence], *Chayu Sinmun*, December 31, 1945.

were major ruptures in the shard belief in the promise for Korea's future. In the southern half of Korea in particular, the U.S. occupation policy to appoint or maintain former colonial personnel, which did not consider at all Korean people's deep-rooted enmity toward "pro-Japanese" collaborators, was a seed of grievance. Dealing with former colonial collaborators ever since has become one of the most contested and unsettled issues in Korea's decolonization process. In an analysis of the serialized newspaper novel *Dawn Wind*, I have examined Yŏm Sangsŏp's poignant criticism of the rise to power of former collaborators under the U.S. occupation and toward the USAMGIK itself as another greedy empire. Kim Tongni's *Liberation*, one of the main texts analyzed in Chapter Four, shows to what extent the treatment of previous collaborators was complicated, especially in the face of ideological conflicts after the establishment of Republic of Korea.

Criticism of the occupying forces and frustration with the decolonization process in South Korea necessarily raise questions about circumstances in its North Korean counterpart. How did North Korean people think about the Soviet occupation? Could we possibly find equivalent critiques against the USSR in literature there as were found in the south? In what ways did the state sanction colonial collaboration, and was its representation in literature different compared to in South Korean literature?

It is reported that in the very initial stage of the USSR occupation, the Soviet occupiers depredated local populations, including pillage and rape.[8] But this notorious reputation was short-lived; the occupation authorities soon placed strict controls on their soldiers.[9] Except for in the first several months, critiques of the Soviet Army are rare in any published sources. Among

[8] Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 388–90; Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution*, 42–45.

[9] Cumings, Ibid., 389; Armstrong, Ibid.

literary works, Han Sŏrya's "The Hat" ("Moja," 1946), which I briefly discuss in Chapter Three, is one of these rare examples, which portray the Soviet occupation forces in a less than positive light. The negative depiction of a Russian soldier in the short story is, as a matter of fact, intended to be a dramatic fictional manifestation of his burgeoning friendship with a Korean in order to highlight the favorable relationship between the USSR and North Korea. But such literary discretion does not seem to have been allowed for North Korean writers. Due to this negative portrayal of a Red Army soldier, the issue of *Cultural Front* in which "The Hat" was published was quickly withdrawn from circulation.[10] This censorship shows that control over literature north of the thirty-eighth parallel was imposed earlier, as well as was more sweeping, compared to the south. Then, after Kim Il Sung proposed guidelines for the production of literature in the beginning of 1947, literary policies in the north were certainly micromanaging—not only restricting content or themes (see the "*Ŭnghyang* incident") but also encouraging emphasis on certain themes, such as assigning task pieces as I discuss in Chapter Three.

As a consequence, literature in the north has been doctrinaire, characterized by "exceptional uniformity, unchallenged by any alternatives."[11] While South Korean literature relatively freely criticized the foreign occupation and the political division of the country before shifting its focus to the state-led critique of communists after 1949, North Korean literature offered only state-sanctioned descriptions of the hopes and expectations for the new nation and its great leader. A critical perspective on the DPRK regime and the USSR as its ally is difficult to find in published literature. To be sure, the absence of published criticism does not mean the

[10] Hyŏn Su, *Chŏkch'i yuk-nyŏn ŭi pukhan mundan* [The North Korean Literary World Under Six Years of Enemy Control] (Seoul: Pogosa, 1999), 41–42.

[11] Tatiana Gabroussenko, *Soldiers on the Cultural Front: Developments in the Early History of North Korean Literature and Literary Policy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 1.

absence of complaint or critique. Rather, total absence of critical perspectives in written texts suggests, in fact, artificial restraints on literary works. In North Korea, the Cold War began earlier than in the south, and the cultural Cold War was more systematically perpetrated.[12] Also, as is well known, critiques of the so-called "U.S. imperialism" and the ROK regime were actively promoted.

After the second U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission completely broke down in October 1947, the rather cautious stance of northern Korea toward the United States shifted to extreme anti-Americanism.[13] This intense anti-Americanism strengthened during the Korean War and has continued to the present in the DPRK. One of the initial, and most prominent, literary demonstrations of strong anti-Americanism is Han Sŏrya's short story, "Jackals" ("Sŭngnyangi," 1951). By depicting an American missionary and his family being hypocritical and brutal to Koreans, as "a pack of jackals wearing human masks," Han constructs an extremely negative image of the U.S.—one which was originally ascribed to Japanese.[14] In his essay dealing with his motive for and process of writing "Jackals," Han states that Kim Il Sung's conversation with writers motivated him to write such a story: "The Great Leader Kim saw writers [in the DPRK] portraying the U.S. imperialists, but there are only a few works seriously dealing with their true nature. He said that the representation of the U.S. imperialists should disclose their wicked,

[12] Armstrong points out that literary and cultural policy in the Soviet-occupied north was much more proactive, and more generously promoted local Korean cultural production than in the American zone in the south. Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945–1950," *The Journal of Asian Studie*s 62, no. 1 (2003): 71–99.

[13] Nam Wŏnjin, "Mije wa sŭngnyangi: 'Choguk haebang chŏnjaeng'gi ŭi panmigwan e taehan yŏn'gu" [American Imperialism and Jackals: A Study of Anti-Americanism during the Korea War Period], *Pigyo munhwa yŏn'gu* 25 (2011): 217.

[14] Ibid., 221.

savage, and brutal nature."[15] Inspired by these words, Han first recalled the Japanese brutality he experienced during the colonial period and replaced it with American, only with an even crueler nature.[16] As Gabroussenko asserts, the "Japs" and the "Yankees" are the two enemies of Korean people, playing a role of "the negative other in North Korean propaganda."[17]

Because of the negative identification between the Japanese and Americans as an imperial power, "pro-Japanese" collaborators during the colonial period have maintained their status as a national enemy of the DPRK. Therefore, literary representations of colonial collaborators in North Korea merely show hackneyed uniformity. They are always portrayed as vicious villains such as landlords or capitalist bourgeoisie who exploit peasant farmers, and who are eventually defeated by the awakened North Korean masses. We should note that the origin of the DPRK lies in the anti-Japanese armed forces who fought against the Japanese imperial army in Manchuria during the late colonial period, with Kim Il Sung and his comrades as the main force. To the DPRK leadership, then, "pro-Japanese" forces were literally the enemies who joined the Japanese imperial army and in putting down the armed liberation struggles. Also, the former collaborators became the cat's paws of American imperialists. Thus, dealing with former collaborators in North Korea was simpler and more straightforward in contrast to the complicated context found in South Korea, where those who participated in the colonial apparatus remained in the system as police and military officials.

During the final five years of the 1940s, a narrative about colonial collaboration was crafted and disseminated in South Korea, claiming that there was no such thing as collaboration

[15] Han Sŏrya, "'Sŭngnyangi' rŭl ssŭgikkaji" [Until I Write "Jackals"], *Ch'ŏngnyŏn saenghwal* (October 1950), quoted in Nam Wŏnjin, "Pukchosŏn ŭi chŏngjŏn, Han Sŏrya ŭi 'Sŭngnyangi' chaeron" [The North Korean Canon, Re-reading of Han Sŏrya's "Jackals"], *Sanghŏ hakpo* 34 (2012): 223.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Gabroussenko, *Soldiers on the Cultural Front*, 44.

and that all Koreans suffered from the brutal colonial rule. On the surface, this narrative seems to be in direct contradiction to Kim Tongni's "collaboration myth," examined in Chapter Four, in which all Koreans under colonial rule collaborated with Japan, and thus no one has the right to criticize another as a collaborator. But both myths are basically the two sides of the same coin, both erasing different colonial experiences among Koreans that resulted from their class, education, and gender, among other things. On the other hand, in North Korea a myth of resistance has predominated: all Koreans bravely resisted the vicious Japanese rule under the lead of General Kim Il Sung, certainly another unreliable myth. In this sense, Yi T'aejun's subtle recalibration of the narrative of his own acts of collaboration and resistance made in the 1949 version of "Before and After Liberation," which I closely analyze in Chapter Three, is worth notice. By embellishing his non-collaboration or trivial resistance, the revisions suggest the pressure of the resistance myth albeit implicitly. Yi T'aejun's "Before and After Liberation" and "Dust" are conspicuously exceptional literary pieces in late 1940s North Korean literature. The affectionate depictions of a Confucian scholar and an antiquarian, both of whom are old-fashioned, obsolete, and feudal characters to be denounced, do not exist in typical North Korean literature. By not giving up on his deep affection for vanishing Korean traditions and admiration of its plaintive beauty, Yi T'aejun walks a dangerous line in the highly controlled literary world of the DPRK, which he might not have been aware of at the time but is obvious to current readers.

Yi T'aejun was purged and exiled from Pyongyang under the pretext that he was a reactionary writer, that his literature reflected his bourgeois views and defeatism, and even for

his colonial period dedication to pure literature, and so on.[18] In addition to Yi T'aejun, a conspicuous victim of the tragic ideological division, Yi Kwangsu and Yi Sŏkhun—among the most well-known "pro-Japanese" writers—were abducted by the North Korean army during the Korean War due to their old crime of collaboration. Their whereabouts since 1950 have been unknown. Ch'ae Mansik died of tuberculosis in June 1950, on the brink of the War. As concerned parties disappeared from the world, mostly due to the fatal antagonism between the ROK and the DPRK, the fierce interests in coming to terms with the colonial past also disappeared from the South Korean public sphere. It was not until the late 1970s that the rigorous efforts of a literary historian, Im Chongguk, brought the issue to the surface again.

In the early years of the 21st century, South Korea saw the launching of two striking projects for a "cleansing of the past" (*kwagŏsa ch'ŏngsan*), one sponsored by the government and the other by a private organization. The belated efforts were made possible because a political condition was met—that a progressive party came into power. Under the direct control of the president Roh Moo-hyun, the Committee for Investigation for the Truth of Pro-Japanese Anti-National Activities (*Ch'inil panminjok haengwi chinsang kyumyŏng wiwŏnhoe*), organized in 2005, extensively investigated and documented collaboration activities under Japanese colonial rule.[19] In the process, there were raging controversies including filing objections from descendants of accused "pro-Japanese" collaborators, political confrontation with the opposition party members, some of whose ancestors were involved in collaboration, and most controversially, the ruling party's chairman's concealment of his own father's collaboration as a

[18] For more details of the circumstances around Yi's purge, see ibid., 123–33. Gabroussenko points out the double standards and absurdities in the accusations against Yi and Yi's literature, and shows that he was a victim of power struggles among political factions.

[19] Regarding the Committee's organization and activities, I have referred to Jeong-Chul Kim, "On Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Korean "Collaborators" of Japanese Colonialism," *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia*, ed. Mikyoung Kim (Milton Park: Routledge, 2016), 162–65.

Japanese military police officer, and so on.[20] Although those who collaborated are no longer alive, the belated investigations compelled their descendants' fights to preserve their ancestors' reputations, power, and wealth that had been maintained, thanks to the failure of timely legal punishment.

A private research organization, the Institute for National Matters (*Minjok munje yŏn'guso*) also made an attempt to compile the complete list of "pro-Japanese" collaborators, and *The Bibliographical Dictionary of Pro-Japanese Koreans* (*Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn*) was published in 2009, after much research by scholars in various fields. This compilation project was supported by the public with donated funds. However, the publication of the dictionary of pro-Japanese Koreans also met with serious opposition, one of which was the accusation that the dictionary's publication itself was an act advantageous to the enemy, North Korea. Slandering those who work on investigating former collaboration acts as the Reds—derogatorily, *ppalgaengi* in Korean—has a long history since the late 1940's sabotage of the Special Committee's activities.[21]

The efforts to investigate colonial collaboration, and to define and label "pro-Japanese" collaborators, are worthwhile by themselves in the sense that it would complete, albeit belatedly, what should have been done immediately after liberation. In spite of its limitations, the project has the symbolic meaning of administering justice and appeasing public grievances, as well as is valuable as for historical records. But for literary scholars, the making of the collaborators' list is nothing new. The literature of collaboration has remained ineffaceable material evidence. In

[20] See Yumi Moon, *Populist Collaborators: The Ilchinhoe and the Japanese Colonization of Korea, 1896–1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 1–3; Yi Chunsik, "Kukka kigu e ŭihan ch'inil ch'ŏngsan ŭi yŏksajŏk ŭimi" [Historical Implications of the Government-led "Cleansing of the Pro-Japanese"], *Yŏksa pip'yŏng* 93 (2010): 91–115, among others.

[21] Chapter Four deals with the transformation of the national enemy in South Korea from former collaborators themselves to the critics of collaborators, who ended up accused of being communists.

addition to the writers registered on the "pro-Japanese" list, such as Yi Kwangsu, Yi Sŏkhun, Ch'ae Mansik, Kim Tongin, and Paek Ch'ŏl, to name a few, we are aware that even Yi T'aejun, Im Hwa, and many others, whose names are not included in the list, left one or two works for imperial war propaganda, or were fascinated by the Japanese imperialist project of Pan-Asianism, albeit not in an obvious way.[22] Literary studies have already more elaborately interrogated the issue of collaboration beyond the dichotomy of whether a writer's name is included in the list or not.

From the beginning, reflections on collaboration cannot reach a shared conclusion that satisfies everyone nor can offer a fair solution as to how to deal with collaborators once collaboration has occurred. For Koreans, the purge of Nazi collaborators in postwar France is often considered to be a successful project for restoring national identity, but for French people, the purge of collaborators is indeed an incomplete project, ending "with a universal sense of frustration and bitter disappointment."[23] My dissertation traces the struggles of the postcolonial intellectuals thrown into this unresolved, and perhaps unsolvable, predicament. For those who lived through the colonial period, colonial collaboration was their own or, at least, their generation's problem. Also, the impending Cold War loomed like a nightmare of repeating their experience of losing autonomy. Therefore, Koreans in the postliberation period enthusiastically debated about the appropriate response to collaboration as well as current political situations, and writers wrestled with the matters through literature. Even efforts to conceal or distort the experience of collaboration required considerable energy.

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[22] For instance, Yi T'aejun's novel, *Sasang ŭi wŏrya* [Moonlit Night of Contemplation], and Im Hwa's "Haehyŏp ŭi romaent'isijŭm" ["Romanticism at the Strait"].

[23] Peter Novick, *The Resistance Versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 158.

Through the dissertation, I explore the role of postliberation literature, as interrogating collaboration retrospectively and providing a site for serious reflection on it. Postliberation literature did not conform to the ideological division imposed upon the country, and, at the same time, fought a losing battle against the Cold War. In those efforts, postliberation literature temporarily suspended the Cold War through contested representation and delved into serious contemplation regarding Korea's decolonization, an ever-present problem in modern Korean history.

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