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LYRICAL TRANSLATION:
THE FORMATION OF MODERN POETIC LANGUAGE IN COLONIAL KOREA

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DAVID ANTHONY KROLIKOSKI

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THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN CERTIFIED BY THE FOLLOWING

MEMEBERS OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:

KYEONG-HEE CHOI

Committee Chair, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

MICHAEL K. BOURDAGHS

Committee Member, Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

HOYT LONG

Committee Member, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations

BRUCE CUMINGS

Committee Member, Professor of History

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ABSTRACT

At the start of the twentieth century, East Asian literature was in a state of flux. Korean intellectuals, like their counterparts in China and Japan, began a collective effort to renew their literature, moving toward forms of writing that more closely approximated everyday language. Scholars of this period have long debated how this transition took place. It is widely accepted that the push toward vernacularization was inspired by Western literature, which was understood to be modern in comparison to past traditions that had been largely drawn from classical Chinese models. Many researchers have identified the integral role of translation in this process as a tool used to import the latest literary trends. My research reframes translation as a fundamentally generative process that enabled writers to conceive new literary forms that did not previously exist in their own language. The dissertation also demonstrates how the multilingual environment of colonial Korea spurred experimentation in writing across several languages, contributing to the development of new literary practices.

My project examines the interplay between translation and the formation of modern Korean literature in relation to the emergence of vernacular poetry during the 1920s. Through close readings of translations, critical writing, and original poetry in Korean and Japanese, I unearth the creative process of early Korean intellectuals, who sought to invent a new form of writing. When viewed from their perspective, the literary translation of this decade is revealed to be a medium in which writers freely experimented with language, not a process intended to produce faithful replicas of foreign texts.

The dissertation is divided into five constituent parts: an introduction, conclusion, and three body chapters that each explore a different aspect of how translation shaped original

writing. Chapter One, "Writing in Translation: Kim Ŏk and the Emergence of the Vernacular Poem," focuses on Kim Ŏk, one of the first prominent Korean translators of foreign poetry. The chapter illustrates how Kim extensively reused language from his translations when composing original poetry, yielding a model of vernacular poetry that was widely adopted in the 1920s.

Chapter Two, "Translating Romance: Reading Han Yong-un," is centered around Han Yong-un, a Buddhist monk who published the celebrated poetry collection *The Silence of Love* (Nim ŭi ch'immuk) in 1926. I argue that Han's poetic style was informed by an intellectual environment of mass translation, which enabled the circulation of competing discourses of love. My analysis shows how Han encouraged his readers to embrace multiple interpretations, each based on a different discourse, thereby engendering a new way to read poetry that also suggested the makings of a national community unified in the 1920s by a collective sense of absence.

My final chapter, "Translating Rhythm: Chŏng Chi-yong and the Development of Free Verse," examines the early career of Chŏng Chi-yong, one of Korea's preeminent modernist poets. The chapter contends that by writing in both Japanese and Korean in the late 1920s, and translating his own poetry between the two, Chŏng developed a new method of free verse rhythm that was disentangled from the soundscape of any single language.

In analyzing these three individual cases, the dissertation concretely demonstrates the myriad ways in which literary translation was enmeshed with the formation of modern Korean literature. More specifically, I show how the creation of modern Korean poetry involved the efforts of intellectuals who were reading and writing in foreign languages, their experiences with translation influencing their original output. By tracing developments in writing on the level of language, the dissertation unearths the historical origins of seemingly-timeless notions about what constitutes Korean literature in the linguistic experimentation afforded by translation. Using

Korea as a telling example, my research illustrates how ostensibly closed traditions of national literatures in East Asia changed in the early twentieth century, their transformations precipitated by actors working in multiples languages.

INTRODUCTION

LYRICAL TRANSLATION IN THE 1920S

In 1926, the poet Yi Sang-hwa (1901-1943) published "Will Spring Return to Stolen Fields?" (Ppaeakkin tŭl edo pom ŭn onŭn'ga), a landmark poem that has been read as an anthem of resistance against Japanese colonial rule:

빼앗긴 들에도 봄은 오는가

지금은 남의 땅 — 빼앗긴 들에도 봄은
오는가?

나는 온 몸에 햇살을 받고
푸른 하늘 푸른 들이 맞붙은 곳으로
가르마 같은 논길을 따라 꿈 속을 가듯
걸어만 간다.

입술을 다문 하늘아 들아
내 맘에는 나 혼자 온 것 같지를 않구나
네가 끌었느냐 누가 부르더냐 답답워라
말을 해 다오.

바람은 내 귀에 속삭이며
한 자국도 섰지 마라 옷자락을 흔들고
종조리는 울타리 너머 아씨같이 구름
뒤에서 반갑다 웃네.

고맙게 잘 자란 보리밭아
간밤 자정이 넘어 내리던 고운 비로
너는 삼단 같은 머리를 감았구나 내
머리조차 가뿐하다.

혼자라도 가쁘게나 가자.
마른 논을 안고 도는 착한 도랑이
젖먹이 달래는 노래를 하고 제 혼자
어깨춤만 추고 가네.

Will Spring Return to Stolen Fields?

Now another's land—Will spring return again
to stolen fields?

My body bathed in sunlight,
I walk and walk in a dream
A path parting the fields like a comb to where
blue and green earth merge.

Sky, and Earth, mouths tight shut:
I know in my heart I have not come on my
own.
Have you drawn me out? Is there someone
who calls me? Answer and ease me!

The winds whisper in my ear
Don't pause even one step. They tug at my
clothes,
While the clouds a lark sings like the girl
beyond the hedge.

Barley fields, full and rich with grain:
In the gentle rains that fell past midnight
You have washed and coiled your luxuriant
hair. Even my cares feel lifted.

Alone, as I press on in my flight,
The gentle streams holding the thirsty fields
Sing a nursing song as they dance along,
light-shouldered.

Swallow and butterfly, alight!

나비 제비야 깝치지 마라
맨드라미 들마꽃에도 인사를 해야지
아주까리 기름을 바른 이가 지심 매던 그
　　들이라 다 보고 싶다.

내 손에 호미를 쥐여 다오
살진 젖가슴과 같은 부드러운 이 흙을
발목이 시도록 밟아도 보고 좋은 땀조차
　　흘리고 싶다.

강가에 나온 아이와 같이
짬도 모르고 끝도 없이 닫는 내 혼아
무엇을 찾느냐 어디로 가느냐 웃어웁다
　　답을 하려무나.

나는 온 몸에 풋내를 띠고
푸른 웃음 푸른 설움이 어우러진 사이로
다리를 절며 하루를 걷는다 아마도 봄
　　신령이 지폈나 보다.

그러나 지금은 — 들을 빼앗겨 봄조차
　　빼앗기겠네.

You must greet the cockscomb and
　　honeysuckle.
I seek the fields the young girl gleaned, her
　　black oiled hair shining.

Put the hoe in my hand.
I want to tread this earth, soft and full as a
　　breast,
Until my ankles ache and the good sweat runs
　　down.

My soul, like a child coming out by the river,
Running free and unbounded: What are you
　　seeking?
Where are you going? Give me an answer!
　　How can you feel such joy?

My body wears a green scent, as on the verge
Between green laughter and green sorrow I
　　have walked all day
Until my legs have gone lame, and still the
　　spring seems spirited away.

Because now, these fields have been stolen,
　　and the spring itself may be stolen
　　too.[1]

Written in simple, melodic language, “Will Spring Return to Stolen Fields?” bares many qualities that are characteristic of vernacular poems from the 1920s. Although composed at a time when cities, hubs of intellectual activity, were gradually transforming the landscape of the peninsula, the image of Korea that Yi paints is rustic, a land covered in fields of grass, where the wind, personified through the magic of poetry, was liable to whisper in a passerby’s ear. This is a Korea as yet untouched by the contamination of modernity, a realm in which the poem’s speaker

[1] Yi Sanghwa, “Will Spring Return to Stolen Fields?” in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry*, trans. and ed. David R. McCann (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 24-26.

too is transformed into their younger, innocent self: "My soul, like a child coming out by the river, / Running free and unbounded: What are you seeking?" But the reader is warned from the outset that this backdrop is a fiction. "Now another's land," the speaker pointedly remarks in the poem's first line, an unembellished statement of fact that conceals a mountain of laments. In many poems of the decade, including those considered to be vessels of resistance, ideology was not to be shouted on the page, but obscured behind indirect language that would nevertheless be transparent to the reading public.[2]

The initial version of "Will Spring Return to Stolen Fields?" published in the intellectual journal *Kaebyŏk* (The Opening of the World, 1920-1926) in 1926, is also notable for being printed entirely in *han'gŭl*, the native Korean alphabetic script first developed in the fifteen-century under the supervision of King Sejong. Although the use of *han'gŭl* had become more widespread in the early twentieth century, having been championed by pioneering newspapers like *Tongnip sinmun* (The Independent, 1896-1899), it was still common in the 1920s to print literature in a mixed script (*kukhanmun*) that combined the Korean alphabet with Chinese characters, especially in a highbrow periodical like *Kaebyŏk*.[3] The choice to exclusively employ

[2] Despite Yi Sang-hwa's use metaphor, the poem's political elements were not ignored. The initial 1926 printing in *Kaebyŏk* was not redacted, but later references to the poem, including one in a 1927 article in *Chosŏn ilbo*, censored the word "stolen" (*ppaeakkin*) behind *fuseji* marks. Kwon Yu-seung, "Yi Sang-hwa ŭi 'Ppaeakkin tŭl edo pom ŭn onŭn'ga' chaego: Chapchi *Kaebyŏk* ŭl chungsimŭro" [The Reconsideration of Yi Sang Hwa's "Will Spring Return to a Stolen Meadow" with a Focus on the Journal *Kaebyŏk*], *Ŏmunhak* 110 (December 2010): 257.

[3] *Tongnip sinmun* was the organ of the Tongnip hyŏphoe (The Independence Club, 1896-1899), an organization founded by Sŏ Chae-p'il (Philip Jaisohn, 1865-1951) in order to spur mass participation in politics. The newspaper was printed in dual Korean and English-language editions, the latter intended to spread foreign awareness about Korea. According to Michael Edson Robinson, the decision to use *han'gŭl* in *Tongnip sinmun* was patriotic, meant to allow the newspaper to be accessible to the general population. Before being adopted by the newspaper, *han'gŭl* had been ignored by elite sectors of society, but was used by Buddhists, popular novelists, and women for some time. Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 26.

han'gŭl, therefore, should be read as deliberate, a decision abetted by Yi's sparing use of Sino-Korean vocabulary. In the context of the poem, the vernacular syntax dovetails with Yi's effort to represent an untainted Korean landscape. The model of poetry being demonstrated is clear: a meeting of Korean words and subject matter that is presented so effortlessly that one might mistake it, much like the depicted countryside, for a bastion of authenticity, rather than an invented tradition, still in the process of being constructed.

Vernacular Poetry and Translation

The practice of vernacular poetry in Korea emerged in the first two decades of the twentieth century. At the time, Korean society itself was in a state of flux, caught between the empires of China and Japan.[4] For centuries, Chinese culture had spread throughout East Asia, creating a cultural sphere that had shaped how literature, including poetry, was written in the premodern era. But after the intrusion of Western culture in the region and the subsequent rise of Japan as a formidable imperial power, the balance of power shifted in East Asia, with Korea caught in the middle. These sweeping changes provoked a movement within the peninsula to question all manner of engrained cultural practices, including the use of Chinese in written language, a choice that had once helped to segregate society between the *yangban* elites and commoners (in addition to men and women), but was also responsible for widespread illiteracy among the population that reformers felt was holding back efforts to self-strengthen. In this time of crisis, more and more voices were adamant that *han'gŭl* be put into general use. The poetry

[4] As Andre Schmid has observed, Koreans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood themselves in relation to their neighbors, China and Japan. The shifting assessment of these two regional powers shaped emerging national discourses in Korea. Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 10.

that would appear in the early modern era would be largely composed with this script, a marker of change that heralded a new era in the world of Korean letters.

I use the term "vernacular poetry" to refer generally to this incipient form of poetic writing, one that was a) composed in the Korean language and b) penned in an idiom that more closely approximated everyday speech than premodern modes of verse. Reforming poetry, therefore, involved more than merely the adoption of *han'gŭl* as the script of choice, but a complete reconceptualization of what constituted poetic language. However, the move to the vernacular was not just restricted to poetry. Intellectuals invested in literature sought to develop both prose and poetry forms that could be read by, and distributed to, a mass audience. This shift was signaled by affixing the prefix *sin* (new) to literary labels—*sinsosŏl* (new novel), *sinsi* (new poem)—that blatantly drew a line between the past and present. Similar movements were occurring throughout East Asia.[5] In Meiji Japan, the *genbun itchi* (unification of spoken and written language) movement reconfigured literature at the end of the nineteenth century, not only streamlining the abstruse constructions of premodern written language, but also, as Karatani Kōjin has argued, giving rise to new forms of consciousness.[6] Likewise, in Republican China, the New Literature Movement of 1917 and May Fourth Movement of 1919 resulted in a widespread push for *baihua* (vernacular) writing.[7]

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[5] Around the turn of the century, it was popular to employ the prefix *sin* to indicate a departure from tradition. According to Yoon Sun Yang, the term *sinsosŏl* has been inconsistently applied since its inception and hence lacks a precise definition. The word only achieved critical currency in the 1930s after being used by Marxist literary critics like Im Hwa in formative literary histories. Yoon Sun Yang, *From Domestic Women to Sensitive Young Men: Translating the Individual in Early Colonial Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 17-18.
[6] Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 61.
[7] Michelle Yeh, *Modern Chinese Poetry: Theory and Practice since 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 10.

As numerous scholars have pointed out, the rise of the vernacular as the standard mode of writing for the new era was induced by the translation of texts written in Western languages into Korean. Unfamiliar literary forms such as the novel and the free verse poem were perceived to be appealingly modern given their central position in a Western culture that had already begun to spread its tendrils around the globe. But literary translation from the West to the East during the early twentieth centuries was no simple process, even if one were to discount the inherent differences between languages as distant from each other as, say, French and Korean, which continue to pose practical difficulties for translators working in the present.

After the cultural turn in translation studies in the 1980s, when scholars who belonged to disciplines other than linguistics began to seriously interrogate it within their own fields, the notion that any instance of translation unavoidably involves the transmission of culture, not just language, has become widely accepted.[8] In this sense, the translation of Western poems, composed in a style that had no equivalent in premodern Korea, necessitated a fundamental reconceptualization of poetry that resulted in the creation of new poetic forms.

Despite being spurred by translation, the creation of modern literary forms in Korea such as the vernacular poem could not be undertaken by simply replicating foreign examples. Scholars such as Lawrence Venuti have long disproved the prevalent misconception that translation in any context is a process that can be distilled down to mere imitation.[9] A book like *Les Fleurs du mal* (Flowers of Evil, 1857), once discovered, was not the answer for Korean intellectuals wondering how to renew their literature, but a problem in need of a solution. Charles Baudelaire and other

[8] Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997), 1-3.
[9] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Routledge: London, 1995), 1-20.

internationally esteemed figures provided aspiring poets in Korea with the impetus to attempt the composition of similar poems in their own language, a goal that was undergirded by the conviction that this standard could be promptly achieved. The task at hand was to formulate a commensurate style of poetry that would provide the basis for translation, and more importantly, establish a paradigm to be adopted by future Korean poets.

The translation of poetry during this transitional period in Korean literature was thus conceived as a temporary measure undertaken in service of original composition. This type of translation should therefore be differentiated from the most common contemporary practice, a kind of writing targeted at expanding the readership of a particular text beyond the boundaries of its original language. In Korea, the line between translator and poet was hazy throughout the early twentieth century, with individuals commonly oscillating between the two roles as twin sides of the same profession. In this way, poets oftentimes used translation as a medium to practice their craft. Relieved of the burden of generating new material, the work of translation served to focus their attention on the mechanics of language. Later in the colonial period, after restrictions imposed by the government-general became increasingly severe following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937), translation also provided an outlet for writing that was potentially safer than original composition. After the publication of his celebrated collection of original poetry, *Deer* (Sasŭm) in 1934, the poet Paek Sŏk (1912-1996), for example, devoted himself to literary translation in Manchuria for this reason.[10]

Many scholars have noted the outsize role translation played as a creative endeavor in the formation of modern Korean literature. Heekyoung Cho, for one, has noted the pronounced

[10] Jeong Seon-Tae, "Ch'aengmŏri e" [Introduction] in *Paek Sŏk pŏnyŏksi sŏnjip*, ed. Jeong Seon-Tae (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2012), 5.

influence of Russian literature upon the development of the realist novel in Korea, a literary form that was introduced to the peninsula through the translation of literary texts and theories. As Cho notes, early Korean enthusiasts of Russian literature did not necessarily base their translations upon the original-language texts, but instead, referred to translations of the material in Japanese.[11] Unsurprisingly, the act of translation during the colonial period was entangled in the cultural hierarchy established by the omnipresent weight of colonialism. As Serk-Bae Suh has observed, translation was a source of anxiety for both Japan and Korea. For the former, translation was a tool that they relied upon to administer their colony, whereas for the latter, it often functioned to reveal cultural differences that were registered as deficiencies.[12] Still, translation provided the means for intellectuals to rapidly expand their horizons beyond the limitations of past traditions, and therefore, was accepted as a necessary, if perilous measure.

During the colonial period, critical voices appeared who expressed apprehension about using translation as a fulcrum in the development of modern Korean literature. Hyŏn Ch'ŏl (1891-1965), the head of the *Kaebyŏk* literature section, for instance, argued in the early 1920s that free verse as a form that was adopted from the West was incompatible with Korean poetry and should be discarded in favor of a native approach to composition.[13] The debate continued to simmer throughout the decade. In the late 30s and early 1940s, Im Hwa (1908-1953), formerly a leading member of Korea Artista Proletara Federatio (KAPF, 1925-1935), penned what has infamously become known as the "Theory of Transplantation Literature" (Isik munhangnon), in

[11] Heekyoung Cho, *Translation's Forgotten History: Russian Literature, Japanese Mediation, and the Formation of Modern Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 7.
[12] Serk-Bae Suh, *Treacherous Translation: Culture, Nationalism, and Colonialism in Korea and Japan from the 1910s to the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), xiv.
[13] Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, *Sowi sinsi hyŏng kwa mongnongch'e* [The So-called New Poetry Form and Indistinctness], *Kaebyŏk*, February 2, 1921, 129.

which he stated that the transplantation of Western literary provided the basis of modern Korean literature.[14] Im's theory became the target of criticism in the postwar period by those who felt his formulation robbed colonial writers of their agency by ascribing Korea's literary accomplishments to the intervention of external forces.[15]

This anxiety surrounding Im's notion of transplantation stems from the desire to not be perceived as second-class in relation to the West. Even if one finds themselves in agreement with Im's argument, this fear nevertheless feels valid given the way in which even the notion of world literature, ostensibly an inclusive category of textual inquiry, continues to foreground the Western canon as the neutral standard upon which other traditions are to be evaluated. Although it is difficult to deny the eminence of a place like Paris in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a fount for international literary culture, but if one investigates this history of reception from the perspective of a developing nation like Korea rather than Western Europe, a markedly different story emerges than that of inevitable dissemination. For Korean intellectuals, individual who were cognizant of global literary trends, translation was a pragmatic choice intended to help speed along the renewal of their own literature. What Hyŏn Ch'ŏl overlooked is that this was possible outside the narrow frame of replication.

Despite the efforts of scholars to reposition translation as a fundamentally creative venture, commensurate to original writing, many arguments maintain an accepted schema that frames translation as a vessel for literary influence. In this dissertation, I propose a different way

[14] Im Hwa's theory pivoted on the argument that Western capitalism was first transplanted to Korea, and on this basis, literary forms too were carried over. Yi Hun, *Im Hwa ŭi munhangnon yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Cheiaenssi, 2009), 254.
[15] Ha Chŏng-il, "Isik, kŭndae, t'alsingmin" [Transplantation, Modernity, Decolonization], in *Im Hwa munhak ŭi chaeinsik* [A New Understanding of Im Hwa's Literature], ed. Munhak kwa sasang yŏn'guhoe (Seoul: Somyŏng, 2004), 64-65.

of understanding the role of translation during the early modern period as a process that was deeply enmeshed with literary writing throughout the 1920s, stimulating a range of linguistic experimentation that was not necessarily learned from outside examples. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the majority of Korean intellectuals acquired at least part of their education abroad in Japan, where they encountered foreign literature on a massive scale.[16] For these select individuals, reading and writing in two or more languages was an ordinary aspect of their lives, especially as Japanese-language acquisition was progressively pushed in colonial schools and employed for official government use.[17] In this sense, it was typical for many who were responsible for the genesis of modern Korean literature to embark on literary escapades that crossed linguistic boundaries. These activities included not only the translation of distinguished foreign texts into Korean, but also incipient attempts to pen literature in an acquired language like Japanese.

Given that enrollment in government-general sponsored schools remained low throughout the colonial period, it is unlikely that Japanese proficiency in Korea was ever widespread, but the individuals responsible for early poetic production were not necessarily a

[16] Karen Laura Thornber has recounted the multiple ways in which writers who belonged to the Japanese empire, including Koreans, were enmeshed in a regional network of reading that shaped the production of local literary practices. However, as this dissertation reveals, Korean poets did not necessarily imagine themselves as imperial subjects, and oftentimes positioned themselves directly against Western writers, despite mediation from Japan. Karen Laura Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3

[17] As Mark Caprio explains, Japanese authorities believed assimilation to require a unified language in the colony, but initially, there was some debate over how this would become a reality. However, from the wartime period on, Japanese language acquisition was relentlessly pushed in Korea. Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 159.

representative sample of the general population.[18] Even if the idea of a scholar, as someone who dedicated their life to pursuits based in reading and writing, had been engrained in Korean culture for centuries, the specific notion of an intellectual was a modern conception, a designation that referred to a person who had received a Western-style education and earned a living with a pen as their primary tool. This class of individuals sprouted primarily out of the mid to higher rungs of Chosŏn, bolstered by families who had the means to send their children to Japan and support their literary endeavors after they returned home.

Ch'oe Nam-sŏn (1890-1957), a prominent early intellectual and publisher, for example, was born into a family that belonged to the middle *chungin* class, his father a skilled technician employed by the government, who also ran a traditional medicine establishment that accumulated a significant amount of wealth. These financial assets, and his father's connections among low-ranking officials, helped Ch'oe to become a government-funded *hwangsil yuhaksaeng* (royal foreign student) in Japan and provided him with the means to start a publishing business once he returned to Korea.[19] But for most, literature was not an economically viable trade on its own. Oftentimes writers sought regular employment as teachers or reporters that provided the bulk of their income. This was especially true of poets, who could not rely on the profits of serialization that sustained the most successful novelists. In effect, the economic constraints of literary life meant that the early poets of modern Korea were a select crowd of predominately young men, a contradiction in light of how their collective project was to erect a form of poetic writing that could be adopted by all of their brethren.

[18] Despite the effort to expand education and spur Japanese language acquisition, enrollment remained between five and ten percent of the population. Ibid., 207.
[19] Administrators often chose the children of their colleagues to receive government funding to study abroad. Yi Yŏng-hwa, *Ch'oe Nam-sŏn ŭi yŏksahak* [The Historical Scholarship of Ch'oe Nam-sŏn] (Seoul: Kyŏngin Munhwasa, 2003), 25-26.

The call to develop a national literature during the colonial period—a time when the Korean nation, as an internationally recognized polity, had been abolished—was another defining contradiction of this messy chapter in literary history. National sentiment remained steady during the 1920s in the aftermath of the March First Movement of 1919, although open expression of these feelings was curbed by the watchful eyes of the government-general. Translation fueled the early stages of building a national literature by shining a light inward on areas that could be further developed in response to advances that were occurring abroad. For this reason, early translators concentrated their efforts on the mass importation of foreign texts into Korean, rather than the distribution of domestic literature outward into the international sphere. Such translation can be best described as a negotiation between cultures, resulting not in transference, but what Lydiu Liu has described as the invention of new meanings in the host language (in this case Korean).[20] As Naoki Sakai has argued, interlingual translation should not be conceived as the transference of meaning between languages, but as the very act that constructs the impression of national language as a distinct, self-enclosed sphere.[21] Using analogous logic, Korean intellectuals sought to use translation as a key implement in the creation of a national literature, aspirationally defined for its capacity to act as a vehicle of expression for the Korean people.

[20] Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity---China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 26.
[21] Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1997), 1-17.

Poetic Transformations in the Early Modern Period

Poetry occupied a central role in the national literature project, and yet, has been marginalized by contemporary English-language studies that have predominately focused on the novel and short story under the assumption that these were the quintessential forms of modern literature.[22] This bias is rampant in the field of East Asian studies, a concession to the logic of the market that classifies verse as a harder sell to undergraduates in comparison to prose. But since the inception of modern literature, poetry has remained a popular form of literary expression in Korea. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the split between prose and poetry as distinct professional domains was a line that could be crossed without hesitation. There were plenty of writers who could be primarily classified as either poets or novelists, but it was common for most to dabble in both forms before establishing a firm literary identity. Given the conciseness of the form, poetry was particularly amenable to the occasional dalliance, unlike the novel, which necessitated a longer period of commitment. The most well-known novelists of the period, including names like Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950) and Yŏm Sang-sŏp (1897-1963), penned poetry in addition to the work for which they are best remembered.

[22] A handful of English-language dissertations about modern Korean poetry have appeared in the last twenty years, although none have been published as academic monographs. In the first, Anne Young Choi characterizes 1920s poetry in terms of a dialectic between traditional didacticism and modern individual expression. Meanwhile, Wayne de Fremery explores 1920s poetry from a material perspective, noting how print shaped the reception of poetry during this critical decade. Finally, Jung Ja Choi examines women's poetry from the modern to contemporary periods, focusing on the relationship between gender and the lyric genre. Anne Young Choi, "Overcoming the Purity of Purpose: Korean Poetry of the 1920s" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2000), 17-18; Peter Wayne de Fremery, "How Poetry Mattered in 1920s Korea" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011), 4; Jung Ja Choi, "Writing Herself: Resistance, Rebellion, and Revolution in Korean Women's Lyric Poetry, 1925-2012" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014), 2.

As Korea began to modernize, poetry was understood to be a key form of literature that was instrumental to the establishment of a national culture. For this reason, even intellectuals with interests broader than literature like the aforementioned Ch'oe Nam-sŏn weighed in on the direction of vernacular poetry and tried their hand at composition. In 1909, Sin Ch'ae-ho (1880-1936), another such individual who is most well-known for penning some of Korea's earliest modern histories, published an article in *Taehan maeil sinbo* that functioned as a mission statement for poets to follow. He called for 1) all poetry to be written in the Korean language, 2) for it to further the national spirit and consciousness, and 3) for poets to discover new forms of expression.[23] From the beginning, the premise of vernacular poetry was enmeshed in the desire to represent domestic culture as an articulation of national strength. The function of all poetry in modern age, in this sense, was to be political.

Before the advent of vernacular poetry, an assortment of poetic forms was practiced in Korea, setting a precedent for the continued significance of poetry into the modern period. The literati of premodern Korea inherited the notion of *si* (poetry) from China.[24] In Chosŏn, *yangban* children were subjected to a classical education that had them memorize a substantial amount of poetry, including complete texts such as *The Book of Songs*. Composition was also directly incorporated into preparation to assume the responsibilities of being a government official. During the civil service examination, aspiring appointees were tasked with generating a poem on the spot, to be constructed out of elements prescribed by test administrators. Given this extensive training, literati did not abandon poetry after assuming their posts, but continued to write as a

[23] Kwŏn Yŏng-min, *Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhaksa* [A History of Modern Korean Literature], vol. 1 (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2002), 151-153.
[24] In Korea, *hansi* began to be composed in earnest at the end of Later Silla (668-935) and beginning of Koryŏ (935-1170). Yi Chong-muk, *Uri hansi rŭl ikta* [Reading Our *Hansi*] (Seoul: Tolbegae, 2009), 17.

leisure activity, generating a large corpus of *hansi* (Sino-Korean poems) that utilized Chinese to talk about Korean subject matter. In the elite society of this age, poetic knowledge was esteemed as an indicator of one's cultivation.

Commoners who lacked a background in classical Chinese literature enjoyed another kind of poetry in the guise of song. *Minyo* (folk songs) were a communal activity shared during everyday tasks such as labor in the fields. As a form of oral literature, they were handed down without a paper record, and therefore have no attributed author.[25] Despite these fundamental differences, folk songs bare a closer resemblance to vernacular poems in form and language than the Sino-Korean poetry composed by the elites. The kinship between songs and poetry during the early twentieth century is evident in the way in which poems were commonly referred to as either *norae* (songs) or *siga* (poem songs). Revered poets like Kim So-wŏl (1902-1934) were praised for how their poems resembled the music of ordinary folk, his body of work often classified as *minyojo sŏjŏngsi* (lyrics in the folk song style). The movement from song to poem is a transformation that also took place in Western cultures—evinced by the etymological roots of the term "lyric" in the lyre—albeit centuries earlier and over a comparatively longer span of time. In Korea, this process was truncated as intellectuals scrambled to invent vernacular poetry as a written literature that was to be distinguished from song. Translation was instrumental as a catalyst to help guide this progression along.

The merger between songs and poetry in Korea was concomitant with the introduction of print. As Yu Chong-ho has argued, the arrival of mass-produced print media such as newspapers

[25] Roald Maliangkay, *Broken Voices: Postcolonial Entanglements and the Preservation of Korea's Traditions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), 53.

and magazines reformulated how poetry was distributed and read in the modern world.[26] In the past, *hansi* were shared only among literati, who constituted a relatively small segment of society, but poetry in the age of print could be spread widely throughout the entire peninsula. Literature was no longer just an educational tool or leisure activity, but a product in want of readers, who could also be described as consumers. The first poems to appear in newspapers like *Tongnip sinmun* have been retroactively described as *kaehwagi si* (enlightenment era poems), named for the period in history following the Treaty of Kanghwa (Kangwado choyak) of 1876, when Chosŏn struggled to reform itself in the image of the West. These poems, which included forms such as the *kaehwagasa* (enlightenment *kasa*), appropriated traditional forms to lobby critiques of targets like the ruling class and pro-Japanese groups.[27] Premodern poetic forms such as *hansi* continued to appear in print alongside vernacular poems into the 1920s, but were soon overtaken in numbers by the latter.[28] As Wayne de Fremery has pointed out, the advent of the publishing industry called for a new manner of literary production, in which not only the author of a text, but also those who printed it, were responsible for the final product.[29] Elements such as typesetting and spacing were vital contributors to how poems generated meaning on the page.

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[26] Yu Chong-ho. Han'guk kŭndae sisa: 1920-1945 [The History of Modern Korean Poetry: 1920-1945] (Seoul: Minŭm sa, 2011), 25.

[27] Targets of critique can be divided into four categories: political figures, factions in society such as religious groups, broad ideological groups (conservatives and progressives), and foreign powers. Chang Sung-jin, *Kaehwagasa ŭi chuje pŏmju* [Thematic Categories of Enlightenment *Kasa*], *Munhwa wa yunghap* 28 (May 2006): 107-108.

[28] Cho Tong-il, *Han'guk Munhak T'ongsa* [A Comprehensive History of Korean Literature], vol. 5 (Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 2005), 68-74.

[29] Wayne de Fremery notes that a small number of individuals were responsible for printing poetry books in colonial Korea. More than forty percent produced in the 1920s were published by Hansŏng Tosŏ Chusik Hoesa. Wayne de Fremery, "Printshops, Pressman, and the Poetic Page in Colonial Korea," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 3, no.1 (May 2014): 188.

Vernacular Lyrics in the 1920s

The lyric, defined broadly as a short poem steeped in metaphorical language, is an appropriate rubric through which to appreciate much of the vernacular poetry that appeared in 1920s Korea. To be sure, a range of poetic texts proliferated in this decade, including poems composed in the social realist mode by proletarian writers, packed with the grimy texture of impoverished reality, or the high modernist experiments of someone like Yi Sang (1910-1937), who approached poetry in print as a visual medium that confounded conventional methods of reading. Still, the most popular poetic genre was the lyric as a supremely personal form of writing that evolved to harbor political implications that evoked an imagined national community. Although the term *sŏjŏngsi*, itself a translation of the word "lyric," is ubiquitous in contemporary discussions in Korea, in the 1920s, the designation was less common, with poems that would be retroactively designated as examples of the genre identified then as *chayusi* (free verse poems) for what was perceived to be their most distinguishing feature. As discussed in the chapters that follow, this prominent type of vernacular poetry first transpired out of an appreciation for the indirect language of French Symbolist poetry, then evolved in the mid-1920s into a vehicle to interrogate life beneath the shroud of imperialism.

The study of the lyric and its attendant theories remains a vibrant site of critical inquiry, but one that has been built almost entirely on the basis of Western literature.[30] Examining neglected strains of the lyric from other regions of the world like Korea can help to contest the unspoken supposition that the canons of the United States, England, France, Germany and other

[30] Despite the origins of lyric theory in the West, Earl Miner argues that it is important to consider the lyric in relation to other cultures. He contends that the lyric, a non-mimetic genre, is particularly suitable to the consideration of non-Western conceptions of literature that do not prioritize representation. Earl Miner, "Why Lyric?" in *Renewal of Song: Renovation in Lyric Conception and Practice*, eds. Earl Miner and Amiya Dev (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2000), 5.

cultural centers of the twentieth century are universally representative, but this comparison should not stop at the mere collation of particular characteristics that ultimately serve to reify the impression of intrinsic cultural differences. As this dissertation reveals, the practice of composing and reading lyrics in 1920s Korea was developed out of a specific history that can be unspooled in detail. The importance of translation to the emergence of vernacular poetry in Korea is a testament to how such development did not take place in a vacuum, but in conversation with texts from around the world.

Many classic theories of the lyric champion the genre for the way they perceive it to resist any such cross-cultural entanglements as a heightened mode of internal expression. Hegel, for instance, contrasts the lyric with the epic poem, which he describes in opposite terms as a form that prioritizes mimetic representation:

> Since epic poetry brings its subject-matter before our contemplation as something obviously alive, whether in its underlying universality or in the manner of a sculpture or a painting, then, at least when it reaches its height, the poet who imagines and feels disappears in his poetic activity before the objectivity of his creation. This alienation of himself can only be completely avoided by the artist on his subjective side if on the one hand he absorbs into *himself* the entire world of objects and circumstances, and stamps them with his own inner consciousness, and if, one the other hand, he discloses his self-concentrated heart, opens his eyes and ears, raises purely dull feeling into vision and ideas, and gives words and language to this enriched inner life so that as inner life it may find expression.[31]

Whereas Hegel sees the poet as a figure that inevitably disappears into the words of an epic poem—their absence generating an unwelcome sense of alienation caused by the reader's inability to situate themselves in relation to the object under contemplation—the lyric provides the opposite possibility as a medium that allows the entirety of the world to be filtered through the perceptions of a single individual. Aristotle famously saw mimesis as the raison d'etre of

[31] G.W.F. Hegel, "Poetry," in *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1975), 1111.

literature, and therefore relegated the lyric to a secondary category of writing below the epic and dramatic poem, but Hegel asserts that literature should not represent reality as it is, and instead, provide a clear framework through which it can be understood.[32]

Other respected theories of the lyric further withdraw away from mimesis to embrace the form as the antithesis of rational expression. These formulations are premised on the popular conception of poetry as an innate kind of language, closely tied to universal human perception, that exists in a realm beyond culture, and even the individual as a filter for reality. In analyzing poetry from Germany's Romantic era, Emil Staiger, for example, posits that the lyric is intrinsically suited to the communication of what Heidegger identified as *stimmung* (mood), a feeling that is suffused with associations to the past. For Staiger, lyricism, as a quality that all poems, even epics, contain to a certain degree, is defined as the union between meaning and music, which can be acutely felt in moments when elements of narration fall away.[33] This synchronic characterization of the genre, based on intuitive readings of major poetics texts, serves to uphold poetry as privileged literary form, but ignores its past and present entwinement with other forms of writing that ground the lyric in a discernable literary history.

A favorite preoccupation of more historically-inclined critics has been to chart the artistic lineage of major poets, generating schemes that frame influence as a kind of direct inspiration that takes place on the micro-level of individual actors. Harold Bloom, for example, borrows a page from Freud in proposing that every poet's work is chiefly informed by a precursor from

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[32] Like Aristotle, Plato believed poetry to be mimetic, but he understood its function to replicate reality to be fundamentally deceptive, hence his call to ban poets from his ideal society: "the tragic poet is an imitator, and therefore, like all other imitators, he is thrice removed from the king and from the truth."

[33] Emil Staiger, *Basic Concepts of Poetics*, ed. Marianne Burkhard and Luanne T. Frank, trans. Janette C. Hudson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 43-96.

whom they may either successfully deviate, embarking upon a distinguished career, or succumb to replication and fail to assert their own creative identity.[34] Along these lines, T.S. Eliot much earlier warned against the tendency to celebrate a poet for what is perceived to be their unique qualities, and instead, suggested that a poet's actual value should be considered in terms of how they continue a tradition inherited from past luminaries.[35] Although Bloom and Eliot destabilize the notion that a writer can exist outside history, both reaffirm a universal canon of literature as a list of great names that looms over all literary activity in the present. This paradigm is particularly troublesome when applied to writing beyond a single hemisphere in that it prefigures intercultural translation as funnel for Western sophistication, rather than a tool deliberately mobilized by intellectuals in the periphery to reconfigure domestic methodologies.

Dissertation Structure

In order to elucidate the trajectory of translation's impact upon poetic writing in Korea, this dissertation is divided into three body chapters that chart the development of vernacular poetry in the 1920s. Each chapter is centered on an individual poet whose output was affected by translation. To avoid the limited range of the single author study, which remains a major mode of critical inquiry in relation to Korean literature, I have situated the poets within the backdrop of three larger issues: 1) literary translation undertaken as a component of original composition 2)

[34] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5-6.
[35] T.S. Eliot observes, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), 44.

the politics of vernacular poetry, and 3) the development of free verse rhythm in a bilingual context.

Chapter One, "Writing in Translation: Kim Ŏk and the Emergence of the Vernacular Poem in Korea" argues that during the early 1920s, translation was employed as an intermediate step in the composition of original poems. The chapter takes the translator and poet Kim Ŏk (1896-?) as its subject. Many literary histories identify Kim's collection of foreign poetry translations, *The Dance of Agony* (Onoe ŭi mudo), as a major influence upon poetic composition in the 1920s. A comparison between his translations and his own poems, which have largely been ignored by previous scholarship, reveals the extensive reuse of language from the former in the latter. The purpose of translation during this formative era was not to be read in order to experience foreign literature in the manner of contemporary translation, but rather to serve as a model in the creation of original literature. Kim's recontexualization of phrases and images from *The Dance of Agony* in his own poetry, thereby altering their original meaning, serves as an illustration of how he employed translation in order to develop a new way to write poems that conveyed his personal worldview. His poetry showed the potential of expressing subjectivity through nature, a technique adopted by many of his successors that lead to the establishment of the lyric genre in Korea.

Chapter Two, "Translating Romance: Reading Han Yong-un," asserts that the indirectness of poetic language in the 1920s was informed by an intellectual environment of mass translation. The focus of the chapter is Han Yong-un (1879-1944), the Buddhist monk whose seminal poetry collection *The Silence of Love* (Nim ŭi ch'immuk) has been celebrated by postwar critics, who praised its central motif of the absent beloved as an incisive metaphor for the loss of Korea's sovereignty to Japan. By paying close attention to Han's use of form, this

chapter argues that his poetry is more significant for the way it inculcated an approach to reading poetry that embraced indeterminacy, encouraging his readers to become active interpreters. He employed love as an abstract theme to simultaneously evoke the concurrent rise of romantic love in popular culture, the poetry and philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), as well as the theme of love as loyalty from premodern Korean poetry. These competing discourses all circulated during the 1920s as translation enabled the extensive importation of various cultures old and new. By deliberating invoking language and ideas from multiple sources, Han not only enabled his poetry to speak to a general readership, but also to suggest the makings of a national community unified in the 1920s by a collective sense of absence.

Chapter Three, "Translating Rhythm: Chŏng Chi-yong and the Development of Free Verse," argues that translation during the 1920s influenced the way poets approached free verse rhythm. The chapter examines the Japanese-language poetry of Chŏng Chi-yong (1902-1950), one of Korea's most celebrated modernist poets, and demonstrates how the formative experience of writing in a second language shaped the rhythm of the Korean-language poems for which he is best remembered. Chŏng's bilingual writing illustrates the importance of self-translation to the development of colonial writers, who were compelled to negotiate multiple languages. When he was a student in Japan, he published poems in both Japanese and Korean, sometimes translating the same poem into the other language within a short timeframe. This practice of self-translation stimulated Chŏng to develop an approach to rhythm that was divested from the specific soundscape of a single language, and instead relied on patterns of correspondences between images, phrases, and the semantic content of individual lines.

CHAPTER ONE

WRITING IN TRANSLATION:

KIM ŎK AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE VERNACULAR POEM

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) once remarked that there are three kinds of translations, each distinguished by epoch.[1] The observation, now centuries old, remains striking because of the way in which literary histories still largely ignore translation, obscuring how it has transformed over time. Goethe envisioned translation's phases to be sequential, but he admitted that "in every literature all of these three epochs are found to repeat and reverse themselves, as well as exist simultaneously."[2] In the first, translations are written in unadorned prose: all the better to acquaint oneself with the foreign. A translator of the second absorbs themselves in the foreign and comes to represent its ideas as their own. Finally, in the third epoch, the aim of translation is to replace the original. In this highest of epochs, translators are able to achieve perfect correspondence.

Goethe's conceit recognizes gaps between cultures, chasms he believed translation would help bridge over time. The Korean intellectuals who read and imported Western literature in the 1920s felt such a divide, which served as an impetus for them to remake their own literature. To borrow Goethe's language, translation could not yet achieve perfect correspondence. As outlined in the introduction, equivalent forms of writing, which were perceived to be modern, did not yet exist in their own culture.

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[1] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Translations," trans. Sharon Sloan in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004): 64.
[2] Ibid., 65.

The impact of translation upon the formation of modern Korean literature is particularly evident in the case of poetry. The first collection of original vernacular poetry to be published was *The Jellyfish's Song* (Haep'ari ŭi norae) in 1923. Its author was Kim Ŏk (1896-?), who emerged as one of the first prolific translators of foreign poetry. Just two years prior, Kim released *The Dance of Agony* (Onoe ŭi mudo, 1921), the first vernacular poetry collection, which consisted of translations originally written by foreign poets, many of them French Symbolists.[3] The close appearance of these two books, both authored by the same individual, is representative of the vital link between translation and poetic writing during this decade. For Kim, translation was a means to freely experiment with language, not a process of replication. By translating, he sought to demonstrate the possibility of writing poetry that communicated the emotional state of an individual through the obliqueness of metaphor. As such, an examination of his early publications serves as a telling example of the way in which translation helped to inform original writing. As this chapter will reveal, what are commonly thought of as two distinct processes often blurred together in practice.

This chapter illustrates how Kim employed translation as a testing ground for a new poetic language. Scholars such as Theresa Hyun have argued that translation empowered early twentieth-century Korean writers like Kim to import Western literary forms. By highlighting the agency of the translator, Hyun and others conceive this process as one of reception, not influence, which implies the forced imposition of ideas.[4] Still, the model of translation being

[3] A second edition of *The Dance of Agony*, which included additional translations, was released in 1923, the same year as *The Jellyfish's Song* initial publication.
[4] Theresa Hyun contends that Kim "acquired many poetic techniques through his translations of Western poetry, which enabled him to go beyond traditional forms and express modern emotions." Theresa Hyun, *Translation and Early Modern Korean Literature* (Seoul: Si wa sihaksa, 1992), 139.

proposed remains one of transference, in which literary forms are transported from one region of the world to another. By uncovering Kim's process as a translator and poet, this chapter complicates this model. For Kim, translation was a medium of linguistic experimentation, a workshop for developing language to be reused in his original poems.

Kim's ultimate goal was to create an idiom of vernacular poetry in Korea that was commensurate to the foreign literature he had encountered in Japan. Ku In Mo contends that Kim glimpsed new possibilities for Korean poems when he considered them outside the national frame in an international context that included Western, Chinese, and Japanese poetry.[5] In this sense, Kim understood the fledgling corpus of modern Korean poetry to be already enmeshed in a vast network of texts. He focused his energy inward, rather than on the exportation of Korean verse abroad, believing the potential of poetry in his mother tongue to be untapped.

This chapter begins by considering Kim's early criticism from the mid-1910s, writing that reveals an acute anxiety about modernity described in a manner that mirrors the opacity of his poems. Many Korean intellectuals who were interested in the possibilities of Western literature shared his concern and the conviction that poetry could address the problems of their era. His apprehension about modernity manifested in his poems as a tragic sense of time expressed indirectly through descriptions of the natural world. Kim first articulated the merits of allusion in articles he wrote about French Symbolist poetry, many examples of which he would translate and include in *The Dance of Agony*. The last sections of the chapter examine Kim's creative process as a translator and poet. By comparing his translations in *The Dance of Agony* with his original poems in *The Jellyfish's Song*, Kim's tendency to extensively rework elements

[5] Ku In Mo, *Han'guk kŭndaesi ŭi isang kwa hŏsang:1920-yŏndae 'kungmin munhak' ŭi nolli* [The Ideal and Illusion of Modern Korean Poetry] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2008), 46.

from the former in the latter is revealed in concrete examples. In the end, Kim established a paradigm of vernacular poetry in which poems function as vessels for the expression of a single individual's worldview. He laid the groundwork for the vernacular poets who would debut later in the 1920s.

Poetry in the Modern World

Kim Ŏk alludes to the pragmatic and psychological difficulties of reimagining Korean poetry in the enigmatic prose passage that opens *The Jellyfish's Song*:

> As April rolls in, my friends all drunk together on the pleasures of life, joy comes to my boneless lump of flesh of a body too, and I am carried to the top of the boundless sea. But my body, unable to move of its own accord, cannot but feebly sink and float in tune to the wind and the waves. As I endeavor to sing with my friends of the sorrows and delights of my anguished chest and heart, pitifully, I twist my body, which from birth knew no words nor "rhymes," for it to sink, float, and suffer. This is my song. And my song is strange and beautiful.[6]

Slotted alongside the more conventional prefaces at the front of the book, the above paragraph fulfills the role of an introduction by preparing the reader to better appreciate the content of the pages to follow. Kim writes in an analogous manner to how he composes poetry, employing allusion rather than direct description to communicate his message. The sentences are written in the voice of a jellyfish, not Kim's own, but by framing the text as a preface, where the author would ordinarily offer commentary in their own persona, Kim encourages readers to look for parallels between the jellyfish and himself.

Kim uses personification to conjure the inner life of the jellyfish, who is preoccupied with the affairs of its friends (*tongmu*) and the tortured state of its heart (*mam*). It is not difficult to imagine Kim as the jellyfish, given the way that these concerns are articulated in familiar

[6] Kim Ŏk, *Haep'ari ŭi norae* [The Jellyfish's Song] (Seoul: Chosŏn tosŏ, 1923), 1.

terminology, but the extended metaphor is sustained to the end of the passage, the hazy line between man and animal never completely collapsing. The application of this rhetorical device in the introduction of *The Jellyfish's Song* serves to establish a precedent that the poems of the book follow. Kim believed that allusion allowed him to capture the ineffable aspects of life that eluded direct representation. Although Kim remains obscure as a poet from the standpoint of literary history, scholars have consistently noted the role he played in introducing French Symbolist poetry to Korea, as well as his influence upon the following generation of poets.[7]

Born in the year 1896—the final year of the Kabo kaehyŏk (Kabo Reforms) and a turning point between the premodern and modern eras—Kim grew up as the eldest son of a large family in Northern Pyŏngan Province, located on the west coast of contemporary North Korea. From an early age, he excelled at learning, and was enrolled in Osan hakkyo (Osan School), where he met Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950), who had been employed there as a teacher since returning from Japan in 1910.[8] Kim too would leave Korea as an international student upon graduation, attending Keiō gijuku daigaku (Keiō University), where he joined the Department of English Literature. In Tokyo, Kim was an active participant in the Chae Tonggyŏng Chosŏn yuhaksaeng hagu hoe (Fellow Korean Students Association in Tokyo), contributing essays, translations, and original poems to its periodical *Hakchigwang* (The Light of Learning, 1914-1930), a journal that also

[7] Jang Cheul-whoan notes that critics have typically divided Kim's career into two parts. The first, beginning from the second half of the 1910s, is the stage for which he is best known, defined by a concerted effort toward the introduction of foreign literature, primarily French Symbolist poetry. In the second stage of his career, beginning in the second half of the 1920s, Kim turned his attention to forms of traditional Korean poetry, culminating in his "Theory of Set-Form Poetry" (Kyŏkcho sihyŏngnon), which advocated the use of fixed rhythm in direct refutation of his earlier embrace of free verse. Jang Cheul-whoan, "Kim Ŏk siron ŭi idŭm ŭisik yŏn'gu: Sihyŏng kwa ŏnŏ ŭi pyŏnmo yangsang ŭl chungsim ŭro" [A Study of Poetic Rhythm in Kim Ŏk's Poetics], *Ŏmun non ch'ong* 53 (December 2010): 436.

[8] Kim Yun-sik, *Yi Kwang-su wa kŭ ŭi sidae* [Yi Kwang-su and His Era], vol. 1 (Seoul: Sol ch'ulp'ansa, 1999), 272.

featured early work by the likes of Na Hye-sŏk (1896-1948), Yi Kwang-su, Kim Tong-in (1900-1951), and Chu Yo-han (1900-1979), among others. Unfortunately, Kim's sojourn in Japan was cut short by his father's unexpected passing in 1916.[9] He returned to Korea and accepted a position at Osan hakkyo to support his family as he pursued a fledgling literary career.

Scholarship about Kim continues to be produced at a steady rate, but most research focuses on his pivotal role in the formation of vernacular poetry as an early translator, ignoring the range of his output that included essays, novels, lyrics, literary theories, and original poems.[10] In particular, much has been written about the influence of Kim's translations upon other poets, especially his own pupil, Kim So-wŏl (1902-1934), who has received substantial recognition for the landmark poetry collection *Azaleas* (Chindallaekkot, 1925). Much less attention has been given to Kim Ŏk's own poetry, which many critics only value for historical reasons, not its literary merit. And yet, in order to understand Kim's methodology as a translator, it is important to consider his Korean-language renditions of foreign poems alongside his original compositions. In both, he strove to develop a kind of vernacular poetry that foregrounded modes of indirect expression such as allusion.

Kim saw allusion as a universal tool that could be employed by poets of any culture, including his own. Although he never explicitly expressed this sentiment, his critical writing and

[9] The Chae Tonggyŏng Chosŏn yuhaksaeng hagu hoe was a social organization that connected Korean students abroad in Tokyo. In addition to fulfilling the practical function of distributing news, *Hakchigwang* printed a wide variety of items including essays, academic papers, travel diaries, as well as literature, both original and translated. Kwon Yu-Seong, "1910-yŏndae *Hakchigwang* sojae munyeron yŏn'gu" [A Study on the Theory of Literature in *Hakchigwang* Published in the 1910s], *Han'guk minjok munhwa* 45 (November 2012): 25.

[10] Ku In Mo argues that future studies about Kim should account for the various aspects of his career as a way to shed light on the contradictory aspects of literary production during the colonial period. Ku In Mo, "Kim Ŏk yŏn'gu ŭi hyŏn tan'gye wa kwaje" [The Current Stage and Tasks of Kim Ŏk Research], *Tongak ŏmunhak* 71 (May 2017): 171.

sustained engagement with foreign literature illustrate a belief that he belonged to the greater community of writers around the world. Scholars of literary influence such as Pascale Casanova have discussed the relationship between writers of the periphery, like Kim, and those of the center (Paris) in terms of perceived gaps in time.[11] But while Kim and his contemporaries certainly felt the need to renew their literature as the result of the texts they had read abroad, there is little to suggest that he saw Korea to be backward in the way that Casanova suggests. On the contrary, Kim espouses a sense of kinship to the French Symbolists, who he believed to be dealing with the same issue as himself in their writing: modernity. His critique of modernity in his prose and poetry is vague, although his contemporaries would explain his discontent with more clarity. Kim's unhappiness with his era explains the mournful character of his poetry, which employs allusion to echo his thoughts about the changing world. Although Kim never explicitly connects these metaphors to his anxiety about modernity, reading his poetry in conjunction with his early essays reveals a clear association. The model of poetry that Kim demonstrated was one in which the individual engaged with the world through the mediation of metaphor.

In "The Artistic Life: For H" (Yesulchŏk saengwal - H kun ege, 1915), an article that he published as a student in *Hakchigwang*, Kim presents himself as a man of culture, someone whose life revolves around the creation and appreciation of art. He argues that art and life combine to form a union (*habil*), an idea that he offers as a rejection of the slogan "art is for its own sake, but not for the life's sake."[12] Kim provides this quotation in English, an indication of

[11] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. Malcom DeBevoise (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 9.
[12] Kim Ŏk, "Yesulchŏk saengwal - H kun ege" [The Artistic Life: For H], *Hakchigwang* [The Light of Learning] 6 (1915): 60-61.

his facility in that particular Western language, but the original source is undoubtedly the phrase *l'art pour l'art* ("art for art's sake") from nineteenth century France. He favored art that engaged with and was created in support of life, a point of view shared by other contributors to *Hakchigwang* in the 1910s.[13] Kim writes, "The art that I seek is improved, created, and developed through life because art can be understood as both a reformer and an imitator. In other words, what improves, reforms, creates, develops, and imitates life is art, and I advocate art that exists for the sake of life."[14] The invocation of a term like "reform" (*kaehyŏk*) is indicative of the extent to which he conceived art as a force capable of influencing the realm beyond the written word.

Although Kim would later change his mind about the relationship between art and life, his concern about the changing world remained evident throughout his career in subtler ways. In another article, written in the following year for the same journal titled "Exigency and Remorse" (Yogu wa hoehan, 1916), he paints a grim picture of his present moment as a citizen of the modern world, which he describes as lacking positive values. In a continuation of the art-for-life philosophy he outlined in "The Artistic Life: For H," Kim pairs aesthetic and moral values together to express his concern about both. Describing the human condition, he writes, "Seeking and searching, but in the end struggling, no way of finding what you are after in sight, as you take one more step, you taste—to be specific—the baseness of being unable to find beauty, the

[13] Kwon Yu-Seong identifies similarities between Kim and Ch'oe Sŭng-ku (1829-1917), another poet who theorized the relationship between art and life in *Hakchigwang*, who concluded that only art "based upon and affirmed life" (*saengwal e kŭnjŏdoego hwaksirhi kŭngjŏngŏnŭn*) was meaningful. Kwon notes that both Kim and Ch'oe emphasized the role of the individual in art, but were also concerned with reforming the problems of the larger group (*chiptan*). Kwon Yu-Seong, "1910-yŏndae *Hakchigwang* sojae munyeron yŏn'gu" [A Study on the Theory of Literature in *Hakjikwang* Published in 1910's], *Han'guk minjok munhwa* 45 (2012): 36-44.
[14] Kim Ŏk, "Yesulchŏk saengwal: H kun ege" [The Artistic Life: For H], *Hakchigwang*, 1915, 61.

fiction of being unable to locate truth, the evil of being unable to obtain good—and in that moment, you feel longing."[15] Later in the article, Kim continues, "Therefore, every moment of life is remorse, misery, fear, gloom, and the anxiety that comes from a searching, nostalgic heart."[16] The world that Kim observes may lack beauty (*mi*), truth (*chin*), and virtue (*sŏn*), but his professed feelings of longing (*tonggyŏng*) and nostalgia (*ch'uhoe*) for an idealized past reveals these circumstances to be specific to his current moment, rather than a timeless condition. For Kim, these lost values are signs of the impoverishment of the modern world.

"Exigency and Remorse" is also notable for serving as Kim's introduction of Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) and Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), two poets whom he would extensively translate, as examples of artists who address the deplorable conditions he describes. However, because of the article's short length, he is unable to provide an extended discussion of either poet. Instead, the reader senses that Kim sees these two figures, whom he names, anticipating familiarity, without even a perfunctory word of explanation, more as exemplary peers who were confronted with the same circumstances as himself rather, than literary giants to be deified. On the basis of this sense of kinship, it is possible to conclude that Kim conceives the absence of values to be a universal, rather than particular problem. "Exigency and Remorse" lacks any references to Korea or its specific hardships, topics that later poets would more readily broach.

Kim's pessimism was shared by many of his peers. *The Dance of Agony*, his seminal collection of translated poetry, opens with a single original poem signed by Yubang, the penname of Kim Yŏng-ch'an (1889-1960), a painter and writer who was Kim's fellow coterie

[15] Kim Ŏk, "Yogu wa hoehan" [Exigency and Remorse], in *Kim Ŏk p'yŏngnon sŏnjip* [Kim Ŏk's Collected Criticism], ed. Kim Jinhee (Seoul: Chisik ŭl mandŭnŭn chisik, 2015), 9.
[16] Ibid.

member for the literary magazines *Ch'angjo* (Creation, 1919-1921) and *P'yehŏ* (Ruins, 1920-1). The poem, adorned only with the text "In the Dance of Agony" (Onoe ŭi mudo e), describes the hell of existence:[17]

삶은 죽음을 위하여 났다.
누가 알았으랴, 불같은 오뇌의 속에
울음 우는 목숨의 부르짖음을.....
춤추라, 노래하라, 또한 그리워하라.
오직 생명의 그윽한 고통의 선 위에
애달픈 찰나의 열락의 점을 구하라.
붉은 입술, 붉은 술, 붉은 구름은
오뇌의 춤추는 온갖의 생명 위에
향기로운 남국의 꽃다운 '빛',
'旋律', '諧調', 夢幻의 '리듬'을.....
오직 취하여, 잠 들으라,
乳香 높은 어린이의 행복의 꿈같이-
오직 전설의 세계에서,
신화의 나라에서.....

Life began for the sake of death.
Who knew? Amid the fire-like agony
The screams of a sobbing life…
Dance, sing, and yearn.
Find a speck of delight in a heartrending moment
Atop only the line of life's profound pain.
Red lips, red drink, red clouds
Above all life that dances that dance of agony
Drink up only the fragrant flower-like 'light' from the south
The 'beat,' 'harmony,' phantasmal 'rhythm'...
And sleep the happy dream
Of a child high on frankincense
Only in the world of legend
The country of myth…[18]

Although not personally penned by Kim Ŏk, the poem functions as a concise explanation for the title of his collection. Beginning from the first line, the tone is nihilistic, with all of life's meaning consigned to its destruction in death. The world is described in terms of suffering that is compared to the heat of a flame. Life is torture, eliciting tears and screams in place of intelligible language. Meanwhile, the speaker of the poem commands the reader to "dance, sing, and yearn,"

[17] In the 1923 reprint of *The Dance of Agony*, the header of the poem was altered to read "As a Preface to *The Dance of Agony*" (*Onoe ŭi mudo* ŭi mŏri e), which suggests "The Dance of Agony," the text that accompanied the poem in the original 1921 edition, was not intended to be the title. Kim Yŏng-ch'an, "*Onoe ŭi mudo ŭi mŏri e*" [Preface to *The Dance of Agony*], in *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony], ed. Kim Ŏk, 2nd ed. (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1923), 3.
[18] Kim Yŏng-ch'an, "Onoe ŭi mudo e" [In the Dance of Agony], in *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony], ed. Kim Ŏk (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 3.

the implication being that these activities may act as a means of escape, although any relief is but a "speck of delight in a heartrending moment." These are the conditions of life.

The second half of the poem discusses the possibility of temporary escape in more detail. Liberation takes place in the space above life, above the heads of the people, who, the reader is told, "dance the dance of agony." Although dance has been established as one of three possible doors to the relief of short-lived delight, "the dance of agony" functions as a metaphor for simply living in the world, an activity in which all living things partake. Everyone suffers, and all seek a moment's respite. The sensuality of the color red, associated with lips, alcohol, and weightless clouds, is suggestive of the allure of fantasy. Finally, the speaker exhorts the reader to drink and soak in the light that emanates from the south (*namguk*), somewhere faraway and removed from the shackles of modernity, but also, crucially, to take in beat, harmony, and phantasmal rhythm. These are the central components of poetry. Poems, in this way, are presented as implements of relief, but their effects are not permanent. Escape is only possible in the temporary world of dreams, notably those of a child, which are compared to "the world of legend" and "the country of myth." All three are associated not only with fantasy, but also with the past. Legends and myths, however, do not correspond to the historical past, but an idealized, imagined time.

In his introduction to *The Dance of Agony*, Yŏm Sang-sŏp (1897-1963), who would go on to achieve fame as a novelist, echoes many of the sentiments expressed in Kim Yŏng-ch'an's poem. Whereas Kim Ŏk and Kim Yŏng-ch'an only intimated that the crisis they described was a phenomenon of the current moment, Yŏm is more explicit. He identifies the problem as being "modern" (*kŭndae*) in nature:

> If that which dances and consoles the heart as it is torn apart by endless agony is not already a poem then what is it? Indeed, of those who revel in modern life, who does not dance the dance of anguish and suffering? If the one who hides lips wet with bitter tears behind a mask and cannot help but give themselves over, in sync

> to the music, to the dark hand of fate is not a modern man, what are they? Is the black but bright world, the black but bright dark interior not the heart of modern man? But in the end, this mentality makes a mockery of one's life, and one realizes they are not their delusions. In general, people are this way for the sake of life, with a fervent love of life.[19]

Although equally dense with metaphor, this prose passage offers a clearer picture of the circumstances depicted in Kim Yŏng-ch'an's poem. Yŏm opens with a rhetorical question that upholds poetry as a salve to the modern heart. He personifies the art form when he says poems dance in a comparison to a human being as someone who revels in the joys of modern life but also suffers. For him, poems are important because they function as a mirror and a source of escape. Throughout the text, Yŏm underscores the inherent duality of the modern. A modern human being, for example, finds pleasure and pain in equal measure. They conceal themselves behind a mask, and yet, give themselves over to the power of music. Their heart, a synecdoche of the world, is "black but bright," a condition that makes a mockery of life, but stems from a fervent passion for the same. According to Yŏm, modern human beings are trapped within these multiple contradictions. As with Kim Yŏng-ch'an's poem, no permanent solution is presented as being even conceivable.

Kim Ŏk often expressed his anxiety in a less direct manner in his own poetry. In *The Jellyfish's Song*, he employs the seasons as a recurring motif in nature poems to indicate the passage of time from the premodern to modern era.[20] Spring is associated with the past, which as

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[19] Yŏm Sang-sŏp, "Onoe ŭi mudo rŭl wihayŏ" [For *The Dance of Agony*], in *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony] by Kim Ŏk (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 6.

[20] Nature has been a subject of poetry since its inception. Nevertheless, the relationship between man and nature began to change in the modern era as more and more people uprooted their lives in farming communities and relocated to cities, where they were surrounded by commotion and technology. As Kim Chong-t'ae explains, many poets of the colonial period were not born in cities, although just about all of them quickly became acquainted with urban life in Tokyo and Seoul, the hubs of modern life and the centers of the literary establishment that would provide them with their careers. Given this experience, the relationship of early modern poets with nature

in Kim Yŏng-ch'an's poem, is idealized and portrayed as the object of longing. In this way, the season comes to represent all that has been lost in the present moment. Kim never spells out this extended metaphor, nor does he ever directly indict modernity, as Yŏm Sang-sŏp did, as the primary source of his concern. And yet, if one reads Kim's poems along with his essays, the connection between a general apprehension about modernity and the mournful tone of his poems becomes apparent.

In Kim's poem "Lost Spring" (Irhŏjin pom), discontent about the present moment is submerged in nostalgia for the speaker's hometown. The poem projects a vision of an idealized past given concrete form in the landscape of the untainted countryside. Kim employs vernacular language not as a marker of a fashionable literary trend, but to evoke the purity of nature as a synecdoche for an absent Korea:

잃어진 봄	**Lost Spring**
첫 기러기의 울음소리가 하늘을 울리며 물 긷는 따님의 얼굴이 우물 위에 어리울 때, 거름 실은 소[牛]를 몰고 가는 농군의 싯거리 노래는 앞산 밑을 감도는 뱃노래와 함께 들리는 내 고향 어린 때의 그 봄날이 그리워.	When the goose's first cry rings out in the sky And the face of the girl drawing water is reflected in the well The farmer's gleaning song as he drives the manure carrying cow Echoes alongside the ferryman's song that circles the skirt of the mountain How I long for that spring day in the hometown of my youth.
안개가 따사로운 햇볕을 섧게도 덮으며	When fog sorrowfully covers the warm sunlight

was enmeshed with nostalgia for a childhood home to which they could never return. This longing, Kim notes, arose out of the clash between the world of nature and the artificial world of humans in the modern era. He argues that through their work, poets were searching for a way back to nature in response to this desire. For these poets, nature was not simply just home, but constituted an idealized space to which it was impossible to return. The speed with which modernization took place amplified a sense of anxiety about society. Kim contends that as the space of nature dramatically shrunk, giving way to city streets, the pull of nature only became stronger. Kim Chong-t'ae, *Chayŏn kwa tongsimŭi sihak* [Poetics of Nature and Innocence] (Seoul: Tosŏ ch'ulp'an pogosa, 2009), 13-14.

진달래의 갓 핀 꽃이 빨갛게 꿈 깰 때
菜田 가의 냉이 캐는 아이들의
　　흥얼거리는 소리가
뜰 안에서 어미 찾는 병아리 소리에
　　섞이는
내 고향의 어린 때의 그 봄날이 그리워.

And the azalea, newly bloomed, awakens
　　from a dream in red
Children hum as they pick herbs by the
　　vegetable patch
The sound jumbled with that of a chick in
　　search of its mother in a field
How I long for that spring day in the
　　hometown of my youth.[21]

Desire propels "Lost Spring." As the title suggests, the speaker of the poem longs for a specific spring, the time of their youth, not the season in general. Seasons are cyclical and therefore unable to be lost, but the same is not true of time, which is linear and cannot be recovered. Kim does not stage this insight as a revelation, and instead, focuses on the emotional exigency of the depicted situation. The speaker longs for a spring from their past to which it is impossible to return, and yet, every year, they inevitably encounter a new spring, an echo of the object of desire that functions to resuscitate their memory and renew their feelings of longing. In this way, nostalgia and the pain that it generates are unavoidable.

The poem is divided into two stanzas that parallel one another, each containing four details that prompt memories of days gone by. Kim opens with a goose's call, the reader's first indication that it is spring. The girl and the well of the second line further solidify the sense of place in the countryside. In the next line, Kim shows the image of a farmer singing as he works, another prototypical countryside scene, before moving onto a ferryman as he makes his way around the mountain. He too is singing a song.

The pastoral images "Lost Spring" that combine to convey a sense of loneliness, a state of mind that may be attributed to the poem's speaker, even if they do not appear as a character on the page. Each line of the first stanza depicts an individual or animal engaged in a solitary

[21] Kim Ŏk, *Haep'ari ŭi norae* [The Jellyfish's Song] (Seoul: Chosŏn tosŏ, 1923), 10.

activity. The lone goose calls out for a mate, and the girl draws water in silence. The farmer and the ferryman both sing as they work, their voices employed for the purpose of bestowing comfort, either to themselves or strangers. Despite being told from their perspective, the poem also does not invite the reader to imagine the speaker as a concrete presence within the fictional world. The only instance of direct self-description appears in the one-line refrain that ends both stanzas. Instead, the impression the reader receives from each stanza is of four discrete details, each unrelated to each other, but connected by a similar feeling of longing. The poem is written from the perspective of the speaker's mind. Hence, their body is not visible.

The images and sounds described in the second stanza also suggest spring, but these are not images that conjure a sense of vitality. Instead, the warmth of the sun is shrouded in fog, the blooming azalea is described as if awakening from a dream, and the chick in the field has lost its mother, its sole provider of food, warmth, and protection. Even the innocuous image of children gathering herbs by the side of a vegetable patch becomes tinged with sadness when paired with the stanza-ending refrain, a potent reminder that childhood is fleeting.

Despite the mirrored structure of the poem, the two stanzas have one key difference. In the first, every character, from the goose who pleas to the sky for a mate, to the girl who contemplates her face in the water, betrays a hint of self-awareness. The second stanza, conversely, shows characters either still at the stage of innocence, as in the group of children picking herbs, or in the moment of loss, such as an azalea waking from a dream or a chick in search of its mother. "Lost Spring" contains no sense of progression, not even an emotional climax, but its structure, in this way, is purposeful. As the poem moves along, the reader moves backward from scenes of self-contemplation to images of comparative purity in the process of vanishing. However, neither stanza depicts a completely perfect world. In this way, Kim tacitly

acknowledges that no such ideal hometown exists nor ever did, and yet, his desire for this imaginary place remains potent.

The model of vernacular poetry that Kim established with texts like "Lost Spring" filtered the perspective of the individual through wistful depictions of nature. The speaker's agony can be felt in the accumulation of details, but its volume is muted by the cushion of metaphor, and the source of his frustration is not elucidated in words. In his writing, Kim's discontent with modernity occurs in the realm of emotions, not in the guise of material oppression. In this sense, an unsympathetic critic might argue that the level of engagement demonstrated by his poetry is superficial, a symptom of the privilege he enjoyed as someone with the means to dedicate his life to art. But even if Kim fancied himself an apolitical man of letters who only possessed aesthetic concerns, he could still not divorce his work entirely from life. His original compositions established a precedent for vernacular poetry, written in the mode of lyric, that was principally informed by the present moment.

French Symbolist Poetry in Korea

Poems like "Lost Spring" reveal Kim Ŏk's overt inclination toward an indirect mode of writing. As a critic in the late 1910s, he penned several articles about French poetry that celebrated the virtues of Symbolism.[22] In particular, Kim was attracted to the prominence of allusion in French Symbolist poetry, which he believed allowed for the expression of the

[22] As Ku In-mo points out, Kim Ŏk first encountered French Symbolism in Japan, where, thanks to the efforts of scholars and translators, a domestic Symbolist movement had become a dominant force in the local poetry community. Ku In-mo, "Han'guk ŭi Ilbon sangjingjuŭi munhak pŏnyŏk kwa kŭ suyong: Chu Yo-han kwa Hwang Sŏk-u rŭl chungsim ŭro" [An Essay on the Translation and Reception of Japanese Symbolism in Korea: Chu Yo-han and Hwang Sŏk-u], *Kukche ŏmun* 45 (2009): 108.

mysterious facets of life. These essays provided Kim with a space to formulate a poetics that would inform the composition of his own poems. His critical writing, in this way, played a central role in his development as a poet. For Kim, essays were not an ancillary component of his repertoire, but a medium that provided him with the means to engage with the international artistic community.

After returning home from Japan, Kim began to contribute articles and translations to *T'aesŏ munye sinbo* (Western Literary News*,* 1918-1919).[23] The newspaper, printed every week and sold on street corners, was dedicated to introducing Western literature to its Korean readership. An editorial (*sasŏl*), prominently displayed on the front page of the first issue and penned by Yun Ch'i-ho (1865-1945)—a political activist who previously helped run the Tongnip hyŏphoe (Independence Club) with Sŏ Chae-p'il (Philip Jaisohn, 1864-1951)—succinctly laid out the paper's objective, stating, "After working for many years with a mission to faithfully translate—directly from the original text, written by the brushes of the great literary masters—and publish famous novels, poetry, prose, songs, music, art, plays, as well as ordinary articles about literature from the West, today marks the publication date of our first issue."[24]

Yun's editorial, as the mission statement of *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, is premised on the assumption that Korea must now learn about unfamiliar cultures in order to strengthen its own. No justification is given for the choice of Western literature, but later in the piece, Yun argues that all Koreans need to expand their knowledge of the world (*segye*), reasoning that Koreans share it with other people, and therefore must study to expand their horizons beyond the borders of the peninsula. Although the West as a region is not defined in the editorial, Yun implies that

[23] *T'aesŏ* refers to the West as a region, but is composed of characters that separately mean "big" and "West."
[24] Yun Ch'i-ho, Untitled Editorial, *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, September 26, 1.

he sees it broadly as the home to international literary culture, not as a firm geopolitical unit. Russia, for instance, whose writers such as Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) held prominent positions on the world literary stage at the time, was included under the umbrella of this term.

In the editorial, Yun upholds careful translation as a source of *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*'s authority. Notably, he emphasizes literary fidelity in the promise to source translations from the original language. This pronouncement could read as a rejection of the methods employed by Ch'oe Nam-sŏn (1890-1957), who was not literate in any Western language and relied on Japanese-language renditions of Western literature to pen his translations. More crucially, the statement indicates that Yun, speaking on behalf of the editorial staff, believed literature and language to be intimately connected. Whatever they hoped to learn from Western literature could not be found in its content alone. Linguistic details, presumably preserved by adhering as closely as possible to the original text, were also important. The fact that Yun, who was predominately involved in political activism, forwarded an argument that valued fidelity in translation and lent his voice in support for a literary newspaper demonstrative of the extent to which intellectuals of the time understood literature to be a collective concern of the Korean people.

In the context of modern Korean poetry, *T'aesŏ munye sinbo* is notable for running the earliest essays about French Symbolist poetry in Korea. The first such article, titled "The State of Western Literature Today" (Ch'oegŭn ŭi T'aesŏ mundan), was written by Paek Tae-chin (1892-1967), a literary critic and reporter. The article, printed across two issues, covered both English and French literature in separate sections. Under the title "French Literature: The Poetry Scene" (Pullansŏ mundan: Sidan), the latter centered on the explication of the core tenants of Symbolism, forwarding it as the preeminent poetic movement of modern France:

> Since 1885, the dominant paradigm in the world of French poetry was Symbolism. Symbolism marked the aesthetic emergence of Individualism and was the embodiment of Idealism, which in turn was a rejection of Naturalism.
>
> In terms of aesthetics, Symbolism can be seen in two ways. It relates to the artist's attitude and mode of expression, or in other words, to form and content. French poetry has been dominated by the Symbolists, and as poetic form moved in their direction, a revolution took place. Up until this point, almost all poetry employed a form of descriptive, direct expression, and in comparison, symbols favor the principle of allusion. The term "symbol" refers to a concept made of several component parts now unable to be broken apart. It contains a core truth that is difficult to explain, even for someone of unusual discernment, and this idea, bristling with originality, is expressed by way of metaphor. In order to elicit empathy, a poem written in the mode of direct expression reveals everything, whereas a poem that uses allusion does not actively adopt an attitude, and instead, calls forth something else.[25]

Paek presumes no prior knowledge in his reader, providing them with a succinct overview of Symbolism bereft of distracting detail. His text starts by dating the emergence of Symbolism, but quickly shifts into a discussion of its principle artistic tenets. Paek explains that Symbolist poetry is defined by its use of allusion, which he contrasts with description, the previously favored mode of writing. He posits allusion as the road to truth, a value that eludes logical explanation, and therefore, cannot be captured through direct expression. The tone of the article is neutral, Paek more outwardly concerned with pedagogy than persuasion.

The next section of Paek's article introduces Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), and Verlaine as major poets and identifies their key differences, creating a picture of Symbolism as a diverse artistic movement. From here, Paek's discussion moves to the rise of free verse poetry (*chayusi*). He describes this new style of poetry as not adhering to any prescribed model. Instead, it foregrounds the expression of one's individuality (*kaesŏng*)

[25] The first part of the article, which discusses English literature, can be found in the fourth issue. Paek Tae-chin, "*Ch'oegŭn ŭi t'aesŏ mundan*" [The State of Western Literature Today], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo* 4 (1918): 5; Paek Tae-chin, "*Ch'oegŭn ŭi T'aesŏ mundan*" [The State of Western Literature Today], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo* 9 (1918): 5-6.

above all. Paek concludes by noting that as free verse poetry became the mainstay of French poetry, "the republican (*kongwajŏk*) notion of freedom (*chayu sasang*) solidified."[26] The association between the artistic principals of Symbolism and the flexibility afforded by free verse is clear, even if Paek ultimately distinguishes one from the other. His article's lopsided focus on Symbolism nevertheless indicates a belief in the movement's continued relevancy, even after the emergence of free verse in the chronology that is provided.

Paek would not provide the final word on Symbolism for *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*. Kim penned his own article that was serialized in the next two issues, an indication of the importance ascribed to the movement in the eyes of the editorial staff. Titled "The French Poetry Scene" (P'ŭrangsŭ sidan), the piece covers generally the same material as Paek's earlier write-up, leading one to speculate about the reasons for this overlap.[27] Kim differentiates himself by going into more depth. He begins by discussing the Parnissians, a group whom he explains dominated French poetry from the period of roughly 1866 to 1885. Although he describes them as those who perfected the art of poetry, Kim notes that they were eventually challenged by the

[26] Ibid., 6.

[27] One of the major differences between the two articles is Kim's exaltation of Baudelaire. In Paek's article, Baudelaire is conspicuously absent. The reason for this disparity may have been a matter of sources. The British poet and critic Arthur Symons (1865-1945) wrote a study of Symbolism titled *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1899. This book, a collection of essays, each dedicated to a single writer, was translated into Japanese by the poet and novelist Iwano Hōmei (1873-1920) in 1913. Symon's original edition contained chapters about Gérard de Nerval, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Jules Laforgue, Stéphane Mallarmé, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Maurice Maeterlinck. However, he would later revise the book in 1919, six years after Hōmei's translation, to add chapters about Honoré de Balzac, Prosper Mérimée, Théophile Gautier, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Baudelaire, Edmund and Jules de Goncourt, Léon Cladel, and Émile Zola. Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Verlaine, the three Symbolists Paek mentions in his article, all appear in the first edition of Symon's study, whereas Baudelaire, notably, does not. Paek and Iwano also use the same term (*P'yosangp'a* in Korean, *hyōshō ha* in Japanese) to refer to the Symbolists. Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: W. Heinemann, 1899); Iwano Hōmei, trans., *Hyōshōha no bungaku undō* [The Symbolist Movement in Literature], by Arthur Symons (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1913).

Decadents, in whose company he includes Verlaine, Mallarmé, and Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838-1889). Later, the Symbolists and the Vers-libristes emerged out of the Decadents, although Kim also contends that the three can alternatively be seen as one large group.[28] For the remainder of the article, he uses the term Symbolism to refer to this collective. Kim explains its core tenants in flowery language:

> What is Symbolism? Symbolist poets provide us with a mysterious answer that is difficult to grasp and defies conventional understanding. But the most correct answer is most likely simple. Something along the lines of, "Don't explain, suggest." A symbol can be understood as a substitute for mystery. After Verlaine, this school's mode of writing was perfected. Stéphane Mallarmé's well-known explanation about allusion, the lifeblood of Symbolism, is on the right track. Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu; le suggérer, voilà le rêve. (In order to talk about things we say this and that, but in doing so, we destroy one fourth of the feel of poetry. Through inference, little by little, the essence of poetry is born. Allusion, in other words, is illusion.) To borrow someone else's words, the mediator that connects the seen and unseen world, the physical world and the spirit world, infinity and the finite, is the symbol. Allusion. Mystery. And so this poetry is scolded for being difficult to understand. A poet like Mallarmé believes that all poetry must have symbolic language. The particular character of Symbolism can be found in language, not meaning. In other words, like music, the simulation of sound as it touches a nerve, that is poetry. In this way, poetry is "the art of the senses."[29]

Like Paek, Kim structures his article as an overview of an artistic movement, not a guideline for how to write poetry. The language he employs carries the sheen of neutrality, as if he was describing something rather than outright admiring it, yet his enthusiasm for the subject is palpable. In delineating Symbolism's sensitivity to the music of language, he opines, "In other words, like music, the simulation of sound as it touches a nerve, that is poetry." Kim further underscores the importance of the relationship between poetry and music, ending with the

[28] Kim Ŏk, "*P'ŭrangsŭ sidan*" [The French Poetry Scene: Part One], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, December 7, 1918, 5.
[29] Kim Ŏk, "*P'ŭrangsŭ sidan*" [The French Poetry Scene], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, December 14, 1918, 6.

pronouncement that there is no more advanced form of art than music.[30] Later, in his own poetics, he would return to this idea.

If the essay was a medium for Kim to develop his poetics in conversation with foreign literature, translation provided the ground to test out his incipient ideas about language. His contemporaries already recognized the significance of his early translations as a starting point to build vernacular poetry in Korea. Several of his colleagues, including the previously-mentioned Yŏm Sang-sŏp, penned prefaces for *The Dance of Agony* in a demonstration of support. Another was Chang To-bin (1888-1963), a journalist and independence fighter who knew Kim from his stint as the superintendent (*hakkam*) of Osan hakkyo when the latter was a student. Chang opens his preface by arguing for the importance of poetry, but he qualifies his convictions by admitting that he is not poet. In the text, he opines that the power of poetry is universal, transcending national borders. For him, poetry's reach can be ascribed to its subject matter of fundamental human issues such as reality and emotion:

> Because in general people are ambassadors of emotion, no matter how good intentioned or wise, when one departs from emotion, it is difficult to create a sense of reality. For example, when something is articulated through emotion, what is articulated becomes more serious, and when one is swayed through emotion, the feeling is intensified. Therefore, no matter to what nationality one belongs, the finest way to articulate or be swayed by such emotion is poetry.[31]

Chang's notion of poetry, which is implicitly compared to prose, is of a form of writing that is based upon emotion (*chŏng*) alone. Without emotion, he explains, it is impossible to capture reality (*hyŏnsil*). The implication is that reality is the world shared by people, although it can only be accessed through feelings, which not only have the ability to bestow knowledge about

[30] The quote goes, "For whatever reason, there is no more developed art form than music." Ibid.
[31] Chang To-bin, "Sŏ" [Preface], in *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony], by Kim Ŏk (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 4.

reality, but can also sway an individual to think a certain way. For Chang, thinking and feeling are two sides of the same coin.

Chang's understanding poetry as a universal art, however, does not preclude his recognition of strains that belong to individual cultures. The forward continues with a brief history of Korean poetry that acknowledges a debt to Chinese poetry. Stepping away from his earlier suggestion that poetry transcends national concerns, Chang moves on to encourage the creation of Korean poetry that breaks away from this legacy:

> But Koreans have their own natural emotions, voice, language, and script, therefore why should we be forced to borrow another's emotions, voice, language and script, in order to write poetry? Certainly, it is only when one uses one's own emotions, voice, language, and script, and applies these to any subject matter of their choosing, that one can become a great poet.
>
> Now is the time for us to call for many national poems. This is not a matter that requires deep reflection, for through these poems, we will be able to articulate everything about us, we will be able stimulate ourselves and grow. One way forward is to consult many poems by Western poets and figure how not only how to write poems but also their way of thinking, which will be applicable to the writing of our own Korean poetry.[32]

On the surface, Chang's argument is contradictory. First, he claims Koreans have their own emotions, what he earlier identified to be the key element of poetry, in addition to their own language. In order for poets to reach their full potential, Chang contends that they need to use their own emotions and language rather than rely on what has been inherited from other groups of people. And yet, he concludes by noting that in order to achieve this goal, Western poems may be consulted both to learn new methods of writing and to understand how Western people think. This final point, which resembles the mission statement of *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, may appear to undermine Chang's call for poets to turn inward rather for inspiration. But it is important to

[32] Ibid., 4-5.

recognize that Chang never specifies the way in which Western learning will be applicable to the creation of Korean poetry. Notably, he describes reading Western poetry as an active pursuit in direct contrast to how he implies foreign traditions were forced upon premodern poets. The ultimate implication of the preface is that by expanding their horizons beyond the peninsula, Korean poets will be able to better understand themselves.

Kim's own feelings about *The Dance of Agony* were markedly more equivocal. In his introduction to the collection, he adopts a humble attitude that downplays the significance of his accomplishments as a translator in contrast to the praise offered by his peers:

> This translator has no intention of sharing his thoughts about this one paltry volume of translated poetry. In other words, this translator has no intention of thinking about whether or not this collection is worth putting out into the world, and moreover, of sharing those thoughts with anyone. Rather, it is my earnest hope and desire that these new poems are not misunderstood in any way by our literary community, which has just begun to open its eyes. This collection and its language is the result of a struggle with my own individual sensibilities. Should there be mistranslations, they are the fault of the translator, and should there be beautiful turns of phrase, those are likewise the triumph of the translator. In the case of poetry, rather than meticulous or direct translation, that the translator must preserve meaning alone, or go in with a creative mindset, is the impoverished opinion of this translator. For whatever reason, this translator must confess, that upon looking back at the making of this book, he feels a sense of strangeness and longing.[33]

The humility that Kim professes in this introduction functions to ultimately underscore his own creative contribution to *The Dance of Agony*. He begins by confessing that he has no desire to discuss the book, explaining that even thinking about his work is unbearable because he is afraid that the translations lack the merit to be published. In addition, the reader learns that Kim holds himself accountable for the quality of the poems, even though he is not the original author. A translator of poetry, he contends, should strive to retain the meaning of the original, but is

[33] Kim Ŏk, *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony] (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 10.

responsible for creating everything else. This opinion, a flat rejection of direct translation, serves a brief summation of his translation theory, couched in the language of guilt.[34] Furthermore, Kim's repetition of the adjective *kananhada*, which can be translated as "paltry" or "impoverished," to refer to both the book and his ideas about translation contributes to the overarching sense of self-abasement.

And yet, upon closer inspection, the underlying argument that Kim forwards highlights importance of the translator in favor of the original poets. In addition to being the first vernacular poetry collection to be published in Korea, *The Dance of Agony* is notable for including poems written by several different authors, who collectively bore no significant connection to each other. Instead, Kim, who chose the poems himself, is the only consistent thread that ties the book together. His peers accordingly reserve the lion's share of their praise for him, the volume's effective author. In the admission that his translations might contain errors, Kim dissuades readers from approaching the poems as being veritable duplicates of the originals.[35] He also does

[34] Kim would further develop his theory of translation, which favored creativity over fidelity, in later texts. In a debate with Yang Chu-tong (1903-1977), a fellow poet, critic, and translator who favored adhering closely to the original text, Kim made the following assertion: "Rather than translating word-by-word (*ch'ukcha*) or directly (*chigyŏk*), I believe it is better to adopt a creative mode and translate for meaning, thereby transferring poetic spirit and atmosphere." Kim Ŏk, "Sidan sanch'aek: 'Kŭmsŏng' 'P'yehŏ' ihu ilgo" [A Walk Among the Poetry Community: Upon Reading 'After *Kŭmsŏng* and *P'yehŏ*,' *Kaebyŏk*, April, 4, 1924, 36.

[35] Ha Jaeyoun argues that Kim belonged to an early generation of literary translators, who in the coming decades would become considerably more sophisticated. He compares Kim to Yi Ha-yun (1906-1974), a member of the "Foreign Literature Group" (Haeoe munhak p'a) and translator of *The Scentless Flower Garden* (Sirhyang ŭi hwawŏn, 1933), a collection of translated poetry that rivals *The Dance of Agony* in volume and scope. Kim and Yi translated many of the same poets and poems, thereby providing suitable material for comparison. Overall, Ha argues that Yi's translations are closer to the original version. He notes that Kim's translations heavily feature compound words, which originated from Japanese-language translations by Ueda Bin (1874-1916) and Kawaji Ryūkō (1888-1959) that Kim had referenced. Ha Jaeyoun, "Pŏnyŏk ŭl t'ongae parabon kŭndae si ŭi munch'e: Kim Ŏk ŭi *Onoe ŭi mudo* wa Yi Ha-yun ŭi *Sirhyang ŭi hwawŏn*" [A Study on Styles of Modern Poetry as Seen through Translation: Kim Ŏk's *The Dance of*

not present himself as being an expert on Western poetry in the text of the introduction, despite the knowledge of the subject he demonstrated in *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*. Rather, Kim modestly offers the possibility of "beautiful turns of phrase" (*koun yŏngmun*), for which he opines that he alone deserves credit. His conception of translation as a generative process mirrors Walter Benjamin's famous observation, penned two years later, that the task of the translator is to find the "intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original."[36] It is not a coincidence that Kim and Benjamin's ideas about translation were both provoked by French Symbolist poetry. Working in separate contexts at the opposite ends of the world, each recognized the impossibility of salvaging the latent meanings inherent to the Symbolist aesthetic by striving for the kind of linguistic equivalency privileged by the notion of literary fidelity.[37]

Kim's ultimate aim as a translator was not to cultivate reverence for Western literature, but to inspire Koreans to put ink to paper themselves. In "The Rhythm and Breath of the Poetic Form: A Narrow-minded Opinion for Hae-mong" (Sihyŏng ŭi ŭmnyul kwa hohŭp: Yŏlchorhan chŏnggyŏn ŭl Hae-mong hyŏng ege), an article he presumably penned for Chang Tu-ch'ŏl, the Hae-mong of the title and editor-in-chief of *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, Kim discusses the future of Korean poetry. The text begins with the contention that art in general is the result of the harmony between the body and the soul. For Kim, this theory means that all art is individual because

Agony and Yi Ha-Yun's *Scentless Flower Garden*], *Han'guk hyŏndae munhak yŏn'gu* 45 (April 2015): 56-66.

[36] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*" trans. Harry Zahn in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), 19-20.

[37] Kim Jinhee, "Kim Ŏk ŭi pŏnyŏk non yŏn'gu: Kŭndaemunhak ŭi chang kwa pŏnyŏkcha ŭi kwaje" [Kim Ŏk's Translation Theory: The Field of Modern Literature and the Task of the Translator], *Han'guk sihak yŏn'gu* 28 (August 2010): 244-245.

bodies and souls belong to disparate human beings. He also speculates that harmony can explain the fundamental difference between Eastern and Western literature, a conceptual divide that he treats as an established truth.[38]

The logic of Kim's thesis is that while harmony is unique from person to person, members of larger communities nevertheless share something in common. By discussing the East and the West in this way, he treats the two spheres as equals. Nevertheless, his main concern is for Korea specifically. The notion of poetry as breath, which Kim borrowed from William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and introduces here, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, but Kim's interest in this basic component of poetry stems from his desire to see the emergence of vernacular poetry in the Korean language. He asks, "But as a Korean, what kind of rhythm can best be expressed? In the Korean language, what kind of poetic form must first be examined? The general, common breath and beat will take on what kind of poetic form? Korean poetry, which has yet to happen upon the right form, must be entrusted to the subjectivity of the individual poet."[39] Kim's emphasis on an individual's subjectivity in the creation of original poetry matches his philosophy for translation, in which the sensibility of the individual translator takes precedence over the original text.

Translating Paul Verlaine and Ueda Bin

Kim Ŏk advocated a philosophy of creative translation that openly acknowledged liberties taken with the original text, but he still distinguished the many translations he produced

[38] Kim Ŏk, "Sihyŏng ŭi ŭmnyul kwa hohŭp: Yŏlchohan chŏnggyŏn ŭl Hae-mong hyŏng ege" [The Rhythm and Breath of the Poetic Form: A Narrow-minded Opinion for Hae-mong], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, January 1, 1919, 5.
[39] Ibid.

from his original poems. Although his peers treated him as the author of *Dance of Agony*, each of the original poets were properly credited in the publication. Translation was a medium of linguistic experimentation for Kim, but it was not a blank canvas. Despite deviations, the original texts are still recognizable in his translations. Given how scholars in the field of translation studies have illustrated the extent to which translation is an inherently creative art, one might ask: in what areas did Kim deviate from the original texts in his translations? What standard of fidelity did Kim envision for close translations that he believed himself to transgress?

As mentioned above, Kim believed that a translator of poetry should strive to preserve the meaning of the original text, but was responsible for everything else. This philosophy was specifically linked to his approach to poetry. "The translation of poetry is not translation," Kim later wrote, "It is composition."[40] On the one hand, his liberal attitude toward poetic translation suited Kim's use for it as preparation for the creation of original poems. On the other, one could argue that his deference to only the vaguely-defined "meaning" of the original text reflects Kim's recognition of his own linguistic limitations. Although he is best known for his translations of French Symbolist poetry, Kim was never formally educated in the language. Given his noted gift for language acquisition, it is likely that he understood enough French to be able to parse poems for their basic meaning. Still, one doubts that he was capable of grasping every nuance necessary to create what could be properly deemed a replica.

But in producing a translation of a poem by someone like Baudelaire or Verlaine, Kim was not at the mercy of his limited French skills. Rather, he had references at his disposal in a

[40] In his introduction to *The Lost Pearl*, a Korean-language collected volume of Arthur Symon's poems, Kim went on to describe poetic translation to be even more difficult than original composition as an art that involved making "the impossible possible." Kim Ŏk, "*Irhŏjin chinju* sŏmun" [Introduction to *The Lost Pearl*], in *Kim Ŏk chakp'umjip* [The Collected Works of Kim Ŏk], ed. Kim Yong-chik (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl ch'ulp'ansa, 1982), 160.

language he had mastered: Japanese. Kim, like many Korean intellectuals of the time, did not mention the mediating role that Japan played in introducing him to the latest trends in international literature. He preferred to portray himself as a firsthand observer, but in hindsight, the influence is unmistakable. Kim was preceded in translating the most prominent names in French Symbolist poetry by a number of intellectuals in Japan. The most celebrated, and almost certainly Kim's window into this corpus, was Ueda Bin (1874-1916), whose 1905 collection of translations titled *The Sound of the Tide* (Kaichōon) was a sensation in his country. Like Kim, Ueda was not praised for his faithfulness to the original texts, but for his ability to render foreign poems in a manner that felt natural in the target language.[41] In this way, his work was distinguished from earlier translations, such as those included in the 1882 *Selection of Poetry in the New Style* (Shintaishi-shō), which commentators decried for its language that deviated too far from established poetic norms.

Kim's translations of French poetry had two sources: the originals and their Japanese renditions. In some ways, his versions are closer to the French, reversing Ueda's creative alternations in favor of more faithful language. And yet, in other places, it is impossible not to see the shadow of Japanese upon Kim's text. The details of Kim's process are best shown in the example of an actual poem. Below is a comparison among three versions, presented in the order of publication, of Verlaine's landmark poem, "Song of Autumn" (Chanson d'automne). The poem first appeared in his debut collection *Saturnine Poems* (Poèmes saturniens, 1866) under the section titled "Sad Landscapes" (Paysages tristes):

[41] Katsuya Sugawara notes that Ueda adopted traditional Japanese prosody in his translations such as the seven-five syllable meter. Katsuya Sugawara, "Metrics Bound and Unbound: Japanese Experiments in Translating Poetry from European Languages," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 54 (2008): 62.

Chanson d'automne

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon cœur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure;

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
Deçà, delà,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte.[42]

Song of Autumn

Leaf-strewing gales
Utter low wails
Like violins,---
Till on my soul
Their creeping dole
Stealthily wins….

Days long gone by!
In such hour, I,
Choking and pale,
Call you to mind,---
Then like the wind
Weep I and wail.

And, as by wind
Harsh and unkind,
Driven by grief,
Go I, here, there
Recking not where,
Like the dead leaf.[43]

The original "Song of Autumn" concisely captures a rush of melancholy emotion articulated through a nature metaphor. In language, the poem is sparse, with each of its lines containing no more than three words. Some consist only of an article and a noun. This terseness matches the ellipsis of the poem's content, which fills in none of the context necessary to understand the speaker's intensity of feeling. Upon hearing the sound of a violin on an autumn's day—musical notes that register as prolonged cries (*les sanglots longs*)—the speaker turns crestfallen and is provoked into reminiscence, about exactly what, the reader is not told. (In contrast to the original

[42] Paul Verlaine, *Poèmes saturniens*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1894), 53-54.
[43] Paul Verlaine, "Song of Autumn," trans. Gertrude Hall, in *Baudelaire Rimbaud Verlaine: Selected Verse and Prose Poems*, ed. Joseph M. Bernstein (New York: Citadel Press, 1993), 294.

text, Gertrude Hall's English interpretation fills in some missing details, such as an evocative "you" as the object of the speaker's memory.) Devastated, the speaker concludes the poem by comparing themselves to a dead leaf, tossed here and there by the wind. The image connotes utter powerlessness against the indifference of nature.

In form, the regularity of "Song of Autumn" belies the disarray of its speaker's inner life. The poem is structured in three neat stanzas, each containing exactly six lines. Grammatically, Verlaine splits "Song of Autumn" into two sentences. The first coincides with the initial stanza, which sets the stage for the core of the poem in stanzas two and three. These latter two are connected by a semi-colon that swiftly ushers the reader's eye from one to the other, the speed consistent with the speaker's tumbling state of mind. The shortness of the lines imbues the poem with a staccato rhythm that doles out what little information it contains in miniature containers, bit by bit. Still, Verlaine makes room for an unassuming rhyme scheme that pairs the fourth and fifth lines of each stanza into couplets. The pattern contributes an extra sense of order and linguistic beauty to the poem. "Song of Autumn" is a vision of melancholy as delicate aesthetic object.

For his translation of "Song of Autumn," Ueda switched the poem's title to "Falling Leaves" (Rakuyō), highlighting the poem's key metaphor:

落葉	**Falling Leaves**
秋の日の ヴィオロンの ためいきの 身にしみて ひたぶるに うら悲し。	An autumn day's Violin Sighs Piercing the body In terrible Sorrow. My chest beats To the tolling of bells Colors fade from

鐘のおとに
胸ふたぎ
色かへて
涙ぐむ
過ぎし日の
おもひでや。

げにわれは
うらぶれて
こゝかしこ
さだめなく
とび散らふ
落葉(おちば)かな。

Tearful
Memories
Of days past.

Indeed
I crumble
Falling
Here and there
In wayward directions
Like falling leaves.[44]

Ueda's "Falling Leaves" preserves the imagery of the original, but micro-changes in structure and tone result in a different overall impression. In form, the Japanese poem follows the model of the original in broad outline: three stanzas, six lines apiece. But unlike Verlaine, Ueda turns each stanza into a discrete sentence, halting the poem's flow at the breaks between them. Moreover, each sentence is also structured around a single noun: "sorrow" in the first, "memories" in the second, "leaves" in the third. None of these sentences are complete from the standpoint of grammar. Instead, Ueda stacks adjective phrases onto the terminal nouns of each stanza and lets the reader draw connections on their own. In addition, the rhyming couplets from the original are absent in Japanese. The mirrored sentence structures between stanzas create a more muted sense of rhythm.

Ueda's structure for "Falling Leaves" results in changes on the level of meaning. Whereas the speaker cries in the present in "Song of Autumn," this action is absent in Ueda's version, having been transposed into the adjective "tearful" to describe the memories. In general,

[44] Ueda Bin, *Kaichōon* [The Sound of the Tide] (Tokyo: Hongō shoin, 1905), 73-76.

"Falling Leaves" departs from "Song of Autumn" in its more pronounced emphasis on recollection to the neglect of the present moment. The emotions of Verlaine's speaker go through a rapid transformation in the space of three stanzas. What begins with a monotone languor, provoked by the sound of a violin, turns to tears in the second stanza as the speaker recalls something from their past. The poem concludes on the jolting image of a dead leaf, a summation of the speaker's descent. In "Falling Leaves," the speaker begins in a state of intense sadness and remains there for the duration of the poem. The image of the falling leaf is less shocking than the original by virtue of the absence of the word "dead." Ueda's speaker is overcome by sorrow, but does not suffer an existential crisis of the scale depicted in "Song of Autumn."

Kim's rendition of the poem, "Autumn Song" (Kaŭl ŭi norae), features characteristics from Verlaine and Ueda as a translation that was undertaken in reference to the two previous versions:

가을의 노래

가을의 날
바이올린의
느린 嗚咽의
단조로운
애닯음에
내 가슴 아파라.

우리 종소리에
가슴은 막히며
낯빛은 희멀금,
지나간 옛날은
눈앞에 떠돌아
아아 나는 우노라.

Autumn Song

An autumn day
A violin's
Long wail.
A monotonous melancholy
Stings my heart.

When the bell tools
I suffocate
Pale
I remember days past
Tears forming.

And thus I depart.
The harsh wind
Blows me
Here and there
Like a falling leaf.[45]

[45] Kim Ŏk, *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony] (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 15-16.

설워라, 나의 靈은
모진 바람결에
흩어져 떠도는
여기에 저기에
갈 길도 모르는
落葉이어라.

"Autumn Song" reverts back several of the changes that Ueda made for his translation, including the title of the poem. The "terrible sorrow" from the Japanese is once again "monotonous melancholy" (*tanjoroun uul*) in Korean. Kim also restores the mixture of past and present that was a key aspect of Verlaine's poem. The speaker in Kim's rendition tears up at the end of the second stanza and departs at the beginning of the third, actions that roughly correlate to the chronology of the original. These details repudiate any speculation that Kim solely consulted the Japanese text in order to produce his version. And yet, his debt to Ueda is apparent when one compares the two translations line by line. Although Kim's version is more faithful to the original, he follows Ueda's line order beat for beat in the beginning of the first and second stanzas. When he departs from Ueda, he does so to adhere more closely to the original, discarding, for example, Ueda's choice to structure his sentences around a single noun.

This case study of Verlaine's "Song of Autumn" serves as an illustration of Kim's process as a translator. Referencing two texts, one in French and the other in Japanese, he produced a third version of the poem that combined elements of both. To borrow his own words, Kim was interested in preserving the meaning of Verlaine's poem. Ueda's translation, in turn, offered him a guide for how to structure the poem in a language with a grammar closer to his own. But Kim's greatest achievement is not apparent in comparison to the other versions of the text. The language Kim employs is unadorned, composed of everyday words that are not literal translations, and yet evoke the emotions and images of Verlaine's poem in a vernacular specific

to Korea. These phrases would become the seeds for his own poems. First employed in translations as analogs for another poet's lines, Kim would reuse this language, stripping of them of their original context, in the service of generating meanings he could call his own.

Vernacular Poetry as Self-Expression

Like Verlaine's text, many of the nature poems included in *The Dance of Agony* and *The Jellyfish's Song* are set in autumn. In his original poems, Kim uses seasons to express a tragic sense of time that reflected his own personal anxiety about modernity. Whereas spring represents an idealized past to which the speaker of his poems is unable to return, winter is depicted as a manifestation of death, a bleak vision of the near future. The prevalence of autumn as a backdrop for Kim's poems can be explained by his association of the season with the present, a period of transition between spring and winter in which premonitions of the latter have already materialized. As examples of early vernacular poems, these poems aim to capture the subjectivity of the speaker in the current moment, which Kim expresses through the external description of nature.

The autumn poems in *The Dance of Agony* and *The Jellyfish's Song* contain numerous similarities including shared images and phrases. However, the sense of exigency that underlies Kim's own poems is notably absent from his translations. The resemblances and differences between Kim's translations and original poetry suggest a process of reconfiguration in which elements from the former were reused in the latter to express Kim's bleak outlook on the current

state of the world.[46] His use of imagery as a canvas to obliquely describe his poetic speaker's emotional state instantiated a model of vernacular poetry as a highly personal form of writing:

가을 1	**Autumn 1**
어제는 아리땁게도 첫 봄의 꽃봉오리가 너의 悅樂 가득한 장미의 뺨 위에 웃음의 향기를 피우며 떠돌았으나,	Yesterday, in a most lovely way, the first bud of spring Atop the cheek of a rose brimming with your delight Wandered about perfuming the scent of laughter
오늘은 쓸쓸하게도 지는 가을의 낙엽이 너의 떨며 아득이는 가슴의 위에 어린 꿈을 깨치며, 비인 듯 흩어져라.	Today In a most lonely way, the falling leaves Atop your excited, tormented heart Shatter a young dream, and as if empty, disperse.[47]

"Autumn 1" (Kaŭl 1), the first of three poems from *The Jellyfish's Song* that share the same title, explores the theme of longing as expressed through seasonal imagery. The poem is divided into two stanzas that closely parallel one another, although each presents starkly different scenes. Stanza one is only three lines long, whereas stanza two is four, but the difference in these numbers are deceptive. The extra line of stanza two contains only a single word, "today," set apart to visually partition the second stanza from the first.

The poem presents the reader with a set of before and after images that delineate a stark break between past and present. Spring is the before of the first stanza, portrayed as a season

[46] Kim Jinhee writes, "Through continuous translation and revision of his translations, Kim Ŏk came to intuit the realities of his native language as well as search for and spur the development of a new mother tongue." Her analysis is based upon close readings of Kim Ŏk's critical writings about the practice of translation. Kim Jinhee, *Han'guk kŭndaesi ŭi kwaje wa munhaksa ŭi chuch'edŭl* [A Task for Korean Modern Poetry and the Subjects of Literary History] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2015), 28.

[47] Numbers have been added to the titles of the three "Autumn" poems for the sake of clarity. Kim Ŏk, *Haep'ari ŭi norae* [The Jellyfish's Song] (Seoul: Chosŏn tosŏ, 1923), 24.

sparkling with life as embodied by the figure of a flower. A rose bud opens, spraying its fragrance into the air. It is a time of merriment. The new flower possesses not only its youth, but also its fragrance, a source of beauty and identity, which it sends out into the world like an emissary. But this idyllic scene gives way to the second stanza, which abruptly transports the reader to autumn, the present moment. In the world of today there are no flowers, their delicate petals replaced by falling leaves, the iconic image of the season. The sense of a one-to-one substitution is emphasized by the parallel phrasing between the two stanzas. The "first bud of spring" that wandered about "in a most lovely way" gives way to the "falling leaves" that disperse "in a most lonely way." Life is replaced by death. The falling leaves of autumn, unlike the first buds of spring, are empty vessels, lifeless shells that tumble toward the ground where they will disperse and eventually disappear. Beauty, despite the reds and yellows evoked by reference to falling leaves, is reserved for spring, a season of delight (*yŏllak*).

The speaker of "Autumn 1" is a barely discernable presence. Unlike "Lost Spring," where the possessive "my" (*nae*) firmly establishes that the reader looking at the world through a character's eyes, "Autumn 1" is written in the second person, being addressed directly to "you" (*nŏ*). The casualness of the informal pronoun instills the poem with the air of intimacy. Although ostensibly addressed to the reader, the reader understands this setup to be a contrivance, given that they are in reality unacquainted. Instead, the poem leads the reader to see the invisible figure of "you" from the perspective of the invisible speaker. Two characters, indirectly sketched, are created on the basis of what the reader can intuit about their relationship. When the speaker describes "you," whose liveliness transforms into torment overnight, these observations take on weight because of the intimacy of their relationship connoted through language.

In “Autumn 2” (Kaŭl 2), Kim continues to explore poetry’s capacity to express subjectivity through the description of the external world:

가을 2

쌔듯하고도 적막한 가을,
맑고도 어뜩스러운 하늘,
힘이라곤 조금도 없는 듯한 日光,
거울을 씻어놓은 듯한 수면.

바람결에 사랑과 미움을 노래하는
나무와 나무, 그리하고 낙엽과 낙엽.

혼자 고적하게 남긴 내 맘은
참말로 의지할 곳도 없어지누나,

저것 보아, 태양조차 혼자 떨어져
구름 뒤에 숨어서 흐득여 울고 있다.

Autumn 2

Fresh but desolate autumn
Clear but dizzy sky
Sunlight short of even a little strength
Water from a cleanly scrubbed mirror.

They sing of love and hate to the wind
The trees and trees, the falling leaves and
falling leaves.

My heart forlornly left behind
Its shelters truly disappearing

Look there, the sun too, alone
It sobs behind the clouds.[48]

“Autumn 2” discards the parallelism of the first poem. Instead, its top-heavy, trailing structure begins with a four-line stanza, followed by three shorter two-line stanzas. The first stanza acts as the setup, establishing not only the scene but also the mood, which is followed by three abbreviated developments. Kim uses the first stanza to provide four discrete descriptions of an autumn day. From the beginning, contrast is emphasized. The reader is told that autumn is “fresh but desolate” and the sky “clear yet dizzy,” the subjectivity of the descriptions a clear but subtle manifestation of the speaker’s personality. The metaphorical language of the next two lines, in which dim sunlight signifies the absence of strength, and the water is so clear it is imagined to run over a freshly cleaned mirror, further suggests that the poem constitutes a particular individual’s point of view.

[48] Ibid., 39-40.

Personification plays a strong role in “Autumn 2.” Unlike “Autumn 1,” falling leaves are not merely empty shells but, along with the trees that hold them, are depicted as sentient beings who sing into the wind. Because the leaves sing songs “of love and hate,” yet another set of contrasts, the reader senses a certain complexity within them, despite being told nothing more. This sense of humanity within nature has been imparted by the speaker, who projects their own emotions onto the world they inhabit. When the poem moves into the third stanza, the speaker themselves is foregrounded, their forlorn heart a mirror of nature’s circumstances. The parallels between the leaves and the speaker suggest that the personification of the poem functions as a mode of internal and external observation as the speaker parses both their surroundings and their emotions in the present moment.

“Autumn 3” (Kaŭl 3), the last poem in the series, further explores the association between autumn and grief:

가을 3

그저 가을만은
돌아가신 옛 님의 생각처럼,
살뜰하게 가슴 속에 숨어들어라.

지금이야 야릇하게도 웃음을 띤 눈이나
핼금하게 파리한 가엾은 그 얼굴과,
하얗게도 病的의 연약한
　　손가락이나마,
그나마 다 잊혀지고, 남은 것이란
살뜰하게도 잊지 못할 달큼한 생각뿐.

살뜰하게도 못 잊을 그 생각만은
없어져 다한 옛 꿈을 쫓는 듯이도,
날카로운 '뉘우침'의 하얀 빛과
어둑하게도 모여드는 '외로움'을
하소연한 맘속에 부어 놓을 뿐.

Autumn 3

Only autumn
Like the thought of a long departed beloved
Burrows deep into the heart.

Now, those eyes smiling strangely
Peeking out of that wan, pitiful face
Those white, sickly thin fingers
All are forgotten, leaving only
The sweet memories I cannot completely
　　forget.

Those memories that cannot be forgotten
Alone as if chasing vanished, completed
　　dreams
Pour the white light of sharp ‘guilt’
The darkly gathering ‘loneliness’
Into the grieving heart.

Only autumn
Like the thought of a long departed beloved

Burrows into the heart, unable to be forgotten[49]

그저 가을만은
가신 님의 옛 생각처럼,
못 잊게도 가슴 속에 숨어들어라.

"Autumn 3" returns to the parallel structure of "Autumn 1." Composed of four stanzas, the first and last of which are identical, the poem foregrounds the relationship between the seasons and memory. In place of the second person address of "Autumn 1" is the moniker "beloved" (*nim*), a staple of vernacular poems in the 1920s, explored further in Chapter Two, that is used to refer to an absent figure. The central idea that undergirds the poem is the comparison between memories of the beloved and the season of autumn. However, unlike the previous autumn poems, the speaker reserves their gift of description for the beloved, not the natural world. The reader will find no references to the sun, the sky, nor the ubiquitous colored leaves that had embodied the speaker's emotions in the previous poems.

Once again, the presence of the speaker in "Autumn 3" is not overt. No first-person pronouns or possessives appear in the original language version. Korean is more amenable than English to hiding the subject of a sentence, but even in the original version, the speaker can be felt in the transitive verbs, which imply a subject that "cannot completely forget," rather than memories that are unable to be forgotten. The repetition of the adverb *salttŭrhada*, translated above as "deep" and "completely," accentuates the feeling of contradiction that characterizes the speaker's predicament. Autumn and memories of the beloved tunnel their way into the heart, but the speaker is unable to expel them with equal ease. In another discrepancy, the speaker notes that they have forgotten the physical characteristics of the beloved, including their eyes and fingers, and yet is able to describe them in precise detail. Abstract memory, still glowing in

[49] Ibid., 101-2.

comparison to the sickliness of the beloved's body, is all that remains. But the sweetness of that memory provides no comfort, and is instead responsible for feelings of guilt, loneliness, and grief. Memory, the poem demonstrates, is tenacious. The repetition of the final stanza acts as an affirmation of what has now become an accepted truth. As a refrain, it mirrors the unescapable cycle of the seasons, which repeat year after year.

"Autumn Leaves" (Nagyŏp), the last of Kim's original poems to be discussed in this section, also uses the backdrop of autumn to explore the subject of memory. In this poem, the emotional exigency of the situation arises from speaker's knowledge of the impending destruction of their past innocence:

낙엽

산산한 게, 몸이 오싹 떨리지.
지금 추억만은 우리의 동산은
달빛에 비치어 은색에 싸였다
자, 내 사람아, 동산으로 가자.

갈바람은 솔솔 스며들지.
나뭇잎에 비가 내려붓는다,
가만히 귀를 기울이고 있으면
어린 꿈의 깨어지는 소리가 들리지.

옷을 새빨갛게 벗기운 포플러는
바람결이 휙 하고 지날 때마다
검은 구름이 덮인 하늘을 향하고
아직도 오히려 새봄을 빌고 있다.

오오, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴,
지금은 가을, 흩어지는 때
흩어지는 낙엽의 우리의 소리를 듣자,
明日이면 눈도 와서 덮이겠다.

가을을 만난 우리의 사랑,

Autumn Leaves

That which is cool makes the body shiver.
The hill by our home, now only memory
Wrapped in the moon's silver light.
My dear, let's go back to that hill.

Does not the autumn wind seep in softly?
When rain falls on tree leaves
If you listen carefully
Do you not hear the sound of a young dream
breaking?

As the wind zips by
The scarlet poplar, stripped of its clothes
Faces a sky covered in dark clouds
Still praying for the coming of spring.

Oh, my dear, come here
It is autumn now, a time of separation
The scattering leaves listen to our sounds
Tomorrow they will be covered in snow.

Our love that has encountered autumn
Our dream that will meet its winter
Before our passions cool, let us

겨울을 맞을 우리의 꿈,
열정이나 식기 전에 더운 키스로
오늘의 이 밤을 새워보자.

Brave the night with a burning kiss.[50]

"Autumn Leaves" shares much of the same imagery as the previous poems. The memory of home, epitomized by a nearby hill, marks a place and point in time for which the speaker longs. As before, this is a desire that will go unfulfilled, a fate to which the speaker has resigned themselves and that readers, by virtue of repetition in theme, have come to anticipate as well. The speaker also mentions a young dream, another recurring subject, which shatters as the rain falls, emitting a sound as if it were a concrete object. If memories evoke an irrecoverable past, dreams constitute a once imagined future that has now dissipated in the wake of the horror of the present moment.

The poem is addressed to "my dear" (*nae saram*), literally "my person," an epithet like "you" and "beloved" that signals intimacy but is less abstract, instilling the sense of a literal human being. The speaker associates "my dear" with home, inviting them to return with them to "the hill," which is specified as a shared landmark. Rhetorical questions in the second stanza suggest the speaker's desire for the addressee to share their worldview and experiences, but the two are separated by distance. The command "come here," which opens the fourth stanza, reinforces the sense of separation between the speaker and "my dear," but also reveals the former's enduring belief in the possibility of reunion.

In "Autumn Leaves," the speaker rises to confront, if not overcome, the impending doom of winter. The opening, in which the speaker's inner emotions are expressed through descriptions of nature, is familiar from the previous poems. Autumn makes a gradual entrance. At first, the changes are almost imperceptible, but before long it will be winter. Snow will blanket the

[50] Ibid., 126-8.

ground, hiding all traces of the past. The leaves, imparted particular significance by the title, are notable not for the beauty of their colors, but for the way they scatter, a metaphor for the separation winter will impose upon the poem's central couple. However, the speaker does not retreat when confronted with this preordained ending. Like Kim's other poems, "Autumn Leaves" lacks even a glimmer of hope, but the speaker nonetheless resolves to spend their final night together with "my dear" until the heat of their kiss is dissipated by the snow.

In *The Jellyfish's Song*, Kim established an early precedent for vernacular poetry in Korea that utilized the indirect expression he derived from French Symbolism to convey the subjectivity of an individual speaker through the description of nature. His affection for the mysteriousness of metaphor, however, obscures the relationship of his poetry to the material world, despite the introduction of *The Jellyfish's Song*, quoted at the beginning of the chapter, teasing a personal connection for the reader to discover for themselves. When approached as individual poems, this task is not easy: the brevity of each, combined with the emphasis on external description, make it difficult to locate a consistent point of view. But when read in the context of a book, where meaning accumulates poem to poem, Kim's tragic worldview is unmistakable. For those who followed in his footsteps, this model of suffusing one's immediate concerns—even those as large and shared as the absence of Korea's sovereignty—behind the cloak of metaphor would become a calling to be further developed. Despite his professed dedication to aesthetics above all else, Kim's poetics was premised on the idea that art was a reflection of life.

Translation and Composition

Given his pivotal role as the lone translator and collator responsible for the creation of *The Dance of Agony*, it should come as no surprise that many of its poems share thematic resonances with Kim Ŏk's own work. Autumn appears here as well as a central motif, particularly in the translations of Remy de Gourmont (1858-1915), an influential French poet, critic, and novelist that belonged to the Symbolist movement.[51] But when these poems are compared to Kim's own from *The Jellyfish's Song*, the reader is left with a wholly different impression, irrespective of commonalities in images and language. The contrast between the two can be ascribed to tone, a symptom of dissimilar points of view. Here lies the distinction between translations and original poems for Kim: even as a creative endeavor, the former ultimately functioned to convey the perspective of the original poet, whereas his own poems were composed from his personal perspective. In this sense, Kim's original poems should not be understood as simple rewritings of his translations, despite shared linguistic elements. Rather, Kim mined his translations for language that he would later recontexualize to express his own worldview.

For example, Kim's version of Gourmont's poem "Autumn Song" (Kaŭl ŭi norae), makes a striking comparison to his own "Autumn Leaves," which was analyzed in the previous section. The first two stanzas of the translation begin as follows:

가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴, 只今은 가을이다. 寂寞도 하고 濕氣도 있는 가을의 때다, 그러나 아직 앵두와 丹楓과 다 익은 들장미의 果實은	Come here, my dear, come here, it is autumn now. A desolate and humid autumn But cherries and colored leaves The ripe fruit of the field roses Remain as red as a kiss

[51] Kim's esteem for Remy de Gourmont can be surmised from how he dedicated an entire section of *The Dancy of Agony* to the poet. The others afforded this same honor were: Paul Verlaine, Albert Samain, Charles Baudelaire, William Butler Yeats, Henri de Régnier, and Paul Fort.

키스와 같이 빛이 빨갛다,
가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴,
　　只今은 가을이다.

가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 只今 애달픈
　　가을은
그 外套의 앞깃을 가득히 하고 떨고
　　있다마는
太陽은 아직도 더우며,
네 맘과 같이 가벼운 空氣 안에서
안개는 우리의 憂鬱을 흔들며 위로해
　　준다,
가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴,
　　只今은 가을이다.

Come here, my dear, come here, it is autumn
　　now.

Come here, my dear, come here, now in
　　mournful autumn
The collar of my coat is packed and I shiver
But the sun is still hot
And in the air as light as your heart
The fog rattles our depression and comforts us
Come here, my dear, come here, it is autumn
　　now.[52]

Many elements between "Autumn Song" and "Autumn Leaves" are shared. Both poems feature descriptions of the wind, a poplar, a kiss, and winter's approach. However, the similarities between the two are even more pronounced on the level of language. "Autumn Song" is structured around the one-line refrain, "Come here, my dear, come here, it is now autumn" (*kakkai oryŏm, nae sarama, kakkai oryŏm, chigŭm ŭn kaŭrida*), which concludes almost every stanza. Kim does not employ a refrain in "Autumn Leaves," but the beginning of the fourth stanza, "Oh, my dear, come here \ It is autumn now" (*Oo, nae sarama, kakkai oryŏm \ chigŭm ŭn kaŭl*) has been directly lifted from the translation's line.

The musicality of "Autumn's Song," generated by the poem's ample use of repetition, imparts a sense of comfort that "Autumn Leaves" lacks. The speaker of the former poem begins by telling the reader that it is autumn, "a desolate and humid" season, but reassures "my dear," the appellation for the addressee in both poems, that the cherries, leaves, and fruit of the field roses remain "red like a kiss." The poem repeats this same message several times over the course

[52] Kim Ŏk, *Onoe ŭi mudo* [The Dance of Agony] (Seoul: Kwangik sŏgwan, 1921), 62.

of its duration. Autumn has come, foretelling the onset of winter, but unlike in "Autumn Leaves," winter does not signify death. Instead, it is portrayed as only another season that will eventually pass, making way for summer, and with it, the renewal of life. In moments, "Autumn's Song" contains descriptions of autumn that are comparable in bleakness to those found in "Autumn Leaves," but these lines are countered by details that convey a sense of beauty and hope amid the desolation of the season.

The final stanza of "Autumn's Song" also shares notable similarities to "Autumn Leaves":

가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴, 지금은 가을이다, 옷을 벗은 포플라 나무들은 몸을 떨고 있으나 그 잎들은 아직 죽지 아니하고 황금색(黃金色)의 옷을 날리면서 춤을 춘다, 춤을 춘다, 그 잎은 아직도 춤을 춘다, 가까이 오렴, 내 사람아, 가까이 오렴, 只今은 가을이다.	Come here, my dear, come here, it is autumn now. Bare poplars shake their bodies Their leaves have not yet died Tossing aside their golden clothes They dance, they dance, their leaves still dance Come here, my dear, come here, it is autumn now.[53]

Because the speaker of "Autumn's Song" offers a message of reassurance, when they implore "my dear" to join them, the injunction carries a different connotation in comparison to the same line in "Autumn Leaves." In Kim's poem, the speaker implicitly compares the onset of autumn to the beginning of the end of the world. Therefore, their request to the addressee is far weightier as a plea to spend their last moments together. In comparison, "Autumn's Song" is more optimistic. Not only is the speaker certain that summer, accompanied by fresh leaves of grass, will follow winter, the poem is dedicated to comforting "my dear" with the promise that, despite

[53] Ibid., 64.

appearances to the contrary, autumn is beautiful in its own way. Meanwhile, in "Autumn Leaves," the poplar has been stripped of its leaves by the wind, left helpless to pray for summer to come. "Autumn's Song" has a similar image, in which a poplar deprived of its leaves is also likened to a person exposed to the elements. However, in this poem, the speaker reassures "my dear" the poplar's leaves are not dead, and the reader is invited to imagine them as they fall down to the earth as if they were joyfully dancing, an image far removed from Kim's comparison of the scattering leaves to couples who find themselves on the brink of eternal separation.

As is evident from the above comparison, whereas Kim's translations of Gourmont convey a romantic atmosphere in their depiction of autumn, his own poems are substantially bleaker, mobilizing the imagery of falling leaves as harbingers of death. This divide is manifest in Kim's translation of "Autumn Leaves" (Nagyŏp), another poem originally penned by Gourmont:

落葉

시몬아, 나뭇잎 떨어진 樹林으로 가자,
낙엽은 이끼와 돌과 小路를 덮었다.

시몬아, 落葉 밟는 발소리를 좋아하니?

落葉의 빛깔은 좋으나, 모양이 寂寞하다,
落葉은 가이없이 버린 땅 위에 흩어졌다.

시몬아, 落葉 밟는 발소리를 좋아하니?

黃昏의 때면 落葉의 모양은 寂寞하다,
바람이 불 때마다, 落葉은 소곤거린다.

시몬아, 낙엽 밟는 발소리를 좋아하니?

Autumn Leaves

Simone, let's go to the wood where the leaves have fallen
The leaves cover the moss, stones, and small paths.

Simone, do you enjoy the sound fallen leaves under your feet?

The color of fallen leaves is pleasant, but their shape is quiet
Pitifully discarded atop the ground, the leaves disperse.

Simone, do you enjoy the sound fallen leaves under your feet?

At twilight, the shape of the fallen leaves is quiet

	When the wind blows, the leaves whisper.
가까이 오렴, 언제 한 番은 우리도 불쌍한 落葉이 되겠다,	Simone, do you enjoy the sound fallen leaves under your feet?
가까이 오렴, 벌써 밤이 되어 바람이 몸에 스며든다.	Come here, we too will someday become pitiful fallen leaves
	Come here, it is night already, wind seeps into the body.
시몬아, 落葉 밟는 발소리를 좋아하니?	Simone, do you enjoy the sound fallen leaves under your feet?[54]

"Autumn Leaves" is addressed to a character referred to as "Simone," a name that appears in many of Gourmont's poems. As in "Autumn's Song," a one-line refrain lends the poem a visual and aural structure, serving as a dividing mark between the three short stanzas. Kim has translated the poem using the same casual verb endings as his original poems, generating a sense of intimacy between the speaker and Simone. When the speaker of Kim's own "Autumn Leaves" asks the "Does not the autumn wind seep in softly?" the question suggests their desire to share and confirm their experience of the world with the addressee. In contrast, the speaker of the translation poem's question to Simone is an inquiry about her opinion. The emphasis in "Do you like the sound of stepping upon fallen leaves?" is placed entirely on "you," giving the line the ring of one romantic partner attempting to get to know the other better, a feeling magnified with each repetition.

The key difference between Kim's poem and the Gourmont translation is apparent from the very first line. The former begins and ends with the speaker surrounded by autumn nature, the cold wind and falling leaves a reflection of their inner emotions. The speaker of the translation, however, does not begin the poem amid the autumn forest. Instead, the poem starts

[54] Ibid., 69-70.

with the speaker beckoning Simone to join them in going to the forest to observe the fallen leaves. Whereas this speaker might be likened to a tourist visiting the woods, the speaker of Kim's poem resembles a stranded traveler, forced to endure and suffer at the indifferent hand of nature. In this way, the circumstances of the two speakers are quite different, even if both are responding to the same phenomena. Nevertheless, the speaker of the translation is not guileless. They admire the beauty of the autumn leaves, whose colors do not feature in Kim's original poems, and yet they also demonstrate awareness that this splendor belies a darker truth hinted at in the mercurial observation that "their shape is quiet" (*moyang ŭn chŏngmakhada*), a description that carries a connotation of loneliness.

Both poems acknowledge that autumn serves as a premonition of death. However, in Kim's original poem, death is fast approaching in the specter of winter. Meanwhile, the speaker in the translation likewise notes that "we too will someday become pitiful fallen leaves," an observation that carries the weight of finality, but refers to a day in the distant future. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of their future death drives the speaker to Simone. The line is given additional urgency by the observation that "it is night already, wind seeps into the body." But even the sense of doom implied here seems quaint in comparison to the situation of the speaker and addressee in Kim's poem, for whom even the possibility of finding pleasure in the sound of cracking leaves underfoot would be morbid. The fate of the dead leaves, after all, is their own.

Kim Ŏk's translations in *The Dance of Agony* were praised for their perceived naturalness in the target language, a quality that resulted from the liberties he was willing to take from the original text. These divergences did not drastically alter the tone of the poems he was

adapting, but instead, were changes in pursuit of language that felt sufficiently vernacular. Given that Kim's ultimate goal for translation was to develop expressions that could be repurposed for his original poems, he treated it as a creative process that was unconstrained by the demands of literary fidelity. From the perspective of literary history, Kim was successful in his goal of erecting a new idiom for vernacular poetry in Korea based on the stature that *The Dance of Agony* achieved in the 1920s. But in the end, he was just one of many poets who used his pioneering translations as the basis for their original compositions.

In the mid-1920s, Kim pivoted away from Western literature. His 1925 poetry collection, *Songs of Spring* (Pom ŭi norae), contained a number of translations of *hansi* under the subtitle *Songs of Chaya* (Chayaoga). From then on, he began to translate *hansi* in earnest, accumulating seven hundred and fifty translations across his lifetime.[55] In 1930, Kim unveiled his "Theory of Set-Form Poetry" (Kyŏkcho sihyŏngnon), in which he underscored the need for poems to be based upon a consistent sense of rhythm.[56] Although he continued to write poetry in some form or another until his disappearance during the Korean War, he never returned to Western literature, the light that had illuminated much of his earlier career.[57] However, this turn is not

[55] Choi Yuhak, "Kim Ŏk ŭi hansi pŏnyŏk yŏn'gu" [A Study of Kim Ŏk's Chinese-Language Poetry Translations], *Chungguk chosŏnŏmun* 2 (March 2017): 59.

[56] Kwak Myŏng-suk argues that Kim's "Theory of Set-Form Poetry" did not call for a predetermined metrical pattern as in *sijo* or Chinese-language poetry. Rather, he advocated each individual poem to have rhythm that was internally consistent and systematic. Kwak Myŏng-suk, "Kim Ŏk ŭi 'chosŏnsim' kwa 'kyŏkcho sihyŏngnon' koch'al" [A Consideration of Kim Ŏk's "Spirit of Korea" and "Theory of Set-Form Poetry"], *Han'guk hyŏndaemun hakhoe haksul palp'yohoe charyojip* (June 2008): 23.

[57] Between 1934 and 1940, Kim composed lyrics for seventy-three popular songs including "Grasping Flowers" (Kkodŭl chapko, 1934), which enjoyed considerable popularity. The record containing "Grasping Flowers" sold around five thousand copies. Ku In-mo, "Siga ŭi isang, noraero purŭn kŭndae: Kim Ŏk ŭi yusŏnggi ŭmban kasa wa kyŏkchosihyŏng" [Ideal of Poetry, Song of Modern Times: Kim Ŏk's Popular Song Lyric and Set-Form Verse], *Han'guk kŭndae munhak yŏn'gu* 16 (October 2007): 138-139.

quite the departure it might seem upon first glance. As this chapter has demonstrated, Kim's interest in Western literature, particularly French Symbolist poetry, was contingent on the extent to which he could use it to spur the creation of an equivalent form of vernacular writing in Korean. Essays about French literature doubled as theoretical musings about the fundamental nature of poetry, and translations served as the testing grounds for phrases he would later incorporate into his own poems. In terms of critical appreciation, Kim never achieved much success as a poet, but the mode of writing that he established in his translations and original poetry would be continued by his successors, including his more famous pupil Kim So-wŏl, who debuted in the 1920s. Chapter Two focuses on Han Yong-un (1879-1944), another such poet.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATING ROMANCE:

READING HAN YONG-UN

In May 1926, a Buddhist monk named Han Yong-un (1878-1944) published *The Silence of Love* (Nim ŭi ch'immuk), a collection of eighty-eight poems that, in time, would be upheld as a landmark text of the decade. The book and the circumstances of its creation are unusual for a number of reasons. Unlike most poetry collections of the decade, which were assembled from a combination of previously printed and new work, *The Silence of Love* contains only unpublished poems. It was composed in the span of just three months, from June to August 1925.[1] Han was also not active in the burgeoning literary circles that had sprung up in urban centers. In this sense, the release of *The Silence of Love* can be understood as an anomaly, one that nevertheless raises pertinent questions, given the elevated position the book commands in Korean literary history. For what purpose did Han choose to compose and publish *The Silence of Love*? What does the collection signify for poetry's place in Korean society at the time? How does *The Silence of Love* compel its readers to approach poetry as a work of literature? What model of poetry as political text does it propose?

In this chapter, I invoke the word "politics" in the context of literature to refer generally to the way in which poetry addressed societal issues, generating a link between what was written on the page and what was happening in everyday life. When *The Silence of Love* was published

[1] Chŏng U-t'aek, *Han'guk kŭndae siin ŭi yŏnghon kwa hyŏngsik* [The Spirit and Form of the Modern Korean Poet] (Seoul: Kipŭn saem, 2004), 268.

in 1926, six years after the March First Movement, there was arguably no larger shared concern for Koreans than colonialism, a condition that seeped into all corners of existence, dictating, for example, what language they were to speak, or what subjects they would learn in school.

Vernacular poetry bloomed in the 1920s as publication restrictions were lifted under the dictates of Saito Makoto (1858-1936), the third governor-general of Korea, who initiated a regime of cultural rule (*bunka seiji*) that was intended to pacify the Korean population after the outbreak of demonstrations in 1919. The convergence of vernacular poetry's development and colonialism in Korea would have an unmistakable effect on the way poems came to be conceived as political texts. Contrary to the predominant model of the lyric in the West, a product of Romanticism that places predominant emphasis on the expression of an individual's subjectivity, short-form poems in Korea from the 1920s often addressed subjects that were pertinent to a collective. Vernacular poems like those included in *The Silence of Love* generated a venue for readers to imagine themselves as belonging to a group in a way that corresponds with Benedict Anderson's observations about the role of the novel in eighteenth-century Europe as a generator of an imagined community.[2] Ironically, in Korea, this phenomenon occurred during a time when the nation did not exist. Rather than being tethered together by the bond of sovereignty, Han proposes that the common link shared by all Koreans is one defined by absence.

The politics of *The Silence of Love* are not evident in the representation of an arduous reality or the crisp expression of discernable ideology, but instead, can be located in the formal characteristics of its poems. As Theodor Adorno has observed, lyric poetry "shows itself most thoroughly integrated into society at those points where it does not repeat what society says—

[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 25.

where it conveys no pronouncements—but rather where the speaking subject (who succeeds in his expression) comes to full according with the language itself."[3] Adorno's thesis about the sociality of poetry is that its political dimension is apparent in the use of language as a shared vessel for communication to transform the concerns of the individual into a general matter. Han does so by establishing a vague narrative premise—the absence of the beloved—that provides a foundation for the poems in *The Silence of Love*. His use of fiction is distinguished from the novel by its deliberate lack of detail, a quality that not only allows readers to bring multiple interpretations to the core storyline, but ultimately also demonstrates how the condition of loss is one that is applicable to numerous aspects of 1920s Korea as a colonial society.

In its use of form, *The Silence of Love* engenders a mode of reading that requires the active participation of anyone who attempts to read between the lines of his poems in search of a greater meaning. The flexibility of interpretation that it permits as its central premise, however, is not limitless, but rather was informed by discourses that were circulating in Korea thanks to an intellectual culture of mass translation. On the surface, Han's poems may appear to be simple articulations of love, but his approach to the subject was colored by the writing of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), who used the notion of love as a label for his vision of an alternative modernity to Western capitalism. Han references Tagore in *The Silence of Love*, allowing readers to draw a connection between himself and the international figure, but at the same time, alludes to traditional depictions of love in Korean poetry and the modern discourse of romance (*yŏnae*) that had acquired popularity in the 1920s after being imported from Japan. Which of these types of love is the subject of Han's poetry? To an extent, all of them, with *The*

[3] Theodore Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O'Connor (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 218.

Silence of Love functioning as a literary junction point where these seemingly disparate threads converge. By distilling these translated discourses down to an abstract portrayal of shared loss, Han generated a sense of community among his readers, providing a model for engaged vernacular poetry built out of open-ended metaphor.

Han Yong-un as National Poet

Han Yong-un is one of the most recognizable names in modern Korean poetry today, but in his own era he was not primarily known as a poet. Born to a low aristocratic family with the name Han Yu-ch'ŏn in Hongsŏng, Southern Ch'ungch'ŏng Province, Han was immersed in the world of letters from a young age, having received a preliminary education in the Chinese classics at a local school known as a *sŏdang*. In 1897, he left his hometown for Hansŏng (present-day Seoul), where he first entered a Buddhist temple, and would decide to leave his family, including a pregnant wife, behind in 1903 to pursue the religion full time. Han was ordained a Buddhist monk on January 26, 1905. Two years later, during a meditation retreat at Kŏnbongsa Temple in Gangwon Province, he was bestowed with the name for which he is known: Yong-un, meaning "dragon clouds."

From the beginning, Han had strong ideas about Buddhism's place in the modern world that marked him as a reformer. He believed that one of Buddhism's most important tenants was egalitarianism, which he saw as an alternative to the Social Darwinist logic of capitalism.[4] In 1913, he published *On the Reformation of Korean Buddhism* (Chosŏn pulgyo yusillon), bringing

[4] Vladimir Tikhonovk and Owen Miller, "Han Yongun: From Social-Darwinism to Socialism with a Buddhist Face," in *Selected Writings of Han Yongun: From Social Darwinism to Socialism with a Buddhist Face*, ed. Vladimir Tikhonov and Owen Miller (Kent: Global Oriental, 2008), 7-8.

his thoughts into an open forum where he thrived as a public intellectual. Despite being removed from the material world as a monk, Han was invested in working with the general population to reshape ordinary lives, a predilection that is also apparent in *The Silence of Love*. He was responsible, in this way, for mustering the participation of Buddhist students in the demonstrations that became the March First movement in 1919, although they were far outnumbered by Protestant and Ch'ŏndogyo activists. Han himself was one of thirty-two signatories of a declaration of independence, which was read aloud throughout the peninsula during the protests. For his participation, he was arrested and served a prison sentence in Sŏdaemun until December 22, 1921.

Given his prominence as a Buddhist reformer and activist who rallied on behalf of Korea's independence, it is perhaps not a surprise that Han was primarily known in his time for these roles, rather than for his poetry. *The Silence of Love* was published in 1926, but periodicals from the time reveal a relative paucity of discussion, incommensurate to the stature the book would later acquire. Han was added to the canon of Korean literature, where he remains, in the 1950s, his place cemented over a gradual process of recognition that continued into the 1960s.[5]

One of the first major critical voices to champion Han was that of Paik Nak-chung.[6] In *Creation and Criticism* (Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng, 1966-present), the progressive literary journal

[5] Lee Sun-Yi specifically notes the contributions of poet and critic Cho Chi-hun (1920-1968), Park No-chun, and In Kwŏn-hwan to Han's canonization. Cho authored multiple articles about Han during the 1950s. In 1960, Pak No-chun and In Kwŏn-hwan collaborated on the first academic monograph about the poet. Park No-chun and In Kwŏn-hwan, *Man-hae Han Yong-un yŏn'gu* [Man-hae Han Yong-un Research] (Seoul: T'ongmungwan, 1960); Lee Sun-Yi, "1960-yŏndae ijŏn Han Yong-un si ŭi chŏngjŏnhwa kwajŏng" [The Canonization of the Poems by Han Young-un Before the 1960s], *Han'guk munye pip'yŏng yŏn'gu* 50 (2016): 101.

[6] A professor of English Literature at Seoul National University from 1962 to 2003, Paik Nak-chung gained renown as a literary critic writing for *Creation and Criticism* (Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng, 1966-present), the journal he founded and for which he served as an editor. As a critic, Paik denounced pure literature (*sunsu munhak*), a paradigm of non-political writing that had

he established, Paik lauded Han as "Korea's first modern poet" (*ch'oech'o ŭi kŭndae siin*).[7] His affection for Han is especially apparent in a 1969 article titled "A Theory of Citizen's Literature" (Simin munhak non), the predecessor to the notion of *minjok munhak* (national literature) that he would introduce in the 1970s.[8] Given that Paik was criticized for his reliance on examples selected from nineteenth-century Western literature to undergird his theory, it is notable that he singles out Han in the article, who he names alongside the contemporary poet Kim Su-yŏng (1921-1968), as an exemplary Korean writer.

For Paik, Han is noteworthy for the way his literature exudes civic consciousness (*simin ŭisik*). In *The Silence of Love*, Paik sees this idea being conveyed through the amorphous notion of love (*sarang*). He explains that both Han and Kim write about love not only in the conventional sense of romance, but to convey a kind of consciousness in which the individual is compelled to imagine themselves as part of a larger community, whose welfare now falls within the purview of their concern.[9] Han, in particular, is distinguished for inculcating this sensibility

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gained traction in the postwar period. In its place, he advocated engagement literature (*ch'amyŏ munhak*), writing that tackled political, social, and historical issues, especially literature that challenged the repressive measures of the state. From the beginning of his career, Paik has also been a prominent political activist, writing and speaking about progressive issues that are not directly related to literature. Susan Hwang, "Dissident Readings: Paik Nak-Chung and the Politics of Engagement in South Korean Literature" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2016), 1-3.

[7] Paik Nak-chung, "Simin munhak non" [A Theory of Citizen's Literature], *Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng* 4, no. 2 (June 1969): 488.

[8] As Susan Hwang notes, "A Theory of Citizen's Literature" can be read as a rejection of modernist writers and critics who belonged to the 4.19 generation, so named for the April Revolution that resulted in the end of the First Republic of South Korea led by Syngman Rhee. Whereas the modernists, such as critic Kim Chu-yŏn, were increasingly drawn toward individualism, Paik called for a literature that encouraged civic consciousness, penned by writers who were foremost concerned with the health of the nation. Susan Hwang, "Dissident Readings," 25-26.

[9] Paik Nak-chung, "Simin munhak non" [A Theory of Citizen's Literature], *Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng* 4, no. 2 (June 1969): 467.

in the aftermath of the March First Movement, a critical period in the formation of modern Korean literature that Paik notes was in need of a transformation in sensibility.[10]

The enshrinement of Han as the quintessential poet of the colonial period continued in the 1970s. Toward the end of the decade, in 1977, Kim U-ch'ang published *A Poet of the Impoverished Era* (Kumgp'iphan sidae ŭi siin), which contains a reading of *The Silence of Love* that celebrated Han as a writer that was keenly sensitive to conditions of his time. Kim compares Han to Blaise Pascal as described in Lucien Goldmann's *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensées of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (1964). He explains that according to Goldmann, Pascal was a tragic figure, who lived in an unjust world, but rather than abandon reality, or attempt to change what could not be altered, he decided instead to reject the world, while also accepting with open eyes that it was the only one he had. Kim argues that Han demonstrates the same attitude in his poetry.

Kim's understanding of Han is premised on the division of two seeming related but distinct concepts: reality (*hyŏnsil*) and truth (*chinsil*). For Kim, reality refers to the world in which we live, whereas truth is an ideal, the ultimate object of desire that was absent in both Pascal and Han's time. The two, Kim notes, nevertheless believed in the notion of truth, which for them, was ironically defined by its absence.[11] For Kim, Han is worth lauding for his understated but persistent sense of optimism. He explains that Han's poetry shows the reader how life is worth living for one's ideals—embodied in the figure of the beloved, a symbol for the absent truth—even if such a life entails endless hardship.[12]

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[10] Ibid., 488-489.
[11] Kim U-ch'ang, "Kumgp'iphan sidae ŭi siin: Han Yong-un ŭi si [A Poet of the Impoverished Era]," in *Kim U-ch'ang chŏnjip* [The Complete Works of Kim U-Ch'ang] (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1993), 126–127.
[12] Ibid., 136-137.

Paik and Kim each uphold Han's poetry for the potential effect it might have on its readers. Whereas Paik's reading is more overtly political in positioning Han as a literary model of civic consciousness, Kim couches his appreciation of Han in language borrowed from Western philosophy. Despite the universality implied by the comparison to Pascal and the evocation of abstract notions like reality and truth, Kim's reading of *The Silence of Love* is nevertheless grounded within a specifically Korean context, the country impoverished, as the title of his book indicates, by its absence of national sovereignty. It follows, then, that the readers for whom Paik and Kim imagine Han's poetry could serve as a useful model were also Korean. Neither Paik nor Kim based their arguments on empirical evidence that Han's book was widely read, choosing instead to highlight his real-life activism that unmistakably colors their interpretations of his poetry. In this sense, both identify Han as a national poet because of the way his biography and literature intersect to form an ideal archetype of an engaged writer that was particularly resonant in South Korea during the 1960s and 70s.

Given the reputation of the book based on appraisals by the likes of Paik and Kim, one might be surprised to be find that the actual poems in *The Silence of Love* do not make direct reference to politics, and instead, rely on metaphorical language to pose indirect statements about 1920s Korea. Nevertheless, Kim attempts to unravel the coded language of Han's poetry by citing the poem "I Saw You" (Tangsin ŭl poassŭmnida), which he claims reveals the subject of the book to be the loss of the Korean nation:

당신을 보았습니다

당신이 가신 뒤로 나는 당신을 잊을 수가 없습니다
까닭은 당신을 위하느니보다 나를 위함이 많습니다

I Saw You

After you left I have been unable to forget you.
The reason why has more to do with me than you.

나는 갈고심을 땅이 없으므로 秋收가
없습니다
저녁거리가 없어서 조나 감자를 꾸려
이웃집에 갔더니 主人은「거지는
人格이 없다 人格이 없는 사람은
生命이 없다 너를 도아주는 것은
罪惡이다」고 말하였습니다
그 말을 듣고 돌아나올 때에 쏟아지는
눈물 속에서 당신을 보았습니다

나는 집도 없고 다른 까닭을 겸하여 民籍
이 없습니다
「民籍 없는 者는 人權이 없다 人權이 없는
너에게 무슨 貞操냐」하고 凌辱
하려는 將軍이 있었습니다
그를 抗拒한 뒤에 남에게 대한 激憤이
스스로의 슬픔으로 化하는 刹那에
당신을 보았습니다
아아 온갖 倫理, 道德, 法律은 칼과 黃金을
祭祀 지내는 烟氣인 줄을
알았습니다
永遠의 사랑을 받을까 人間歷史의 첫
페이지에 잉크칠을 할까 술을
마실까 망서릴 때에 당신을
보았습니다

There is no harvest because I have no land to till and seed.
No dinner to eat, I went to a neighbor's house in search of millet or potatoes, and the owner said to me, "A beggar has no character. A person without character is not a person. To help you would be a crime."
I saw you through the tears that flowed upon returning home after hearing those words.

I have no home, and for other reasons, no family register.
There was once a general, who sought to ravish me and said, "A person without a country has no rights. What is chastity to you who has no rights?"
I saw you after defying him, in the instant when my anger toward others was transformed into personal grief.
Ah, I once thought all the morals, ethics, and laws were but the smoke of a ritual carried out for swords and gold.
I saw you as I hesitated, wondering if I should receive eternal love, lay ink upon the first page of human history, or take a sip of wine.[13]

"I Saw You," like many poems in *The Silence of Love*, is premised upon the absence of the beloved, here referred to in the second person as "you" (*tangsin*). In a pattern that forms the structure of the poem, the speaker of the poem is subjected to memories of the beloved during moments of intense emotion, the first taking place after being turned away by a neighbor, who refuses to share food. The second memory, indicated by the repetition of the title phrase "I saw

[13] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 65-66.

you" (*tangsin ŭl poassŭmnida*), occurs after the speaker resists being raped by a malicious general, who, like the neighbor, questions the speaker's worth as a human being. The final memory of the beloved occurs at the end of the poem, as the speaker contemplates three nebulous options: receiving eternal love, writing history, or drinking wine. These instances of recollection are striking because the speaker gives the reader no indication of their attitude toward these memories. Rather, the reader is simply told that such moments took place and then are left to ponder their meaning.

If considered within the framework of the poem laid out above, the key line that Kim cites as evidence of Han's purpose—"I have no home, and for other reasons, no family register"—is not marked as being significant in and of itself.[14] According to Kim's reading, the speaker of the poem lacks a family register because there is no longer a nation to render such a document meaningful, hence, its absence stands in for the loss of Korea. However, the line is ambiguous enough to leave room for other interpretations. For example, if one were to see the speaker of the poem as a fictional representation of Han himself, the lack of a family register could be read as symptom of his status as a monk who has severed ties with his relations. Moreover, in the context of the poem's text, when the abusive general uses these words against the speaker, they are an echo of the earlier reproof by the neighbor, who admonishes the speaker by telling them they are not a person because they have no character. Both scenes are given equal weight and act as commentary about the abstract notion of injustice as encountered by the helpless, rather than being specifically about the wrongs of imperialism. Although it is certainly possible to read *The Silence of Love* as an extended metaphor for the loss of Korea to Japan, as

[14] A family register (*minjŏk*), or *hojŏk* as it is now referred, is a record used to track a family's genealogy.

Kim does, the text itself does not give priority to this reading. Instead it is presented as one of many possibilities.

Indeed, the coexistence of multiple interpretations is among the first ideas that Han raises in *The Silence of Love*. This was not necessarily a new idea, as evidenced by Kim Ŏk's prior embrace of Symbolist allusion, but is nevertheless striking for the way that Han readily foregrounds the acceptance of ambiguity as the most appropriate reading methodology. In the introduction of the book, playfully titled "Throwaway Thoughts" (Kunmal), he attempts to define the term "beloved" (*nim*), the affectionate appellation that appears in the title, there translated as "love." Han's explanation, as seen below, is not straightforward:

> "Beloved" refers not just to one's beloved but to anything for which one yearns. If humanity is Buddha's beloved, then philosophy is Kant's. For the rose there is spring rain, for Mazzini there is Italy. My beloved is not only what I love, but what loves me.
>
> If romantic love is free, one's beloved is free as well. But are you not shackled by this splendid freedom? Do you also have a beloved? What you call your beloved is but your own shadow.
>
> I have written these poems longing for the wandering lamb, who has lost its way out of the darkened field.[15]

As the introduction makes clear, Han is less interested in the specific identity of the beloved than the abstract notion of this figure and the act of longing that defines it. He references Buddha, Kant, and Giuseppe Mazzini as three individuals of disparate time, provenance, and character, who are nevertheless premised as being analogous because each harbored an attachment to an object that served as their own beloved. The generalness of Han's inquiry is evident in the range suggested by the appearance of international names and by the invocation of nature in the rose

[15] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), unnumbered page.

who cherishes the spring rain. Each actor, he explains, pines for a different beloved, who returns their admirer's love in a relationship based upon mutual feelings. Han does not invoke his personal life as an example, instead presenting the speaker and the beloved as abstract characters. Readers are therefore given the leeway to imagine the beloved referenced in *The Silence of Love* as their own.

Despite the impression of dispensability conveyed by its title, "Throwaway Thoughts" plays an integral role in instructing readers on how to approach the poems contained within. The passage does so not by furnishing its audience with context in the form of either background information about the composition of the text, or the introduction of a master narrative to tether the disparate poems into a coherent whole. Rather, "Throwaway Thoughts" overtly questions the use of context as a roadmap to decipher poetry by troubling the relationship between signifier and signified.

As the opening sentence reveals, "beloved," the key term of the book's title, "refers not just to one's beloved but to anything that is the object of one's longing." Although the statement is couched as a clarification, the reader is pulled away from the sphere of concrete specificity and thrust in the direction of open ended universality. Notably, this movement also corresponds to a pivot away from the private realm of romantic love. The beloved may be defined as the object of one's longing, but love is recast as a public emotion shared by a community, even if individual members may harbor distinct affections that corresponds to their identities. The examples of "beloved" that Han lists frame love as a sober life passion, albeit not a pursuit that is chosen: "My beloved is not only what I love, but what loves me." The symmetry drawn by this statement reinforces how love as conceived by Han materializes only out of a relationship between two parties, whose mutual feelings for each other will the spark of a connection into existence.

Spelling out the underlying logic of Han's statements might inspire one to raise playful questions along the lines of "What might it mean for philosophy to love Kant"? His employment of metaphor combines the loftiness of philosophical inquiry with the slyness of a puzzle. By withholding a definitive answer to who or what the beloved stands for, Han inspires the reader to not only think, but appreciate the delicate process of unwinding the logic of his language. Love is the central topic of the book, but Han resists reducing what he fundamentally believes to be a powerful if ubiquitous emotion into a single version of its multiple permutations. The abstractness of love is precisely what renders it difficult to describe in empirical language.

Lyrical Narrative in *The Silence of Love*

The open-endedness of the metaphor introduced in "Throwaway Thoughts" informs the structure of Han Yong-un's poems, which are united by a single premise. The painful event in question is the departure of the beloved, who has left for an unspecified reason, resulting in an absence that colors the present moment for the speakers of Han's poems. The central conceit of *The Silence of Love* is that separation is not be taken as an impetus for disillusionment, but instead, embraced as a catalysis for positive introspection. By turning inward, the speaker is able to recreate themselves, their identity defined in the present tense by their response to being left behind. This dynamic is exemplified by the title poem of the collection:

님의沈黙

님은 갓슴니다 아々 사랑하는나의님은
　　갓슴니다
푸른산빗을깨치고 단풍나무숩을향하야난
　　적은길을 거러서 참어떨치고
　　갓슴니다
黃金의꽃가티 굿고빗나든 옛盟誓는

The Silence of Love

My beloved is gone. Oh, my beloved, who I
　　love, is gone.
Sundering the blue mountain light, they
　　walked along the small path that faces
　　the forest of autumn leaves, and tore
　　themselves away.
An old promise, once hard and bright as a
　　golden flower, now a cold speck of

차듸찬띠끌이되야서 한숨의 微風
에 나러갓슴니다
날카로은 첫「키쓰」의追憶은 나의運命의
指針을 돌너노코 뒷거름처서
사러젓슴니다
나는 향긔로은 님의말소리에 귀먹고
꽃다은 님의얼골에 눈멀었슴니다
사랑도 사람의일이라 맛날때에 미리
떠날것을 염녀하고경계하지
아니한것은아니지만
리별은 뜻밧긔일이되고 놀난가슴은
새로은 슬븜에 터짐니다
그러나 리별을 쓸데없는 눈물의 源泉
을만들고 마는것은 스스로
사랑을깨치는것인줄
아는까닭에 것잡을수업는 슬븜의 힘을
옴겨서 새希望의 정수박이에
드러부엇슴니다
우리는 맛날때에 떠날것을염녀하는
것과가티 떠날때에 다시맛날것을
밋슴니다
아々 님은갓지마는 나는 님을보내지
아니하얏슴니다
제곡조를못이기는 사랑의노래는
님의沈默을 휩싸고돔니다

dust, was carried off by a sigh of light wind.
The sharp memory of our first kiss set the compass of my fate, then withdrew and disappeared.
I have become deaf to my beloved's fragrant voice, blind to my beloved's flower-like face.
As love too is an affair of people, upon meeting, we fear and are wary of farewells, but separation occurs in an instant, and the stunned heart tears upon newfound sadness.
But knowing that to turn our farewell into a source of hopeless tears is to destroy love by my own hand, I took the unruly power of sadness and poured it into the summit of new hope.
Just as I feared your departure when we met, I believe we will meet again now that you have left.
Oh, my beloved is gone, but I did not send them away.
The song of love, unable to overcome its melody, wanders, surrounding my beloved's silence.[16]

The relationship between the speaker and the beloved forms the basis of "The Silence of Love." Almost no concrete information about either is provided. The poem invites the reader to fill in details based on diction and tone, but many particulars remain obscure. In a number of other poems from the book, the speaker explicitly refers to themselves as a woman, but here gender is only implied. The speaker adopts the role of a traditional women, who is rendered immobile and

[16] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 65-66.

therefore compelled to wait for her beloved's return. Still, Han obviates the specification of gender in "The Silence of Love," allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. The overall ambiguity of the poem, created by withholding detail, serves to place emphasis on the emotions of the speaker, which are described in detail, rather than the characters themselves, who are not.

In tone and form, Han prioritizes accessibility in "The Silence of Love" to allow for a comfortable reading experience. From the standpoint of categorization, it has been described by critics as a *sanmunsi* (prose poem) composed of eleven discrete sentences, each definitively concluded with a period at its conclusion. On the page, however, the poem does not possess the standard appearance of a prose poem, which are typically printed without line breaks in a block of text. In an unusual decision, Han inserts breaks after every sentence, lending the poem the visual appearance of a typical vernacular poem. The choice results in a poem that is simple to parse, its rhythmic pauses aligning one-to-one with the discrete units of its semantic content, the text shorn of the intricacy entailed by enjambment.

Likewise, the speaker's voice in "The Silence of Love" is pitched to be respectful, composed with the distinct traits of spoken language that clearly articulates a sense of polite distance from the reader. Unlike most poets who were active at the time, Han forgoes the grammatical informality of the plain-form that is commonly employed in written language. The *sŭmnida* verb endings that he consistently uses throughout the collection impart the feeling of orality to his poems, inviting his readers to imagine them being recited, but more importantly, establishing a clear relationship between the speaker and reader. Whereas many poems written in the lyrical mode can give the impression that the reader is invading the speaker's personal space—a secret listener to their most private thoughts—Han's poems, instead, are presented as public thoughts that have been willfully shared with whomever might care to read them.

Nevertheless, “The Silence of Love” may still be considered a lyric in that it expresses the interiority of the speaker as they reconcile their feelings in the absence of the beloved. The standard interpretation of the poem as an extended metaphor defines the beloved as a symbol for Korea. But to read the poem in this way is to reduce the blue mountain light, the kiss, and the cold speck of dust described in its lines down to corresponding objects or ideas, rupturing the delicate abstraction of the poem and the assorted possibilities it suggests. As a lyric, “The Silence of Love” generates a consistent fictional world that is depicted subjectively from the perspective of the speaker. Although the reader is inclined to identify the speaker with Han, the former is a persona of the latter, not a literal match.

“The Silence of Love” begins with the straightforward declaration that the beloved is gone. This event, which occurred in the past, serves as the impetus for the lines that follow. The speaker is conspicuously passive. Rather than take action, they recount their beloved’s departure through descriptions of nature, then turning backward, they dwell on the memory of the relationship, described through references to an old promise and kiss. Movement through time, as the speaker reconciles their feelings in the present tense, provides the structure of the poem. They justify their mood, noting that “separation occurs in an instant, and the stunned heart tears upon newfound sadness,” before vowing to control their feelings in the resolution to hope for a future reunion. The poem concludes on this sentiment with the observation that the “song of love, unable to overcome its melody, wanders, surrounding my beloved’s silence.” In the end, absence is overcome not through actual reunion, but resilience.

As is evident from the title poem, in *The Silence of Love*, Han introduced a variant of the lyric that had come to dominant vernacular poetry in the 1920s, his version prioritizing the vocalization of a fictional scenario that, in tone, is marked as public discourse, meant to be read

and shared widely. In both the context of the West and Korea, the lyric has proven to be a difficult genre to define, opening up the possibility for poets like Han to experiment with the form, molding it to suit their own purposes. Scott Brewster lists brevity, the use of a first-person narrator or persona, the quality of being performative and an outlet for personal emotion as the basic traits of the lyric.[17] His definition is fairly standard, especially in the emphasis placed on the role of the speaker, who is implicitly contrasted with the outside world, and their emotions. Over time, theories of the lyric have proposed several different configurations of the relationship between the speaker and the world. This pairing has been central to how the lyric has been conceived throughout literary history.

Tracing the origins of the lyric in Korea, Kim Chong-hun notes that in the premodern era, emotion (*kamjŏng*), paired with the complementary notion of the environment (*kyŏng*), was understood to be an important component of *hansi* (Sino-Korean poetry). Lyricism (*sŏjŏng*) did not yet have a major place in poetic theory, although a version of the idea already existed.[18] Kim explains that the perception of lyricism began to shift around the 1920s, when this old idea of lyricism was confronted with the imported Western concept, both of which were now referred to with the same word.[19] However, during this period, lyricism was not positioned at the forefront of debates about poetry because most poems were tacitly understood to be lyrics. Kim contrasts this conception of lyricism, which he refers to as "broad lyricism" (*nŏlbŭn sŏjŏng*), with "narrow lyricism" (*chobŭn sŏjŏng*), the variation of the idea, described above, that was derived specifically from Western Romanticism, in which lyrics are conceived as the expression of a

[17] Scott Brewster, *Lyric* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1.
[18] Kim Chong-hun, *Han'guk kŭndae sŏjŏngsi ŭi kiwŏn kwa hyŏngsŏng* [The Origin and Formation of Modern Korean Lyrical Poetry] (Seoul: Sŏjŏng sihak, 2010), 14-15.
[19] Ibid., 17.

single ego unto which everything else is internalized.[20] Both versions continue to exist side by side, lending the term a degree of ambiguity.

Other critics have argued for a reconceptualization of the Korean lyric as a separate genre from that of the West. Ko Bong-Jun contends, citing the historical specificity and narrowness of various Western theories of the lyric, for an understanding of the Korean lyric that conceives the form as an expression of feeling (*chŏng*), a term that Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950) introduced to intellectual discourse during the 1910s and was central to how he conceived modern life as an escape from blind devotion to systems and laws, ushering in the freedom of the emotions and the emergence of the individual. As Ko explains, Yi's notion of feeling can be located in the spectrum of ideas that characterized his era between several conflicting binaries including Romanticism and Enlightenment, modernity and tradition, East and West.[21]

Most theories of lyric, Western or Korean, do not broach the issue of fiction, posing a problem for the analysis of *The Silence of Love.* The application of narratology to the study of short-form poetry remains a point of contention. From the time of Aristotle, narrative has typically been associated with long-form poetry such as the epic and the drama. However, within Anglo-American academia, the emergence of New Criticism in the 1940s shifted the theoretical paradigm. In the attempt to distinguish the poetic speaker from the author of a poem—thereby severing literature from the real world—the New Critics advocated for the scrutiny of lyrics through the lens of narrative. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, for example, make the case that all poems contain dramatic elements:

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[20] Ibid., 28.

[21] Ko Bong-Jun, "Sŏjŏngsi iron ŭi sŏlch'al kwa mosaek: 'Sŏjŏng' kaenyŏm ŭi ijungsŏng kwa 'chŏng'ŭi kaenyŏm ŭl chungsim ŭro'" [A Consideration of the Theory of the Lyric: Focusing on the Dualism of 'Lyric' and the Concept of 'Emotion'], *Han'guk sihak yŏn'gu* 20 (December 2007): 133-139.

> This is clear when we reflect that every poem implies a speaker of the poem, either the poet writing in his own person or someone into whose mouth the poem is put, and that the poem represents the reaction of such a person to a situation, a scene, or an idea. In this sense every poem can be—and in fact must be—regarded as a little drama.[22]

The emphasis that Brooks and Warren place on the poetic speaker is telling. From the standpoint of narratology, the poetic speaker is a character, what Vladimir Propp refers to as a *dramatis personae* in *Morphology of the Folktale*, one of the earliest studies of narrative.[23] But unlike conventional narrative forms that include the folktale, lyrics generally do not have plots, sequences of events that Propp describes in terms of "functions" that characters perform.[24] As alluded to by Brooks and Warren, the primary function of the poetic speaker is to react by narrating their thoughts in the present moment. In this sense, time as represented by the lyric is static. Whereas epics, dramas, and novels can potentially take place over the course of years, the lyric often depicts a single, solitary moment.

The New Critical approach, however, has its share of detractors. Jonathan Culler, for one, argues that to read lyrics as narrative is to conflate the genre with the dramatic monologue, a subset of the whole. He conceives of lyrics as rhetorical statements, calling particular attention to the ways in which poems engage with readers, whose attentions are captivated by formal elements that include rhythm and modes of address.[25] Reading lyrics in terms of narrative, Culler contends, sidelines these elements, which distinguish poems from novels:

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[22] Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), 20.
[23] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd ed., trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 19-20.
[24] Propp writes, "Definition of a function will most often be given in the form of a noun expressing an action (interdiction, interrogation, flight, etc.). Secondly, an action cannot be defined apart from its place in the course of a narration. Ibid., 21.
[25] Culler's proposed, alternative definition of a lyric does away with the notion of a poetic persona, and instead focuses on what he describes as a "poetic speech-act" that does not have an

> There are numerous reasons to resist the model of lyric as dramatic monologue. It pushes the lyric in the direction of the novel by adopting a mimetic model and focusing on the speaker as character, but it is deadly to try to compete with narrative on terrain where narrative has obvious advantages. This model ignores or reduces, with its normalizing novelizing, the characteristic extravagance of lyric on the one hand and its intertextual echoes on the other; and it neglects all those elements of lyric—including rhyme, meter, refrain—not imitated from ordinary speech acts.[26]

Culler's assertion serves as a welcome reminder that lyrics belong to the world as objects, whose power over readers can be ascribed, at least in part, to their rhetorical components. Nevertheless, his argument also begs the question of how to approach lyrics that clearly foreground themselves as fiction, as the poems of *The Silence of Love* do. The conceit of the poetic speaker as a character, who must be differentiated from the author, is central to the way Han's poems assert themselves as text on the page. At times, the speakers are individuals who are conspicuously not Han, even if readers like Paik Nak-chung and Kim U-ch'ang choose to see him in their voices. Any connection, it must be admitted, between Han and the speakers of his poems is symbolic, not literal. The overtness of narrative in *The Silence of Love* is best exemplified by the poem "The Ferry and the Passenger" (Naruppae wa haengin):

나룻배와 行人	**The Ferry and the Passenger**
나는 나룻배 당신은 行人	I am a ferry You are my passenger
당신은 흙발로 나를 짓밟습니다 나는 당신을 안고 물을 건너갑니다	You board me with soiled feet. I hold you as I cross the water.

equivalent to a speech-act in the real world. His method is inductive, to sample examples of famous lyrics across time and identify four common elements that many, but not all, share. Culler lists an emphasis on voicing, what he calls "the enunciative apparatus;" the quality of being an event rather than relating an event, a rejection of mimesis, that he later refers to being illocutionary; a ritualistic aspect, in that lyrics are meant to be taken in and repeated by readers; and the quality of being hyperbolic. Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 33-38.

[26] Ibid., 118-119.

나는 당신을 안으면 깊으나 옅으나 급한
여울이나 건너갑니다

만일 당신이 아니 오시면 나는 바람을
쐬고 눈비를 맞으며 밤에서
낮까지 당신을 기다리고
있습니다
당신은 물만 건너면 나를 돌아보지도
않고 가십니다 그려
그러나 당신이 언제든지 오실 줄만은
알아요
나는 당신을 기다리면서 날마다날마다
낡아갑니다

나는 나룻배
당신은 行人

As long as I hold you, no matter how deep or
low, no matter how strong the rapids, I
cross the water.

And should you not come, I will stand in the
wind, endure the snow and the rain,
waiting for you as night turns to day.
As long as you cross the water, you never
look back to me.
All I know is that you will always come.
As I wait for you, I grow older day by day.

I am a ferry
You are my passenger[27]

The central metaphor of "The Ferry and the Passenger" casts the beloved as a traveler being carried to their destination by the speaker. As an anthropomorphized boat, the speaker acts as a container for the passenger, cargo that is precious and must be protected. The indifference of the passenger for the ferry does not go unnoticed. "You board me with soiled feet," the speaker points out, "I hold you as I cross the water." The poem is addressed to "you" in the second person as a monologue recounting all that the passenger has failed to perceive, but the evenhanded tone suggests resignation, not anger, in the speaker's acceptance of their role. In response to the passenger's indifference, the speaker offers devotion as intimate as an embrace, yet strong enough to weather the currents they will encounter.

"The Ferry and the Passenger" begins and ends with a refrain that inscribes the roles of the speaker and "you." The use of personification is presented in a straightforward manner to the

[27] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 28-29.

reader, the connection between the speaker and the boat, the beloved and the passenger articulated so clearly, there could be an equation symbol between them. Repetition underscores the cyclical nature of a relationship that cannot proceed forward, but also reinforces the sense of the poem as narrative by positing each party as a character. "I am a ferry," declares the speaker, the language plain but firm in a way that exudes a nonchalant attitude toward metaphor. In this way, symbols are framed as an ordinary and appropriate lens with which to view the world.

In "The Ferry and the Passenger," the speaker's resigned tone is conveyed through the poem's prominent use of the present tense. The straightforward narration of a sequence of actions, in which each statement is anchored by a single verb, collapses the past and the future into the current moment, a condition that will continue in perpetuity, at least according to the speaker's presumptions. In the second stanza, the speaker turns to a hypothetical situation, noting, "I will stand in the wind, endure the snow and the rain, waiting for you as night turns to day," the one grammatical exception to the present tense of the other lines. However, even this assertion is pitched from the same static moment as the rest of the poem. In this way, "Ferry" follows the paradigm of lyrics as representations of a single juncture in time, despite gesturing toward a larger narrative.

For the speaker, the moment described in "The Ferry and the Passenger" is representative of their existence, extending back to that an unspecified moment in the past and into the foreseeable future. They define themselves in the poem by their willingness to wait for the passenger in a demonstration of faith not contingent on reciprocation. The speaker intones, "All I know is that you will always come," consigning the aggregate of their knowledge to a single prophecy based upon intuition, not empirical evidence. As such, "The Ferry and the Passenger"

is a testament to the unbending will of the speaker that has colored how they perceive the world and their place within it.

"The Ferry and the Passenger" is but one variation of a story about absence that reappears throughout *The Silence of Love*. Each individual poem constitutes a different variant, articulated in the voice of a separate speaker, all of whom approach the conundrum of the beloved's disappearance from a distinct angle. In "I Will Forget" (Nanŭn ikkojŏ), for example, the speaker struggles to relinquish their memories of the beloved, a perspective is not explored in other poems from *The Silence of Love,* even if the theme of separation is shared. In recounting a failed effort to move beyond the past, "I Will Forget" serves as a testament to the emotional hardship engendered by absence:

나는잊고저

남들은 님을생각한다지만
나는 님을잇고저하야요
잇고저할수록 생각히기로
행혀잇칠가하고 생각하야보앗슴니다

이즈랴면 생각히고
생각하면 잇치지아니하니
잇도말고 생각도마라볼까요
잇든지 생각든지 내버려두어볼까요
그러나 그리도아니되고
쓴임업는 생각々々에 님쑨인데
　　엇지하야요

귀태여 이즈랴면
이즐수가 업는것은 아니지만
잠과죽엄쑨이기로
님두고는 못하야요

I Will Forget

The thoughts of others are with their love
But I resolve to forget mine.
Yet the more I resolve, the more I recall
So I wonder, will he really be forgotten?

When I resolve to forget, my thoughts turn to
　　him
And once there he will not go away.
What if I try neither to forget nor think?
Or rather just cast him aside?
But even so it would do no good
Alas my every thought is for him.

If I were to really try
To forget would not prove impossible
But I cannot leave my beloved behind
To sleep and death alone.

Ah, more than the thought that will not be
　　forgotten
Harrowing is the resolve to forget.[28]

[28] Ibid., 6-7.

아々 잇치지안는 생각보다
잇고저하는 그것이 더욱괴롭슴니다

"I Will Forget" opens by introducing a comparison between the speaker and others (*namdŭl*), the former distinguished by their decision to forget, whereas the latter choose to hold onto their memories. The reference to people outside of the speaker reinforces the idea of separation as a shared condition, one that is metaphorically shared by Han's readers. Following the pattern established by the previous poems, the speaker's identity is established on the basis of their response to the beloved's departure, which sets them apart from their peers.

But what "I Will Forget" ultimately demonstrates is the impossibility of letting go. At first, the situation is presented as a logical conundrum, in which the attempt to forget inevitably spurs thoughts of the beloved—the very memories they were trying to discard—thereby begetting an inescapable cycle. The third stanza reveals, however, that the speaker's problem is emotional, not logical. They admit, should they try, it would be possible to erase their memories, but in the end, they cannot bring themselves to resign the beloved to "sleep and death alone." The world of memory, in this way, is portrayed as being distinct from the world of dreams and death. By implication, committing an experience to memory through reminiscence is presented as a way to keep the past alive. Nevertheless, by the poem's conclusion, the speaker acknowledges this to be an imperfect solution. They bemoan that the act of willing to forget is more painful than the thought of not forgetting. Either choice hurts, but the former remains preferable. Recollection is painful because the speaker has to contend with loss, but choosing to forget, as a decision made of their own volition, is even more arduous. In the end, the speaker resigns themselves to live in torment, the inevitable choice, given the speaker's enduring dedication.

Taken as a whole, *The Silence of Love* is a mosaic of individual responses to absence, each in their own way reaffirming the choice to remain steadfast, rather than succumb to despair. The persuasiveness of the narrative arc is strengthened by variation: the routes that each poem travels to arrive at this same conclusion. Rather than provide one model of dedication, Han offers multiple in the form of his poems' speakers, each of whom confronts their problem in a slightly different manner. In his use of the poetry collection as a form in which discrete poems are given contextual meaning in relation to one another, Han's work is an unassuming counterpoint to Mikhail Bakhtin's assertion that the lyric is an inherently monologic form of literature as a representation of just a single individual's perspective.[29] This quality, according to Bakhtin, renders poetry inferior to the novel, the latter of which can comfortably house a cacophony of voices that better represents the jumble of society. Han's deployment of narrative to create fictional personas that must be distinguished from himself is instrumental to the way the book has been designed.

In *The Silence of Love*, narrative is a tool designed to encourage interpretation. By rejecting the idea that there was only a single way to decode the principal metaphor of the book, Han empowers his readers to develop their own readings of their material. The narratives of his poems are, of course, fixed by the language in which they have been written, but as symbols, the figures of the speaker or the beloved could potentially stand in for anything the reader could potentially imagine in the depicted relationship. In this way, narrative in *The Silence of Love* can be understood as a method to hook readers and change their relationship to poetry. During the

[29] Bakhtin writes, "The world of poetry, no matter how many contradictions and insoluble conflicts the poet develops within it, is always illumined by one unitary and indisputable discourse." Mikhail Mikhaĭlovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 286.

1920s, the use of this device in poetry was discussed by leftist critics, who sought to popularize literature as a way to inculcate class consciousness. In particular, the proletarian critic Kim Ki-chin (1903-1985) believed narrative to be an integral component of poetry should poets hope to capture the attention of potential readers like farmers and laborers who did not inhabit the bubble of intellectual society. Kim asserted that poetry needed to move in the direction of what he termed the "short-form epic" (*tanp'yŏn sŏsasi*), a poetic form longer than the typical vernacular poem that foregrounded narrative comparable to that of the novel, albeit expressed through different means:

> And so, what does the proletarian poet need to concentrate on?
>
> First, the proletarian poet needs to focus on the incident, novel-like aspects of their material. As much as possible, they must use only what is poetically necessary, compress it accordingly, and endeavor to make the incident's content and fundamental ambience utterly clear and concise in a memorable way. If this is not accomplished, the poem will undoubtedly become long like a novel, thereby losing its flavor as a poem. The essence of poetry lies in striking and suggestive jumps, in leaps of emotion between individual lines.[30]

Kim appreciates the novel for what it provides in "incident" (*sagŏn*), his term for narrative that can serve as an enticement for readers who prefer story to aesthetic rigor. And yet, he also warns the poet not to mimic the novelist too closely, for one risks losing the appeal of poetry's concision altogether. As Kim notes, poems generate meaning through ellipsis, in the spaces between lines that as he describes as "leaps of emotion." The short-form epic poems, penned by his fellow proletarian writer Im Hwa (1908-1953) that Kim upheld as a model, were much longer than what one might imagine based on the description above, sometimes taking up multiple pages to tell a story rich with descriptive detail that left little to the imagination. It was Han, in

[30] Kim Ki-chin, "Tanp'yŏn sŏsasi ŭi kil no uri ŭi si ŭi yaksik munje e taehayŏ" [Toward Short-Form Epic Poetry: Our Poetry's Problem with Form], *Chosŏn Munye*, May, 1929.

combining the fictional elements of the novel with the brevity and elliptical qualities of poetry, that more closely matched the form that Kim had envisioned.

Translating Tagore

Han Yong-un employed fictional elements in *The Silence of Love* as a device to structure his poems in a manner that would appeal to general readers, but abstractness of its central scenario more crucially allowed him to ground his literature in a number of discourses that were circulating in 1920s Korea due to the proliferation of translation. In 1929, Yi Kwang-su published a short assessment of *The Silence of Love* in *Chosŏn ilbo* (Chosŏn Daily News) under the header "Recent Reading" (Kŭndok).[31] The text begins with a recollection of him acquiring a copy of the book when it was published three years prior, and him being impressed by the fact that a Buddhist monk had chosen to write poetry in "pure Korean" (*sun Chosŏn mun*). Yi praises Han's poems as being among the highest in quality in the still nascent field of modern Korean poetry, but refrains from going into further detail. Curiously, he concludes the review by downplaying the possibility that Han was influenced by Rabindranath Tagore, suggesting instead that Han is an original. The reference indicates a presumed association between Han and Tagore, a connection that would be evident to any reader of *The Silence of Love* who came across the poem titled "Upon Reading Tagore" enclosed within.[32]

[31] Yi Kwang-su, "Han Yong-un sijip Nim ŭi ch'immuk" [Han Yong-un's Poetry Collection *The Silence of Love*], *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 14, 1929.
[32] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 131-132.

Beginning in the 1910s, Tagore was introduced to Korea, where he soon assumed a stature that few other foreigners could hope to match.[33] The popularity of the Bengali poet can be explained due to a number of factors. After publishing an English-language translation of his poetry collection *Gitanjali* in 1912 with Macmillan in London—an edition that was anointed with a flattering introduction by William Butler Yeats—Tagore was bestowed the Nobel Prize in literature the following year. The accolade was significant in the eyes of Korean intellectuals, who saw Tagore not only as a rare non-Western, bequeathed with recognition from the other side of the world, but also as a fellow colonial, who was committed to the cause of dismantling empire.[34] Tagore never visited the peninsula, but during his numerous excursions to Japan, he openly expressed sympathy for Korea, providing the impetus for admiration that would be sustained through translation.

Tagore's writing was extensively translated into Korean by a number of different intellectuals in the 1910s and 20s. Among his translators were figures as various as Pang Chŏng-hwan (1899-1931), who would go on to become an advocate for children's literature, and a young Chŏng Chi-yong (1902-1950), who translated nine poems from *Gitanjali* for his school newspaper.[35] No one, however, would prove to be as extensive as Kim Ŏk, who published three

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[33] The first mention of Tagore in Korea appeared in a 1916 article for *Sinmun'gye* (New Literary World, 1913-1917) titled "Master Poet, Philosopher, Religious Man of the World, Tagore" (Segyejŏk taesiin ch'ŏrin chonggyo ka T'akkoa sŏnsaeng). Kim Woo-Jo, "T'agorŭ ŭi Chosŏn e taehan insik kwa Chosŏn esŏ ŭi T'agorŭ suyong" [Tagore's Perception of Korean and the Reception of Tagore in Korea], *Indo yŏn'gu* 19, no.1 (May 2015): 51.

[34] Divik Ramesh, "Tagore: A Song of Hope in Despair," *Indian Literature* 56, no. 3 (May/June 2012): 115.

[35] At the time Chŏng was enrolled in Hwimun kodŭng pot'ong hakkyo (Hwimun high school). He published his translations of *Gitanjali* in the inaugural issue of *Hwimun*, the school periodical, in January 1923. Choi Dong-Ho, "Chŏng Chi-yong ŭi T'agorŭ sijip Kit'anjari pŏnyŏk sip'yŏn:1923-yŏn 1-wŏl palgandoen Hwimun ch'angganho rŭl chungsim ŭro" [On Chŏng Chi-yong's Translation of Tagore's *Gitanjali*: The Inaugural Issue of *Hwimoon* Published in January 1923], *Han'gukhak yŏn'gu* 39 (December 2011): 14.

complete translations of Tagore's poetry collections in the early 1920s.[36] Kim saw Tagore as a viable model for aspiring Korean poets, much in the same way he had previously admired the French Symbolists.

Scholars have identified Tagore's influence upon *The Silence of Love* in content and form. Choi Ra-young, for example, argues that Han adopted prominent stylistic elements from Kim's translations. Prior to *The Silence of Love*, Han had only published two vernacular poems: "Heart" (Sim, 1918) and "Deliberation over the Rose of Sharon" (Mugungwa simŭigwajŏ, 1922), which were printed in *Yusim* (One Heart), his own journal, and *Kaebyŏk* (The Opening of the World) respectively. Neither of these short poems, written in simple language, bares much resemblance to the prose poems of *The Silence of Love*.[37] Comparing Kim's 1923 complete translation of *Gitanjali* with Han's poetry, Choi identifies similarities in themes, images, and language. Of particular note is the formality of the speaker's voice in both books, an effect created by the sentence-ending copula *sŭmnida*, employed by Kim to capture the respectful, religious tone of Tagore's poems that later became associated with Han. Choi notes that Tagore's other translators from the same era adopted different solutions when confronted with the same original text, an insight that suggests a link between Kim and Han.[38]

Other scholars have emphasized thematic parallels between Tagore and Han. Song-uk, for example, notes how Tagore makes extensive use of philosophical concepts that originate

[36] Kim Ŏk, trans., *Kit'anjari* [Gitanjali], by Rabindranath Tagore (Seoul: Imundang, 1923). Kim Ŏk, trans., *Sinwŏl* [Crescent Moon], by Rabindranath Tagore (Seoul: Imundang, 1924). Kim Ŏk, trans., *Wŏnjŏng* [The Gardener], by Rabindranath Tagore (Seoul: Aedong sŏgwan, 1924).
[37] Choi Ra-young, *Kim Ŏk ŭi ch'angjakchŏk yŏksi wa kŭndae si hyŏngsŏng* [A Study of *Kim Ŏk*'s Creative Poetry Translation and the Formation of Modern Poetry] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2014), 188-189.
[38] Ibid., 204-15.

from Buddhism in his poetry. In particular, he argues that the notion of *ātman*, a way of understanding the self which does not recognize a split between itself and the other, is central to Tagore's poetry collection *The Gardener* (1913). Song-uk explains that *The Gardener* can be interpreted as the story of an individual embarking on a journey in search of the other, a quest that takes them into their own interiority, the only place, according to the idea of *ātman*, where the encounter between the self and the other is possible.[39] Although he perceives Han to share Tagore's philosophical and religious worldview, he notes a key difference between the two: whereas Tagore's poetry is abstract and removed from society, Han, he argues, engages directly with reality. Song-uk contends that for Han, leading a proper life in accordance with the principles of Buddhism and freeing Korea from Japanese rule are tantamount to the same cause.[40] In this way, he sees the central metaphor of Han's poetry to be equally religious and political in nature.

It is clear from these examples that Han was an admirer of Tagore's poetry, but a more significant link can be drawn between the figures in terms of the way they mixed politics and literature in their public lives. Both were invested in anti-imperialist projects in their own countries, but as seen from the examples quoted in the previous section, these activities were seldom reflected on the page in the concrete images characteristic of proletarian literature or other forms of overtly political writing.[41] Rather, politics are submerged behind the cloak of

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[39] Song-uk, "Yumijŏk ch'owŏl kwa hyŏngmyŏngjŏk agong: Man-hae Han Yong-un kwa R. T'agorŭ" [Aesthetic Transcendence and the Revolutionary Self: Man-hae Han Yong-un and R. Tagore], in *Han Yong-un*, ed. Sin Tong-uk (Seoul: Munhak segye sa, 1986), 139-43.
[40] Ibid., 150-152.
[41] As Dipesh Chakrabarty observes, Tagore employed prose and poetry for different functions. With the former, Tagore grounded his writing in history and sought to document social ills. His poetry, on the other hand, depicted the world outside of historical time, emphasizing transcendental images of nature. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 153.

metaphor, liable to be overlooked by someone unaware of the circumstances that informed the initial act of writing. Through Tagore, Han saw the potential of poetry as literature that escaped the literalness of direct representation. In favoring a style of writing that distilled one's political concerns into abstract lessons that could be applied to various aspects of life, Tagore showed Han how literature could expand his activist project into realms that were not necessarily marked as being political. The intention was not to hide the message, but rather that the point of the text, even when couched in metaphysical language, would be clear to Han's Korean readers, for whom colonialism was a condition that infected every facet of their existence, including literature.

The key difference between Tagore and Han can be found in the scope of their target readerships. By translating his work into English, Tagore developed a platform that extended beyond Bengal and India. As his name grew in stature, so did the orbit of his concerns, resulting in a transformation that positioned him to speak on behalf of the East as a collective region in relation to the West. In comparison, Han imagined his potential readership to be limited to those who shared his own language and culture. Translation, for him, was a process that enabled the transplantation of foreign ideas into Korea, an interface with the outside world that, for now, only moved in one direction. This distinction in audience had deeper implications than matters of distribution and cultural capital. For Han, the disparity meant that Tagore's poetics, however appealing, would need to be adapted to suit Korea. He would imbue his poetry, written in Tagore's model, with a new perspective that would coincide with that of his readers.

The extent of Han's reworking of Tagore is evident from a poem of the latter that was among the first to be translated into Korean. "The Song of the Defeated" (Tchokkin iŭi norae, literally "The Song of the Pursued") was published in Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's journal *Ch'ŏngch'un*

(Youth) in 1917 after having been commissioned the previous year.[42] Although the publication did not identify the translator of the poem, Chin Hang-mun (1894-1974)—a foreign student in Japan at the time, who would go on to become a founding member of *Tonga ilbo* (The Eastern Asia Daily News, 1920-present)—retroactively claimed credit. Chin testified that he encountered Tagore when the poet was meeting with students during a short stay in Japan. Tagore agreed to write a poem for "Korean youths in search of a new life" upon Chin's request.[43] The result was "The Song of the Defeated," one of two English-language poems that Tagore would ultimately write about Korea:

> **The Song of the Defeated**
>
> My Master has asked of me to stand at the roadside of retreat and sing the song of the defeated.
> For she is the bride whom he woos in secret.
> She has put on the dark veil, hiding her face from the crowd, the jewel glowing in her breast in the dark.
> She is forsaken of the day, and God's night is waiting for her with its lamps lighted and flowers wet with dew.
> She is silent with her eyes downcast; she has left her home behind, from where comes the wailing in the wind.
> But the stars are singing the love song of the eternal to her whose face is sweet with shame and suffering.
> The door has been opened in the lonely chamber, the call has come;
> And in the heart of the darkness throbs with the awe of the expectant tryst.[44]

On the level of language, correspondences between "The Song of the Defeated" and *The Silence of Love* are easy to spot. Chin's translation uses two words in place of "master" from the original

[42] Rabindranath Tagore, "Tchokkin iŭi norae" [Song of the Defeated], *Ch'ŏngch'un* July 1917, 100.
[43] Chin Hang-mun, "Kuuhoegosil" [A Room for Remembering Old Friends], *Tongu*, September 1963, 11-12.
[44] The English-language text of "Song of the Defeated" is available online in the Korean American Digital Archive of the USC Digital Library. Rabindranath Tagore, "Song of the Defeated," accessed September 8, 2017, http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll126/id/14750.

English-language poem. The first mention is rendered as *chunim* in Korean, a Sino-Korean word meaning "owner." The next reference is shortened to *nim*, the very word that Han would employ to refer to the beloved in *The Silence of Love*. Han's use of *nim* in *The Silence of Love* is deliberately vague, both an allusion to Tagore but also an invocation of an extended history of the word in *sijo*, a premodern form of Korean verse.[45] Intellectual readers familiar with Tagore at the time were afforded the latitude to see Han's *nim* as the same figure mentioned in "The Song of the Defeated" and Tagore's other poems. Meanwhile, those who were conversant in the *sijo* tradition—in all likelihood, many who belonged to the same group of intellectuals—could appreciate Han's poems as a continuation of that legacy. In seamlessly merging the foreign and the domestic, Han was abetted by the process of translation, in which *nim*, a native word in the target language, was infused with a resonance it originally did not possess. Adaptation for a Korean audience, in this instance, was therefore coterminous with translation. Chin's fortuitous choice of *nim* as a translation for "master" allowed Han to connect Korea's past with Tagore, inviting readers to perceive the latter international figure's insights as being pertinent to their more circumscribed concerns.

In basic premise, "The Song of the Defeated" is similar to many poems contained in *The Silence of Love*. Tagore, like Han, describes a relationship between a woman and a mysterious

[45] As Kim Hŭng-kyu argues, the starting point for many premodern Korean poems about romantic love was separation engendered by a beloved's death, change of heart, indifference, or unforeseen circumstances. In a survey of *sijo* from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he found several examples of poems in which *nim* prominently appears. Some poems feature a variation he dubs "new beloved" (*sae nim*), in which the speaker longing for their beloved is one-sided and takes place outside the bounds of an establishment relationship. Another category that Kim identifies is "another's beloved" (*nam ŭi nim*) in which the desired beloved already belongs to another individual. Kim Hŭng-kyu, *Kŭndae ŭi t'ŭkkwŏnhwa rŭl nŏmŏsŏ: Singminji kŭndaesŏngnon kwa naejaejŏk palchŏllon e taehan ijung pip'an* [Beyond a Shift in Privilege: A Double Critique of Modernization Theory and the Theory of Internal Development] (Paju: Ch'angbi, 2013), 42-48.

individual. The unnamed woman, a possible stand-in for Korea, has left her home "from where comes the wailing in the wind." She is the defeated of the title, who awaits a reunion with her master by the side of the road, her "face is sweet with shame and suffering." Despite her anguish, Tagore's speaker shows the reader that the greater forces of nature are aligned on the woman's side, paving the way for a fulfilling conclusion. Night approaches, and with it, enters the air of romance. The stars sing a love song, and the "darkness throbs with the awe of expectant tryst." In terms of depicted chronology, the poem, in this sense, is not actually about defeat, but its aftermath and the expectation of an imminent resolution.

A notable disparity between Tagore and Han is that the conclusion suggested by "The Song of the Defeated" is labeled a tryst, the language more erotic in tone than the purity of feeling depicted in *The Silence of Love*. The choice to frame the central relationship in terms of sexual desire, however, can be read as an interpretation imposed by the poem's speaker, who is cast as a third-person observer. The use of this perspective, establishing distance between the speaker and the poem's principal characters, constitutes the key difference between Tagore and Han's poems. Whereas Han writes from the perspective of a speaker who longs for the beloved, Tagore describes a similar situation from an outside point of view. If Tagore's poem is meant to be an allegory with "the defeated" standing in for Korea, this arrangement makes sense. Tagore was sympathetic to the plight of Korea, but could only speak from the perspective of an observer. Meanwhile, Han, in adapting Tagore's poetics, wrote from an inside point of view, his speaker taking on the voice of the defeated.

Han adopted Tagore as a literary model, but his interest in the Bengali intellectual went beyond poetry. His fascination with Tagore was also based upon the latter's philosophical insights that Han, as one of Tagore's many Korean-language translators, played a role in

introducing to the peninsula. In 1918, Han became the editor and publisher of a short-lived magazine titled *Yusim*.[46] Although described as a Buddhist periodical, the magazine was more generally a vehicle for Han as a thinker and producer of literature. For the magazine's first and second issues, he translated a portion of Tagore's book *Sādhanā: The Realization of Life* (1915). Notably, Tagore was introduced on the page as an Indian philosopher (*indo ch'ŏrhakcha*), rather than a poet.[47]

On the surface, *Sādhanā* bears little resemblance to *The Silence of Love*. The book is a religious treatise featuring essays pieced together from lectures that Tagore previously offered to children in Bengal as a teacher.[48] Rather than exhort the tenants of any one religion, Tagore discusses spiritual ideas from a standpoint that he describes as being neither philosophical nor scholarly. Along the way he touches upon Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian beliefs. The portion of the book that Han translated for *Yusim* comes from the first essay of the book titled "The Relation of Man to the Universe." In a departure from the English-language version of the text, Han's translation of "man" into *kaein* emphasizes the sense of an individual, rather than mankind as a collective entity.

[46] The title of the periodical *Yusim* refers to a central lesson from the Avataṃsaka Sūtra that explains that all things are the creations of consciousness.
[47] The Korean-language title of *Sādhanā: The Realization of Life*, *Saeng ŭi sirhyŏn*, preserved only the original's subtitle. *Yusim* was shut down after three issues by the government-general. As a result, the majority of the text was not translated. Han Yong-un, trans., "Saeng ŭi sirhyŏn" [The Realization of Life], by Rabindranath Tagore, *Yusim*, September 1, 1918, 47-56.
[48] In the brief introduction to *Sādhanā: The Realization of Life*, Tagore notes that the text is comprised of English-translations, both by himself and friends, from the original Bengali. He was invited to Harvard by James Haughton Woods (1864-1935), a professor of philosophy who helped begin scholarly enquiry about Asia at that institution. While visiting the campus, Tagore presented many of the essays that appear in *Sādhanā* as lectures. Rabindranath Tagore, *Sādhanā: The Realisation of Life* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), vii-ix.

In *Sādhanā*, Tagore broadly characterizes a fundamental difference between Western and Indian philosophy, drawing a line between the East and the West as distinct cultural spheres. He explains that whereas the West is continually driven to overcome nature, as exemplified by their recent colonial conquests, India is content to find a way to live in harmony with the larger world. Meanwhile, a later, untranslated chapter of *Sādhanā* is dedicated to the idea of love. For Tagore, love is spiritual, not romantic, and comes only from the complete understanding that the self and the universe are one. Love is defined as a form of perception. Unlike romantic love, or even love for a god, Tagore's notion lacks a single target, and instead emanates outward in every direction as the "spirit finds its larger self in the whole world, and is filled with an absolute certainty that it is immortal."[49] Additionally, love is the key to what Tagore earlier identifies as the basic quality of his philosophy, in which man finds itself at peace with the world.

Although Han ultimately did not translate the portions of *Sādhanā* that explore the concept of love, it is likely he was intrigued by the notion, given the central role he would cede to the concept in *The Silence of Love*. Tagore developed his idea of love over the course of many years. As Samir Dayal explains, for Tagore, love was political in the sense that he understood it to be an alternative to nationalism.[50] In particular, Tagore was critical of nationalism as a response to imperialism. At the time, anti-British sentiment in India had begun to move in this direction. Tagore was also critical of nationalism abroad, and gave lectures in China and Japan that openly condemned the particular nationalist movements of these two nations.

As a substitute to nationalism, Tagore proposed love as the basis of an alternative modernity that would unite Asia. In effect, Tagore's vision for love was pan-Asian, although in a

[49] Ibid., 113.
[50] Samir Dayal, "Repositioning India: Tagore's Passionate Politics of Love," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 15 (Spring 2007): 172.

way that should be distinguished from Japan's pan-Asian project, which was founded on the ideology of modernity inherited from the West. Love was pan-Asian not because it was exclusive to Asia, but because Tagore hoped nations like India, China, and Japan could unite behind it, and thereby provide an effective model with which to resist the West.[51] In contrast, Han's version of love as articulated in his poetry is more abstract, defined as an orientation toward an absent beloved that could stand in for all manner of things. Nevertheless, given the copious references to Tagore that are scattered throughout *The Silence of Love*, one cannot help but conclude that Han envisioned some of his readers tracing the idea of love back to Tagore, where they would be empowered to imagine an alternative to Western modernity. However, given the ambiguity of Han's core message, this would be an interpretative path that they would have to embark on by themselves.

Love as Devotion

The discourse of love may serve as a link between Han Yong-un and Tagore, allowing the former to channel the latter in a manner that connects his Korean readership to a broader community in Asia, but Han's depiction of a love as an emotional force in his poetry is also narrower than the grand vision that Tagore lays out in his lectures. In *The Silence of Love*, Han uses a fictional scenario to provide readers with a model of a relationship drawn from the premodern notion of love as piety, an important value in the premodern era due to the influence of Neo-Confucianism. This particular type of love, defined for one's unyielding dedication for an absent other, is spelled out in the aptly titled poem "Devotion" (Pokchong):

[51] Although Tagore was highly critical nationalism, he did envision India as privileged mediator between the East and the West where the two opposing systems of thoughts could meet and reconcile their differences. Ibid., 174.

服從

남들은 自由를 사랑한다지마는 나는 服從을 좋아하여요
自由를 모르는 것은 아니지만 당신에게는 服從만하고 싶어요
服從하고 싶은데 服從하는 것은 아름다운 自由보다도 달콤합니다 그것이 나의 幸福입니다

그러나 당신이 나더러 다른 사람을 服從하라면 그것만은 服從할 수가 없습니다
다른 사람에게 服從하려면 당신에게 服從할 수가 없는 까닭입니다

Devotion

Others claim to love freedom, but I prefer devotion.
Not that I don't understand freedom, I just want only to be devoted to you.
I want to be devoted, as devotion, more than beautiful freedom, is sweet, the source of my happiness.

But if you were to tell me to be devoted to someone else, that alone I could not abide.
For in being devoted to another, I could not be devoted to you.[52]

Following the archetypal frame of a love poem, the speaker of "Devotion" uses each line to reaffirm their commitment to the beloved. In place of the word "love," the speaker employs the term "devotion" (*pokchong*), a concept that can alternatively be translated into English as "obedience" because it carries the connotation of discipline, an indication of the way the speaker's love resembles a yoke. The formality of the word contrasts with the intimacy of "you," and as it is repeated, the romantic mood of the poem gives way to a register that is philosophical. Devotion is compared to freedom, a principal tenant of modern existence that was elevated during the Enlightenment, that the speaker unexpectedly surrenders in favor of commitment. The peculiarity of the speaker's choice is made evident by the stated comparison with others, who as a group, prefer freedom. In defending their own position, the speaker offers a simple declaration: "I just want only to be devoted to you." Devotion, thus, is pitched as an expression of their personality. It is their defining characteristic.

[52] Ibid., 68-69.

But what is devotion to Han? Simply put, the notion is depicted as unbending affection for the beloved in spite of their absence. The speaker's existence in the present has been shaped by the beloved's actions, which they are powerless to reverse. But the passivity of the speaker belies their agency to interpret their circumstances through the framework of love as devotion. Speaking in the second person, the speaker warns the beloved, "But if you were to tell me to be devoted to someone else, that alone I could not abide." The will of the speaker, which will not waver, overrides the logical fallacy of the statement. In the end, the speaker is alone, left to wait for a reunion that may never materialize. As portrayed by the poem, however, love in the form of devotion, is cultivated from within, and therefore, dependent on the will of the speaker alone. "Devotion" is a testimony to the power of this choice.

As demonstrated by "Devotion," the beloved's disappearance provides the speaker with the opportunity for introspection, an examination of the self that plays out on the pages of *The Silence of Love*. In terms of narrative timeline, the departure of the beloved is shown to be the pivotal moment of the speaker's existence, an instant that consumes their every thought in the present. Han upholds unwavering commitment as a model for readers to follow in their own lives. Love as devotion, in this sense, is the object of aestheticization in his poetics, a quality that distinguishes him from poets like Kim Ŏk, who turned to natural landscapes in search of an aesthetic ideal. This idea that is explicitly stated in the poem "Separation Is the Creation of Beauty" (Ibyŏl ŭn mi ŭi ch'angjak):

이별은美의創造

리별은 美의創造임니다
리별의美는 아츰의 質업는 黃金과
　　밤의糸업는 검은비단과 죽엄업는
　　永遠의生命과 시들지안는
　　하늘의푸른꼿에도 업슴니다

Separation Is the Creation of Beauty

Separation is the creation of beauty.
The beauty of separation is absent from
　　morning's gold without foundation,
　　from night's black silk without thread,
　　from eternal life without death, from
　　the sky's unwrinkled blue flower.

님이어 리별이아니면 나는 눈물에서죽엇다가 우슴에서 다시사러날수가 업슴니다 오々 리별이어 美는 리별의創造임니다	Beloved, if it were not for separation, I could not be reborn in laughter after dying amid tears. Oh, separation. Beauty is the creation of separation.[53]

"Separation Is the Creation of Beauty" is a short poem that lacks even the minimal characterization of Han's more narrative-driven poems. However, given its shared subject matter, the poem is given context by the rest of the collection, and can be read as a succinct restatement of its central theme. The first line of the poem declares that "separation is the creation of beauty." The statement is provocative, but if read alongside the other poems examined above, the notion becomes easier to parse. Whereas the speakers of those poems ultimately chose to perceive loss in a positive light, the speaker of "Separation Is the Creation of Beauty" expresses a similar sentiment, albeit couched in the language of aesthetics, where beauty is regarded as the highest ideal. If beauty is a ubiquitous value, given tangible form through actual examples, the rhetoric of the poem elevates separation onto a similarly universal plane as a condition that colors all aspects of life. The speaker notes that the particular beauty of separation cannot be found in "morning's gold without foundation" and "night's black silk without thread." These examples are unified by their lack of essential elements, just as beauty without separation is presented as being nonexistent. In a similar fashion, "eternal life without death" and "the sky's unwrinkled blue flower" lack flaws, and therefore cannot be considered beautiful. Imperfection and beauty go hand and hand, the poem demonstrates, the former allowing the latter to be perceived.

[53] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 3.

The speaker of "Separation Is the Creation of Beauty" moves from abstract declarations to more personal observations in the last three lines of the poem. In this portion of the poem, separation is linked to rebirth, another phenomenon related to creation. The poem concludes on a final line that is the inverse of the first. "Beauty is the creation of separation," an assertion that reinforces the sense of a fundamental relationship between the two ideas. The equation once again posits separation, like beauty, as a universal value. In this way, the absence of the beloved is portrayed as an ordinary development in a relationship. According to the logic of the poem, separation is not a hardship undertaken by the unfortunate alone, but an experience shared by everyone. The community that Han generates through his poems is one that is unified by the experience of absence.

Tagore may have spurred Han to reevaluate love as the basis of one's core relationships in the modern world, but the latter was also clearly inspired by the popular discourse of romance (*yŏnae*) that infiltrated Korea in the 1920s. In Japan, romantic love (*ren'ai*) entered intellectual discourse during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). This development coincided with the rapid modernization of Japanese society that followed the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Ambassadors of the Iwakura Mission, who had been sent across the world in order to renegotiate the Unequal Treaties their government had signed with Western powers, returned home with stories about strange customs they had observed in the United States and Western Europe. As recounted by James L. Huffman, one aspect of foreign societies that astonished these diplomats was how men and women publicly interacted with one another in a familiar manner. Kume Kunitake (1839-1931), one such diplomat who published an account of his journey, wrote that he was struck by the behavior of women he observed at an American naval academy. These women, he wrote,

many of them wives of soldiers, would come and go as they pleased, mingle with men, and even danced at social functions.[54]

From the perspective of traditional Japanese and Korean society, steeped in Neo-Confucian values that taught a woman's rightful place was inside the home, sights like the one described above registered as a shock. But change was in the air. Kitamura Tokoku (1868-1894), one of the founders of the Romantic movement in Japan, set the stage for a new understanding of love when he penned an article for *Jogaku zasshi* (Women's Education Journal, 1885-1904), a progressive magazine run by Iwamoto Yoshiharu (1863-1942) that advocated for a rethinking of a woman's role in society. In the article, titled "The Pessimistic Poet and Women" (Ensei shika to josei), Kitamura declared that "Love is the key to unlocking life's secrets" (*ren'ai wa jinsei no hiyaku nari*), a line that is both enigmatic and evocative. His conception of love existed in the world of the spirit rather than the body, and demanded a new way of seeing women as the counterpart of men.[55] As Karatani Kōjin points out, Kitamura was a Christian, and the notion of romantic love in Meiji Japan originated with the church.[56]

According to Kwon Boduerae, the first usage of term "romance" in Korea appeared in a 1912 adaptation of Ozaki Kōyō's novel *The Gold Demon* (Konjiki yasha, 1987-1902).[57] The word continued to appear in both adaptations and original works of literature in the following years. Adoption of this term outside of literature was slower, but by the 1920s love was a popular

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[54] James L. Huffman, *Japan in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 78.
[55] Suh Ji Young, *Yŏksa e sarang ŭl mutta* [Burying Love in History] (Seoul: Esoope, 2011), 131-141.
[56] Karatani Kōjin, "Edo Exegesis and the Present," in *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 274-275.
[57] The adaptation of *The Gold Demon* was serialized in *Maeil Sinbo* and written by Cho Chung-hwan (1863-1944), who made a career out of adapting Japanese novels into Korean. Kwon Boduerae, *Yŏnae ŭi sidae: 1920-yŏndae ch'oban ŭi munhwa wa yuhaeng* [The Era of Love] (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏn'gu, 2003), 12.

phenomenon. The word itself was borrowed from Japan and China as a translation of various Western language variants of "love" under the supposition that no identical concept existed in these cultures. Kwon points out that "romance" was implicitly understood to stand for "free love" (*chayu yŏnae*), as opposed to more traditional notions of romance. Founded upon individual agency, free love existed outside of and often in conflict with the dictates of tradition. As was the case in Japan, gender played a significant role in defining this new form of love, which was strictly conceived to be heterosexual.[58]

Yu Chong-ho describes the romantic aspect of Han's poetry as the manifestation of suppressed eros. Like Kim U-ch'ang, his reading is reliant on knowledge of Han's life as a religious man. Although chaste after he became a monk, Yu reasons that Han's erotic impulses were revealed on the page. For Yu, the inherent tension of this situation explains the multiple layers embedded in the word "beloved" as one's romantic love, the nation, and a religious entity. He suggests a precursor for Han in Chŏng Ch'ŏl (1536-1594), a scholar from the Chosŏn era, who penned a poem titled "The Song of Longing" (Sa miin kok), in which the poet adopted a woman's voice to express his loyalty and longing for his king. As in Han's poems, the speaker of this poem uses the word "beloved" to refer to the object of their desire.[59]

Other academics read "The Song of Longing" differently, placing less emphasis on sexual desire. As David R. McCann explains, the predominant interpretation of the poem is political, despite being written in the persona of a woman as a testament to her enduring love for her king. Chŏng Ch'ŏl, who had been a leading figure in the Eastern Faction, wrote the poem and its pair "The Song of Yearning" (Sok miin kok) in exile. Both can be read as allegories of his

[58] Ibid., 13-18.
[59] Yu Chong-ho, *Han'guk kŭndae sisa: 1920-1945* [The History of Modern Korean Poetry: 1920-1945] (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2011), 114.

situation after his political faction lost favor in the capital. In this respect, "The Song of Yearning" is arguably more direct in the way that it questions the abilities of the king's new advisors to properly support him. "The Song of Longing," on the other hand, laments the impossibility of reunion with her lord in comparison to the cycles that inevitably begin anew each year. Unlike Yu's interpretation, McCann describes the poem as artistically conservative in its use of a female speaker.[60]

The "Song of Longing" begins as follows:

> At the time I was born I had been born to follow my lord.
> Our lives were destined to be joined, as even the heavens must have known.
> When I was young my lord loved me.
> There was nothing to compare with this heart and love.
> All that I longed for in this life was to live with him.
> Now that I am older, for what reason have I been put aside?[61]

On the surface, "The Song of Longing" contains thematic similarities to Han's poetry. In both, separation serves as the impetus for poetry. Love, when reciprocated, is described in the past tense, and has since been replaced by longing in the aftermath of loss. In the third line, Chŏng Ch'ŏl employs the verb "to love" (*sarangada*) to describe the lord's feelings for the speaker. Much like the noun *yŏnae*, the linguistically unrelated noun *sarang* and verb "to love" (*sarangada*) have also transformed in meaning over time. The word originally meant only "to think," but could be used to express love for one's king in the premodern era. The object of "to love" expanded to include God after the arrival of Christian missionaries to Korea, and later, to one's country during the early swell of nationalistic sentiment around the turn of the twentieth century.[62] However, Kim Hŭng-kyu notes that as early as the fifteenth century, the word could be

[60] David R. McCann, *Form and Freedom in Korean Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 39-46.
[61] Translation by David R. McCann. Ibid., 40-41.
[62] Kwon Boduare, *Yŏnae ŭi sidae: 1920-yŏndae ch'oban ŭi munhwa wa yuhaeng* [The Era of Love] (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏn'gu, 2003), 12.

used to mean either "to love" or "to think." At the time, another word, *tŭtta*, also carried the meaning "to love." A major transition began in the next century when usage of *tŭtta* began to decrease, leaving *sarang* and its cognates to become the primary word for "love." As a result, the verb *sarangada* lost its original meaning of "to think," which was taken over by another word.[63]

Given the etymology of "love," deciphering an expression like "my lord loved me" from the third line of "The Song of Longing" is not straightforward. At the time of the poem's composition, the definition of *sarangada* was changing and could mean either "to think" or "to love." In the previous line, the speaker asserts, "Our lives were destined to be joined, as even the heavens must have known." And in the following line, the speaker opines, "There was nothing to compare with this heart and love." If encountered in the context of a modern poem, these statements would be read as expressions of romantic love, but "The Song of Longing" leaves room for ambiguity. In the text of the poem alone, the reader is not provided a concrete sense of the society in which the speaker lives. Instead, they are only granted access to the speaker's subjective point of view, who conceives love as a spiritual bond. Love and its absence are felt on a cosmic scale, the heart understood to be the container of these feelings within a human body. Similar conceptions of love can be found in the contemporary world, but as Kwon Boduerae points out, love in its modern form is distinguished by the culture of its society. In particular, the gradual emergence of women as actors able to participate in, initiate, and reject acts of courtship resulted in a new practice of love in the modern era. As can be inferred from reading "The Song

[63] Examples of *sarang* meaning "love" can be found in extant literature that dates back from the seventeenth century. Kim Hŭng-kyu, *Kŭndae ŭi t'ŭkkwŏnhwa rŭl nŏmŏsŏ: Singminji kŭndaesŏngnon kwa naejaejŏk palchŏllon e taehan ijung pip'an* [Beyond a Shift in Privilege: A Double Critique of Modernization Theory and the Theory of Internal Development] (Paju: Ch'angbi, 2013), 29-36.

of Longing," this new practice did not eradicate traditional conceptions of love. Instead, it supplemented them.

Like Chŏng Ch'ŏl, Han depicts love as one individual's commitment for another, an intense emotion closer to loyalty than romantic love. And yet, Han specifically references romance in the introduction to *The Silence of Love*, where he writes, "If romantic love (*yŏnae*) is free than one's beloved is free as well." The equation that Han constructs here between the traditional notion of devotion—derived from the loyalty one was expected to feel toward one's ruler—and modern romance is deliberate, an argument meant to draw a line between past and present. The amorphous notion of love is positioned as a junction point between various discourses, old and new, translated and domestic. Han's thesis in identifying the ubiquity of love is that the metaphorical condition of absence unites the entirety of Korea in the current moment.

The present, therefore, is a central element of Han's poetics that consequently shapes his depiction of love as an unchanging emotion. His speakers talk about their feelings as if caught an in unending loop, a cycle that is aestheticized out of the realm of tragedy. This sense of repetition is clearly delineated in the poem "Upon Waking" (Kkum kkaegosŏ), which depicts the beloved's repeated departure:

꿈깨고서

님이며는 나를사랑하련마는 밤마다
　　문밧게와서 발자최소리만내이고
　　한번도 드러오지아니하고
　　도로가니 그것이 사랑인가요
그러나 나는 발자최나마 님의문밧게
　　가본적이업슴니다
아마 사랑은 님에게만 잇나버요

아々 발자최소리나 아니더면 꿈이나

Upon Waking

My beloved loves me, so when every night,
　　he leaves only the sound of footsteps
　　outside my door, not once entering,
　　only to leave again, can I call that
　　love?
I have never taken a single step outside my
　　beloved's door.
Perhaps love is a thing he keeps alone.

Oh, were it not for those footsteps, I would
　　not wake from my dream

아니깨엿스련마는 쑴은 님을차저가랴고 구름을탓섯서요	But in my dream I was searching for him, riding atop a cloud.[64]

Like most poems in *The Silence of Love*, "Upon Waking" is written in the present tense, the grammatical construction underlining the strangeness of the depicted scenario. The beloved's behavior is inscrutable to the speaker, their presence amounting to nothing more than the clamor of footsteps behind a closed door. Every night, the beloved stands outside the speaker's room, never entering, before disappearing once again. The daily repetition of this sequence of events serves to enhance the sense that the speaker inhabits a reality that defies rational comprehension. Nevertheless, the speaker chooses to charitably interpret the beloved's actions through the framework of love. The poem begins with the declaration "my beloved loves me," a statement shorn of any hesitation. For the speaker, the love of the beloved is an unquestionable fact. Therefore, his absence—what would ordinarily be considered unintelligible behavior for someone who supposedly cares for the speaker—is not read as betrayal, but instead, sparks an existential reconsideration of what it means to love.

As we have seen in other examples, the speaker of "Upon Waking" is unable to change their circumstances, necessitating the reinterpretation of themselves and the beloved in order to make sense of the present. The speaker confesses, "I have never taken a single step outside my beloved's door." Despite longing for reunion, the speaker waits for the beloved to enter their room, a development that never comes to pass. The prospect of taking action themselves is never broached, the implication being that such a feat is not only impossible, but inconceivable within the world of the poem. Instead, the existence of the speaker is dictated by the beloved, whose

[64] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 15.

footsteps, the reader is told, awaken them at night. Even in the world of dreams, the speaker is tied to the beloved in a fantastical chase that soars through the clouds. The freedom that this flight connotes is not escape from the beloved, but rather the ability to understand them according to the rubric of one's choice. For the speaker, that lens is love.

But how long must the speaker, and by extension, Han's Korean readers, continue to endure the absence of the beloved? Does devotion have a limit, or is it a burden that one must shoulder for eternity? Han defers from answering these questions directly, but offers clues in the concluding statement of *The Silence of Love*:

> **To My Readers**
>
> Reader, I am ashamed to be seen as a poet before you.
> When you read my poems, I will be saddened, and you will spoil your own mood.
> I have no desire for my poetry to be read by your children and grandchildren.
> Reading my poems in the future might be like sitting atop a cluster of flowers in late spring, rubbing a dried chrysanthemum between one's fingers, and holding it up to one's nose.
>
> I do not know late it is.
> The shadow of Mount Sorak grows faint.
> Awaiting the morning bell, I toss aside my brush.
>
> The Year of Ŭlch'uk, August 29, end of night[65]

Han's parting words, couched in language of humility, can be read as an optimistic prediction of Korea's eventual liberation, a time when his poems will no longer hold any conceivable meaning. He cautions that when "you read my poems, I will be saddened, and you will spoil your mood," a warning that reveals he understands the stakes to be high: although expressed metaphorically, Han writes about reality in the present moment. How long that moment will last

[65] Han Yong-un, *Nim ŭi ch'immuk* [The Silence of Love] (Seoul: Taedong inswae chusikhoesa, 1926), 168.

is not clearly specified, but Han does declare that he has "no desire for my poetry to be read by your children and grandchildren." From this wish, one can conclude that Han has envisioned *The Silence of Love* as a book meant for the current generation of Korean readers in 1926. He could not envision the importance that his poetry would play in the future as a way to help commemorate acts of literary activism during the colonial period, but from these words, it is evident that Han conceived devotion as a temporary necessity, a weight on the population's collective shoulders that would be lifted once Korea's sovereignty was restored.

As outlined in this chapter, *The Silence of Love* is a collection of poems written for and about Korea during the 1920s. Beginning in the postwar era, Han Yong-un began to be celebrated by scholars, who were instrumental in canonizing him as a model for activist poets. The predominant interpretation of *The Silence of Love* that was established during this period was that the central figure of the book, the beloved, is a symbol for the Korean nation that was rendered absent by Japan's forceful colonization of the peninsula. This method of reading, since popularized by entrance examinations designed to test one's knowledge, however, simplifies Han's project, a collection that is premised on the idea of an open-ended metaphor in which the beloved is deliberately not defined. Playfully explained in the book's introduction, this framework is not meant to obfuscate the content of its poems, but rather to encourage a mode of reading based on active interpretation. Readers are given the leeway to relate the abstract narratives of Han's poems to all manner of situations from their own lives, thereby opening up the scope of his poetry beyond what would be possible through the mimetic reproduction of reality. The ultimate point of this style is to illustrate connections between all aspects of colonial Korea, private and public, which Han metaphorically depicts as being colored by absence.

Korea, as a community implicitly proposed by *The Silence of Love*, is defined by this very condition.

Both the form and content of *The Silence of Love* were influenced by the intellectual community of 1920s Korea in which translation was an aspect of everyday life. Seeking to write poetry that spoke to the current moment, Han designed his book around the amorphous keyword "love," which was circulating at the time in the form of various competing discourses. Most prominently, the Bengali poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, who enjoyed a certain celebrity among Korean intellectuals in the 1920s, promoted the notion of love as an Eastern alternative to Western capitalism, the prevailing ideology of the modern era. Meanwhile, in the realm of popular culture, the culture of romance had infiltrated Korean society by way of Japan, rewriting the way people understood amorous relationships between men and women. Han seized this zeitgeist, referencing both of these translated discourses, but in the end, portrayed love as a form of devotion, a choice rooted in optimism that could help orient Koreans beset by a prolonged spell of hardship. This commitment, as depicted in *The Silence of Love*, is a mode of being in the present, a temporary span of time that would come to its natural conclusion once Korea was liberated. Accordingly, Han's use of love as a concept that ties him both to Tagore and romance, is decidedly also of his particular era. In this sense, his poetry is a perfect example of what Adorno envisioned as a social lyric, a literary text whose connection to politics is not announced on the page, but instead, engrained in the way it adopts the language of its moment.

Although Han was not considered to be a leading poet in his time, his legacy in the world of modern Korean poetry is immense. If Kim Ŏk, discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrated the potential of poetry to elliptically talk about the individual through the prism of metaphor, Han's contribution was to enlarge the canvas of poetry as an art form that had

significance for an entire community. The model of poetry that he developed in *The Silence of Love* paved the way for future generations of poets who sought to provide commentary about society through the artifice of indirect language.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSLATING RHYTHM:

CHŎNG CHI-YONG AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREE VERSE

The story of Chŏng Chi-yong (1902-1950) is both familiar and unfamiliar. Like many Korean intellectuals of the colonial period, he was educated in Japan, where he was exposed to artistic movements that would come to shape his writing. What was unusual about Chŏng is the degree to which he integrated himself in Japanese literary circles while abroad. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he published his first poems in Japanese, not Korean. Chŏng submitted poems to Japanese periodicals for four years beginning in 1925, alternating between Japanese and Korean, before abandoning the former. Given the volume of his output, and how his most canonical poems originate from later stages of his career, it is easy to overlook his Japanese poems when assessing his accomplishments as a poet. Until recently, much of this work was also not readily available, which partially explains the relative absence of scholarship on the subject.[1]

Chŏng's Japanese poems, however, exerted a pronounced influence upon his Korean-language writing beyond his formative years as a published poet. Even after ceasing publication in Japanese, he continued to rework those poems into Korean, serving as his own translator. This example of self-translation contradicts the widely-ingrained notion of a poet's power being anchored to a particular language, a belief that has colored the way Chŏng continues to be

[1] As Kim Tong-hŭi points out, many of Chŏng's Japanese poems were only discovered in 2014 by Kumaki Tsutomu. The unearthed texts include nineteen original poems from *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi* (Dōshisha Preparatory Division Student Magazine) and seventeen original poems from *Jiyū shijin* (Free Verse Poet), both student periodicals. Kim Tong-hŭi, "Chŏng Chi-yong ŭi Ilbonŏ si" [The Japanese-Language Poetry of Chŏng Chi-yong], *Sŏjŏng sihak* 25, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 179.

celebrated. For him, in a time when intellectuals were expected to be multilingual, moving between languages was a natural, even casual affair. The experience shaped his writing in ways big and small.

This chapter argues that Chŏng's propensity for acting as his own translator influenced his sense of poetic rhythm. As intellectuals in the early twentieth century began to compose vernacular poems, one of the central issues that they confronted was how to reconceive rhythm to suit this new kind of writing. From early on, poets and critics agreed that poems for the modern age should be written in free verse, matching the style of the most fashionable foreign literature. However, the embrace of free verse did not mean that poems could be written without rhythm. As H.T. Kirby-Smith has observed, free verse has historically been informed by past conventions, even in areas in which it departs from them.[2] In Korea, a new mode of rhythm had to be created, one that was extricated from the regulations that had defined the metrics of *hansi*, *sijo*, and other poetic forms in the premodern era.

In his poetry, Chŏng developed a kind of free verse rhythm that was generated by patterns of repetition. Most theories of prosody identify rhythm in the repetition of metrical units like syllables that are specific to the soundscape of a single language.[3] These forms of rhythm, therefore, are notoriously difficult to translate, especially when dealing with two languages that do not resemble one another.[4] Chŏng, however, translated his own poetry between Japanese and

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[2] H.T. Kirby-Smith, *The Origins of Free Verse* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 10-11.

[3] As Paul Fussell explains, metrical systems can be divided into four categories: the syllabic, the accentual, the accentual-syllabic, and the quantitative. Paul Fussell, *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, rev. ed. (New York: Rutgers University, 1965), 6.

[4] Western forms of meter, commonly based on patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables, are not amenable to Korean. Linguists refer to Korean as an intonation language, meaning that when spoken, pitch modulation is a function of an entire sentence, rather than the property of a single syllable within a given word. A two-syllable word, for example, that has an initial stress when

Korean. In order to facilitate translation, he generated rhythm through the repetition of elements that came in various sizes and shapes: words, phrases, images, even entire lines. When read linearly, this repetition forms a pattern that the reader intuits as rhythm, even though it does not involve sound. Therefore, Chŏng was able to translate his poems between Korean and Japanese, creating an identical structure of repetition in each language.

This chapter begins by examining Chŏng's Korean-language poetry to demonstrate his continued use of structural patterns, rather than sound, to generate rhythm, even after he had abandoned writing in Japanese. From here, I survey the development of free verse rhythm in Korea, beginning with Ch'oe Nam-sŏn (1890-1956) and the advent of *sinch'esi* (new style poetry). In their gradual abandonment of the principles of fixed verse, as well as their incipient forays in publishing poetry in print, intellectuals like Ch'oe set the stage for Chŏng's new conception of rhythm. Next, the chapter turns to early theoretical writing in Korea about poetic rhythm in the context of vernacular poetry, before examining the Japanese-language poems Chŏng produced as a student in Kyoto. In these poems, Chŏng employs repetition to convey a sense of compulsion, as his speakers find themselves strangely drawn toward the foreign elements of cosmopolitan society, and yet, also increasingly alienated by their urban surroundings. Reading these poems in Japanese and Korean, both versions penned by Chŏng's hand, reveals the weight of linguistic pressures upon Korean intellectuals during the 1920s. Despite adapting his methods to suit the needs of two communities, Chŏng's poetry speaks to the

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uttered in isolation, might have its meter reversed to unstressed stressed when placed within a phrase. Stresses are dynamic, based on a larger context of phonetic cues that have proven to be difficult to identify. Sun-Ah Jun explains that researchers have attempted to identify rhythmic units in Korean independent of individual words, but their efforts have been stymied by "the ambiguous nature of stress in Korean." Sun-Ah Jun, "Korean Intonational Phonology and Prosodic Transcription," in *Prosodic Typology*, ed. Sun-Ah Jun (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 203-204.

ultimate failure of completely belonging to either in their depiction of the inner life of a perpetual stranger, alone both at home and abroad.

Soundless Rhythm

In literary studies, rhythm is commonly employed as an umbrella term to refer to the structure of sound in language written, spoken, and imagined.[5] This definition postulates an intrinsic relationship between rhythm and sound that stems from before the invention of writing. But rhythm is not exclusive to poetic language. To borrow the words of theorist Kim Chun-o, the distinction between poetry and prose is "a matter of degree" (*chŏngdo ŭi munje*).[6] Poetry is understood to be more rhythmic than its counterpart, but there is no definitive method to distinguish between the two, and no stipulation that spells out how rhythmic a collection of lines would need to be in order to qualify as poetry.

All language has rhythm, but not all language is spoken, a detail that complicates any proposed link between rhythm and sound. Words on a page or thoughts in one's head do not produce actual sounds on their own. In this light, the connection between rhythm and sound may be said to be a matter of perception, a remnant of history that contemporary theories of rhythm have yet to completely dismantle. Walter J. Ong explains that the advent of writing inaugurated "the reduction of dynamic sound to quiescent space, the separation of the word from the living present, where alone spoken words can exist."[7] When one reads, writes, or thinks, one may

[5] Park Seulki observes that most Korean theories of rhythm define it in terms of sound, a premise that she rejects. Park Seulki, *Ridŭmŭi iron: Si, chŏngch'i, kŭrigo in'gan* [The Theory of Rhythm: Poetry, Politics, and the Human] (Seoul: Sŏgang taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2018), 27.
[6] Kim Chun-o, *Siron* [Poetics], 4th ed. (Seoul: Tosŏ ch'ulp'an, 2017), 134.
[7] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), 82.

imagine sounds that correspond to spoken language, but these noises are not audible and would not be registered by a third party.

In Korea, the emergence of vernacular literature shifted the perception of rhythm. This adjustment was most evident in poetry as the form of writing where rhythm is most pronounced. As Park Seulki observes, the idea of rhythm transitioned in the 1910s from a notion based entirely on sound to one that increasingly depended on text.[8] Sound did not disappear, but the proliferation of poetry in print generated the newfound possibility of experiencing a poem as language to be read silently. This shift, which was taking place throughout East Asia, coincided with the popularization of free verse as a replacement for fixed verse.[9] It was in this context that Chŏng Chi-yong began to write poetry.

Given his outsize reputation, a sizeable amount of research has appeared on Chŏng's poetry, much of it praising his accomplishments in rhythm. Yi Sŭng-pok notes, for example, that one of the defining traits of modernist poets like Chŏng is that they approached rhythm not as ornamentation, but as a fundamental tool of communication. In their experimentation with new modes of expression, the modernists expanded the possibilities and consciousness of rhythm in modern Korean poetry.[10] Lee Hyon-Seung argues that Chŏng straddles the line between traditional and modern forms of rhythm, never fully extricating himself from the legacy of fixed

[8] Park Seulki, *Han'guk kŭndaesi ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa yul ŭi inyŏm* [The Formation of Modern Korean Poetry and the Idea of Rhythm] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2014), 120.
[9] John A. Crespi argues that in 1920 and 30s China, a major question that poets confronted in the new regime of print was if new poetry should be based on the dynamics of speech or text. John A. Crespi, *Voices in Revolution: Poetry and the Auditory Imagination in Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 45.
[10] Yi Sŭng-pok, "Chŏng Chi-yong si yulgyŏk ŭi ch'egye wa kyoyuk pangbŏp" [The Structure of Chŏng Chi-yong's Rhythm and Teaching Methodology], in *Chŏng Chi-yong ihae* [Understanding Chŏng Chi-yong], ed. Kim Chong-t'ae (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2002), 319.

verse.[11] Meanwhile, Jang Cheul-whoan contends that Chŏng generates rhythm through the repetition of phonetic units, clusters of language that range in size from individual phonemes to entire sentences.[12] These scholars concur that much of the appeal of Chŏng's poetry stems from his use of rhythm, but comparatively little research has been conducted on the influence of Japanese-language writing upon his distinctive style.

The best place to begin a discussion of Chŏng's rhythm is a poem. "Nostalgia" (Hyangsu) is one of his best-known works, having been included in countless textbooks as a tribute and lamentation of a hometown. The poem was first published in 1927 in the journal Chosŏn chi kwang (The Light of Chosŏn). At the time, Chŏng was also composing poems in Japanese, although a version of "Nostalgia" has yet to be discovered in that language. This absence suits the poem's aesthetic in its depiction of a location bereft of modern elements associated with Japan and the West. The title "Nostalgia" is Sino-Korean, a combination of two characters: the first an ideogram for "hometown" and the second for "worry." Together, the symbols mean "homesickness," an enduring feeling of loss that is expressed through the poem's repetition. The complete text is quoted below:

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[11] Lee asserts that theories of rhythm developed for traditional Korean poems such as *ŭmboyul* and *ŭmsuyul* cannot be applied to modern poems. The flowering of free verse in the 1920s was premised on the rejection of these kinds of rhythm, although this rejection was never completed. Lee Hyon-Seung, "Han'guk hyŏndaesi unyul non ŭi kanŭngsŏng: Chŏng Chi-yong ŭi si rŭl chungsim ŭro" [The Possibility of a Theory of Contemporary Korean Poetic Rhythm], *Han'guk sihak yŏn'gu* 14 (December 2005): 271-272.

[12] Jang's central argument is a rejection of the perception that the lack of a regular meter in modern Korean poetry means the absence of rhythm altogether. For a detailed analysis of Chŏng's poems on the basis of the repetition of sentences, phrases, words, and phonemes, see Jang Cheul-whoan, "Chŏng Chi-yong si ŭi ridŭm yŏn'gu: Ŭmga ŭi panbok ŭl chungsim ŭro" [The Rhythm of Chŏng Chi-yong's Poetry: The Repetition of Phonetic Units], *Han'guk sihak yŏn'gu* 36 (April 2013): 65.

향수

넓은 벌 동쪽 끝으로
옛이야기 지줄대는 실개천이 회돌아
나가고,
얼룩백이 황소가
해설피 금빛 게으른 울음을 우는 곳,

— 그 곳이 참하 꿈엔들 잊힐 리야.

절화로에 재가 식어지면
뷔인 밭에 밤바람 소리 말을 달리고,
엷은 졸음에 겨운 늙으신 아버지가
짚베개를 돋아 고이시는 곳,

— 그 곳이 참하 꿈엔들 잊힐 리야.

흙에서 자란 내 마음
파아란 하늘 빛이 그립어
함부로 쏜 화살을 찾으려
풀섶 이슬에 함추름 휘적시든 곳,

— 그 곳이 참하 꿈엔들 잊힐 리야.

전설바다에 춤추는 밤불결 같은
검은 귀밑머리 날리는 어린 누이와
아무렇지도 않고 여쁠 것도 없는
사철 발벗은 안해가
따가운 해ㅅ살을 등에 지고 이삭 줏던 곳,

— 그 곳이 참하 꿈엔들 잊힐 리야.

하늘에는 석근 별
알 수도 없는 모래성으로 발을 옮기고,
서리 까마귀 우지짖고 지나가는 초라한
지붕,
흐릿한 불빛에 돌아 앉어 도란도란거리는
곳,

— 그 곳이 참하 꿈엔들 잊힐 리야.

Nostalgia

The place where a small brook, whispering an
old tale
Runs to the eastern end of the wide field
Where a spotted bull lets out
A listless, golden cry

--- Could that place be forgotten, even in
dreams?

The place when ashes cool in the clay brazier
The sound of the night wind drives horses
across the crops
Where my old father, overcome by
drowsiness
Lays down his straw pillow

--- Could that place be forgotten, even in
dreams?

The place where my heart, raised in the soil
Longs for the blue of the sky
Where I was soaked by the dew on the grass
As I searched for an arrow carelessly fired

--- Could that place be forgotten, even in
dreams?

The place where my young sister, dark tresses
flowing
Like a night flame dancing in the sea of
legend
Alongside my wife, indifferent and plain
Barefoot year round
Gather grain, the hot sun on their backs

--- Could that place be forgotten, even in
dreams?

The place where stars pepper the sky
Moving toward unknowable sandcastles
Where the frost crow calls as it passes an
unkempt roof
Folk murmur around a dim flame

--- Could that place be forgotten, even in dreams?[13]

The rhythm of "Nostalgia" is generated by a pattern of repetition. The poem is composed of effectively five stanzas, all but one containing four lines and a separate refrain. Even if one were to overlook the symmetry of these numbers, the poem draws attention to the repetition of its structure: each block of the poem concludes with an identical line, the rhetorical question, "Could that place be forgotten, even in dreams?" The preceding four lines serve to identify the place being referenced, a function that is even more apparent in the original text. In Korean, the lines combine to form a multi-part adjective phrase that modifies the noun "place," the final word of the fourth line in each stanza. (Because of grammatical differences between English and Korean, the placement of this key word had to be shifted in the above translation.) By providing a description of the lost hometown in the lines leading up to each stanza's conclusion, the poem fulfills the promise of its refrain, a declaration posed in the form of a query that imparts the conviction that this hometown will not be forgotten.

The regularity of this organization provides "Nostalgia" with a discernable structure. On the page, repetition is created through divisions such as line and stanza breaks. Units of text created by these divisions recur: five stanzas, five lines, five instances of refrain. When combined, they form a structure, its sense of cohesion bestowed by repeating elements. Although this structure is conveyed in writing, a similar pattern could be expressed aurally. One would need only to employ an alternate method to mark the poem's divisions, such as pausing for variable lengths at stanza and line breaks, during recitation. In this way, the poem's structure is

[13] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Hyangsu" [Nostalgia], *Chosŏn chi kwang*, March, 1927, 13.

independent of text and sound, but has the potential to be represented by either. The single component of the poem that lacks a clear aural equivalent is the dash of the poem's refrain. This mark functionally differs from line and stanza breaks in that it does not signal a new division of the poem, but rather enhances the sense of repetition already inherent to the lines that contain it.

In employing a structure that can be represented by writing or sound, "Nostalgia" occupies a middle ground between poetry's past as song and present as a text. This ambivalence is matched by the poem's content, in which the speaker's experience of the present is filtered through their recollection of the past. But as Kim Chong-t'ae points out, the hometown depicted by the poem is not a perfect utopia, but a place equally associated with the toil of labor.[14] The regular cadence imparted by the poem's structure conveys the sense that each stanza represents a piece of a larger aggregate picture. The idyllic descriptions of the stream and bull of the first stanza give way to the image of the speaker's fatigued father, then to the mother and sister gathering grain as the sun scorches their backs.

Chŏng's use of rhythm in "Nostalgia" adheres to a paradigm that he adopted in many poems. By formulating rhythm as a pattern of repetition independent of sound, Chŏng was not restricted to a single language. This quality set him apart from others poets whose rhythm was based on the particular sonic or textual characteristics of their mother tongue.[15] Unsurprisingly,

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[14] Kim Chong-t'ae argues that the setting of "Nostalgia" does not represent Chŏng's actual hometown, but is rather a mixture of memory and an imaginary place, filtered through Chŏng's perception as a modern individual. According to Kim, this combination enables the location to be perceived as a collective hometown, a quality that lends the poem much of its appeal. Kim Chong-t'ae, *Chŏng Chi-yong ihae* [Understanding Chŏng Chi-yong] (Seoul, T'aehaksa: 2002), 199-203.

[15] One of the reasons why prosody has been central to the study of poetry is the belief that a poem's rhythm, conceived as sound, is intrinsically connected to its semantic meaning. But some scholars disagree. Benjamin Harshav argues that the sound pattern of any poem exists independently of the text's meaning. The two layers are not entangled with each other from a holistic perspective, but are perceived to intersect at certain points based on the specific

many of Chŏng's poems that appeared in Japanese and Korean share the same underlying structure. Although "Nostalgia" was not one such poem, it is not difficult to imagine a version that preserves its rhythm in Japanese. This is not to say that nothing would be lost in translation: there is much to admire, for example, in the unadorned language that Chŏng employs to depict the hometown, or in how his words often fall into mellifluous clusters of three and four syllables in the original poem. It would certainly be a challenge to recreate the particular texture of this language in another that lacks the same resonances, but Chŏng's record of translation indicates that he was unconcerned with producing an exact facsimile. Rather, structure untethered to text and sound provides the critical link between his bilingual poems, a point of commonality that served as the basis of translation.

The Transition to Free Verse

Chŏng Chi-yong did not formulate his style of rhythm in a vacuum. Rather, he was informed by the work of his predecessors, poets who had begun to abandon the rigidness of traditional poetry in the effort to renew their writing. The transition to what they perceived to be the modern idiom of poetry, free verse, was not straightforward. Poets could not simply copy the techniques of foreign poets given intrinsic differences in language. Many metrical devices, such as the stressed and unstressed syllables of English poetry, could not be reproduced in Korean. Instead, poets needed to find their own way to replace fixed verse. By definition, free verse was

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characteristics of a poem's sound or semantics. Harshav explains that sounds by themselves do not carry particular meanings, but instead, a range of potential meanings that can be activated by the semantic level of a poem. In this way, for the example, the repetition of sibilants can be mobilized to create the opposite impressions of either silence or noise depending on the context in which they are employed. Benjamin Harshav, *Explorations in Poetics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 145.

to be looser, determined by the individual poet, rather than prescribed from the outside. And yet it still had to be recognizable as rhythm, a concept that until then had been defined by inelasticity. The paradox of this situation meant that fixed verse could not be abandoned in full. Incipient attempts at free verse instead echoed traditional poetic forms, retaining some elements while forfeiting others.

One early innovator was Ch'oe Nam-sŏn. Ch'oe dabbled in many different fields and would likely not have considered himself to be a poet, but he composed and published an impressive number of poems throughout his lifetime. Many scholars identify "From Sea to Boy" (Hae egesŏ sonyŏn ege), which was printed in the inaugural issue of Ch'oe's magazine *Sonyŏn* (Boys, 1908-11) as Korea's first modern poem. The designation begs the question: what exactly about it is modern? On the one hand, the poem's central message, which exhorts the youth of Korea to embrace to the power of the ocean, has been connected to the Enlightenment values that Ch'oe adamantly pushed in his periodicals.[16] But much of what makes the poem novel for its time has to do with its peculiar rhythm, which bares traits of both fixed and free verse:

海에게서 少年에게

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 쏴.....아.
때린다, 부순다, 무너 버린다.
태산 같은 높은 뫼. 집채 같은 바윗돌이나.
요것이 무어야, 요게 무어야.
나의 큰 힘 아나냐, 모르나냐, 호통까지
　　하면서
따린다, 부순다, 무너 바린다.
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 콱.

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 쏴.....아.

From Sea to Boy

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
Thwack, smash, wreck.
Mountain high hill. Stones the shape of a
　　house.
What's this, what's this?
Know not my awesome might? I roar
Thwack, smash, wreck.
Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung,
　　kwak.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
I fear nothing

[16] Dafna Zur, *Figuring Korean Futures: Children's Literature in Modern Korea* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 33.

내게는, 아모 것도, 두려움 없어,
육상에서,아모런, 힘과 권을 부리던
자라도,
내 앞에 와서는 꼼짝 못하고,
아모리 큰 물건도 내게는 행세하지
못하네.
내게는 내게는 나의 앞에는
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 꽉.

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척,쏴..... 아.
나에게 절하지, 아니한 자가,
지금까지 있거던 통기하고 나서 보아라.
진시황, 나팔륜, 너희들이냐.
누구 누구 누구냐 너희 역시 내게는
굽히도다.
나허구 겨룰 이 있건 오나라.
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 꽉.

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 쏴.....아.
조고만 山모를 의지하거나,
좁쌀 같은 작은 섬,손벽 만한 땅을 가지고
고 속에 있어서 영악한 체를,
부리면서, 나 혼자 거룩하다 하난 자,
이리 좀 오나라, 나를 보아라.
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 꽉.

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 쏴.....아.
나의 짝될 이는 하나 있도다,
크고 길고, 넓게 뒤덮은 바 저 푸른 하늘.
저것이 우리와 틀림이 없어,
적은 是非, 적은 쌈, 온갖 모든 더러운 것
없도다.
조 따위 세상에 조 사람처럼,
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 꽉.

처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 쏴.....아.
저 세상 저 사람 도두 미우나,

No matter the strength, the power one
commands on land
Before me all are helpless
Even large objects will not sway me
Me, me, me.
Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung,
kwak.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
Apprise me of those
Who do not bow before me.
'Tis, Qin Shi Huang? Napoleon?
Who, who, who? Yes, all submit to me.
Those who would vie with me, come forward.
Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung,
kwak.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
Those who subsist on the side of a small
mountain with
Nothing more than a grain of an isle, land as
meager as the palm of one's hand
And there who feign shrewdness
Worshipping only themselves
Come lay your eyes upon me.
Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung,
kwak.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
There is but one who is my equal
The sky who blankets large, long, and wide.
Without doubt like me
Free of all squabbles, conflicts, all manner of
filth
Unlike those people of that world.
Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung,
kwak.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, swaaa.
That world, those people, all are despicable
But among them is one thing I love.
You brave, innocent boys
Cute as a button, come into arms
Come here, my boys, place your lips on mine.

그 중에서 똑 하나 사랑하는 일이 있으니,
膽 크고 純精한 소년배들이,
재롱처럼, 귀엽게 나의 품에 와서
　　안김이로다.
오나라, 소년배, 입 맞춰 주마.
처.....ㄹ썩, 처.....ㄹ썩, 척, 튜르릉, 꽉.

Chuuulssuk, chuuulssuk, chuk, tyururung, kwak.[17]

The idiosyncrasy of "From Sea to Boy" announces itself from the very first line. Ch'oe's use of onomatopoeia to evoke the sound of the waves had little precedent in Korean poetry. It is also dissimilar to the onomatopoeia of everyday language that came to be a staple of vernacular poems. These transcriptions are Ch'oe's own invention, a bald attempt to use *han'gŭl* as a device to record sound as it is heard. The unusualness of each onomatopoeia, a comma separating one from another, stands in contrast to the uniformity of the lines that contain them. Onomatopoeia consistently appear in the first and last line of every stanza, creating the indelible impression that the incoherent sounds of the waves have been translated into the voice of the ocean, the poem's speaker, before collapsing once again into unadulterated sound by the time the stanza concludes. The clash between regularity and irregularity epitomized by the onomatopoeia runs through the entirety of the poem.

The rhythm of "From Sea to Boy" likewise stands somewhere between the order of fixed verse and the flexibility of free verse. Ch'oe does not adhere to a preexisting poetic form with established syllable and line counts, a choice that in itself was a substantial break from poetic tradition. At the same time, he refrains from entirely abandoning a discernable rhythmic pattern, and instead, opts to erect one of his own design that is specific to "From Sea to Boy." The poem is comprised of six neatly-divided stanzas, each an exact seven lines apiece. By beginning and

[17] Ch'oe Nam-sŏn, "Hae egesŏ sonyŏn ege" [From Sea to Boy], *Sonyŏn*, November, 1908, 2-4.

concluding each stanza in an identical manner with a matching line of onomatopoeia, Ch'oe accentuates the poem's structure through repetition. The pattern of the poem becomes even more apparent when one scrutinizes each line in relation to another, all of which roughly adhere to a set a number of syllables. "From Sea to Boy" alternates between long and short lines, even numbered lines being the latter at eleven syllables each. The lines of each stanza correspond to those of the other five in terms of syllable count, with minor deviations.[18]

This rhythmic scheme in "From Sea to Boy" operates independently from the poem's content. If the correspondence between the lines of each stanza is clear on the abstracted level of syllable, no such parallelism exists on the level of meaning. Line two of stanza one—"Thwack, smash, wreck"—bears no semantic connection to line two of stanza two—"I fear nothing"—and so on. The rhythm instead provides an underlying framework to which its words conform, lending the entirety of the poem a consistent cadence that evokes the steady beating of the waves. Ch'oe sometimes signals the internal beat of each line with commas that divide them into tidy clusters of syllables. The above-quoted "thwack, smash, wreck," for example, is 3 3 5 in Korean. Repetition within lines in the form of recurring and syllables—the alternating *yo* and *muŏ* sounds of line four in stanza one, the series of three initial *niŭn* consonants of line six stanza two—accentuate the sonic texture of the poem. Although these devices are arguably discernable on the page, they are fundamentally rooted in the sound they represent and need to be spoken aloud in order to be appreciated. The rhythm of the poem has been designed to be heard, not intuited by the eye alone.

[18] The syllable counts of the third line of each stanza ranges from fourteen to sixteen. Line number five shows greater variation: two stanzas of eighteen, two of sixteen, one fourteen, and one fifteen.

"From Sea to Boy" is not a translation of a foreign poem, but its rhythm was inspired from foreign examples. Ch'oe bestowed the poem with the label *sinch'esi* (new style poetry), a name that announced a decisive break from tradition. The term was borrowed from Japan, where the same Chinese characters are pronounced *shintaishi*. Many scholars point to the 1882 publication of *A Selection of New Style Poetry* (Shintaishi-shō)—twenty-six years prior to the appearance of "From Sea to Boy"—as the starting point of modern Japanese poetry. Ch'oe's *sinch'esi* does not resemble *shintaishi* from the perspective of form, but conceptually both represent an intermediate step away from fixed to free verse that resulted in a hybrid between the two.[19] *Shintaishi* was even more directly indebted to foreign models than *sinch'esi*, with fifteen of the total nineteen poems from *A Selection of New Style Poetry* being translations of Western poems. Nevertheless, the influence of the West upon Ch'oe would have been evident to any reader of *Sonyŏn*, as the magazine regularly printed translations of Western literature. Ch'oe penned many of these himself using previous Japanese-language translations as a reference.

Rhythm in Print

The poetry scene of the 1920s, the decade in which Chŏng Chi-yong began to publish, was in a state of flux. Print had irrecoverably changed the landscape, spurring experiments to figure out how to represent poetry with text. Rather than being taken into one's body passively as sound, rhythm now required active interpretation based on what was transcribed on a page,

[19] As Nicholas Eugene Albertson explains, *shintaishi* were regular in that each line typically contained twelve syllables, arranged into groups of five and seven. However, unlike traditional forms like the *haiku* and the *tanka*, *shintaishi* could be of any length, with stanzas of variable sizes. Nicholas Eugene Albertson, "Beyond Shasei, Beyond Nature: Idealism and Allusion in the Poetry of Shimazaki Tōson, Doi Bansui, and Yosano Akiko" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 18.

placing much of the onus onto the shoulders of the reader. Yet one was not free to imagine rhythm however they pleased.

Poets like Ch'oe Nam-sŏn were already mobilizing the visual presentation of a poem to indicate how it was meant to be read, but this tendency became more salient over time. As is evident in "Nostalgia" and "From Sea to Boy," markers such as line breaks, stanza breaks, and spacing became the new generators of rhythm. Today, these elements have become standardized to the point that it is easy to overlook their effect. But this was not always the case. Poets experimented with these conventions well into the 1920s. Consider, for example, "The Song of My Beloved" (Nim ŭi norae) by Kim So-wŏl (1902-1934). Kim fiddled with the poem's spacing between reprints, adjusting how its rhythm was meant to be read. Below is the initial version of the poem as published in *Kaebyŏk* in 1923:

님의 노래

그립은 우리님의 맑은노래는
언제나 내가슴에 저저잇서요.

긴날을 門박게서 서서 들어도
그립은 우리님의 부르든 노래는
해지고 저므도록 귀에 들려요.
밤들고 잠드도록 귀에 들려요.

고히도 흔들리는 노래가락에
내잠은 그만이나 깁히 들어요.
孤寂한 잠자리에 홀로 누워도
내잠은 포스근히 깊히 들어요.

그러나 자다깨면 님의노래는
하나도 남김없이 잃허버려요.
들으면 듯는대로 님의노래는

The Song of My Beloved

The limpid song of my dear beloved
Forever colors my heart.

Even heard outside where I pass the long day
The beautiful song of my dear beloved
Rings as the sun sets and the sky darkens.
Rings as night settles and sleep descends.

To the softly trembling melody
My sleep comes equally deep.
Though I lie solitary in this lonesome bed
My sleep is warm and deep.

But when I awake I altogether forget
The song of my beloved.
Heard time after time I altogether forget
The song of my beloved.[20]

[20] Kim So-wŏl, "Nim ŭi norae" [The Song of My Beloved], *Kaebyŏk*, February, 1923, 31.

하나도 남김없이 닛고말아요.

The spacing of “The Song of My Beloved” exposes a clear difference from “Nostalgia.” Unlike Chŏng, Kim employs a rhythm based on syllables. Each line contains approximately twelve, separated into three neatly divided clusters that appear as columns on the page. This distinct look is created by spacing. Spaces uniformly separate the text into three clusters based on syllable count. In each line, the first cluster contains three, the second four, and third five. There are a few exceptions to this rule: in lines three and four of the second stanza, the final cluster is split into smaller groups of two and three. This particular exception adheres to standard spacing practices by separating the noun from the verb, as they would be in prose. But for the most part, the poem ignores conventions by squashing two distinct words together—the adjective “limpid” (*malgŭn*) and the noun “song” (*norae*) of the first line, for example—to create a cluster of three, four, or five syllables. In this way, the spaces of “The Song of My Beloved” are not dictated by grammar.

If the purpose of spacing conventions is to enhance comprehension, the rules Kim employs enable a different kind of readability. For an alphabetic script like *han'gul*, spaces are instrumental in helping the reader to distinguish one word from the next. Text without spaces reads as a jumble of text, an effect that the poet Yi Sang (1910-1937) gleefully exploited. In “The Song of My Beloved,” the simplicity of the language and brevity of the lines ensure that comprehension is not an issue, even when two words are collapsed into one. Kim is therefore empowered to use spacing for other means. By deliberately breaking up the text according to syllables rather than semantic meaning, he foregrounds rhythm over content.

In “The Song of My Beloved,” spaces provide a visual guide to help the reader perceive rhythm. The contrast between the text and spaces create a discernable pattern. When parsed

linearly, the two alternate at regular intervals. A reader could easily translate this pattern into sound during recitation, with spaces serving as the equivalent of rests in musical notation. In this sense, the printed poem could be read as a transcription of sound. To do so is to imagine sound preceding text, to picture Kim composing the poem aloud before setting it down in writing. But such speculation is irrelevant from the reader's point of view. For them, text necessarily precedes sound. The poem merely contains the potential for sound, which may be actualized or not, depending on how the reader choose to read it.

In a 1925 revision, Kim modifies the spacing of the poem, creating a distinct sense of rhythm from the original. Several lines are now divided into two rather than three clusters, one of five syllables, the other seven:

님의 노래

그립은우리님의 맑은노래는
언제나 제가슴에 저저잇서요.

긴날을 門박게서 섯서드러도
그립은우리님의 고흔노래는
해지고 져무도록 귀에들녀요.
밤들고 잠드도록 귀에들녀요.

고히도흔들니는 노래가락에
내잠은 그만이나 깁피드러요.
孤寂한잠자리에 홀로누어도
내잠은 포스근히 갑피드러요.

그러나 자다깨면 님의노래는
하나도 남김없이 잃허버려요.
드르면듯는대로 님의노래는
하나도 남김없이 닛고말아요.[21]

[21] Kim So-wŏl, *Chindallaekkot* [Azaleas] (Seoul: Maemunsa, 1925), 12-23.

This revision of "The Song of My Beloved" constitutes a renewed effort to mobilize spacing as a representation of rhythm. By combining the first and second cluster of several lines into a single five-syllable bundle, Kim further departs from standard spacing practices. Words that were separate in the original are now combined. These changes switch the syllabic pattern from 3 4 5 to 7 5, a configuration that Kim is known for regularly employing.[22] The lack of other modifications indicates that his primary concern for this new printing was how to best signify rhythm. Notably, no additional syllables were added to a new version. The changes could therefore be read as a shift in emphasis to accentuate the division between the seventh and eighth syllable, rather than that between the third and fourth, of each line. For Kim, spacing was a tool to signify rhythm, but as the revision of "The Song of My Beloved" shows, he had yet to settle on an exact methodology to employ it. These experiments in the 1920s gradually disappeared as poets adopted the same practices as prose writers, spacing their poems according to the dictates of grammatical norms, not rhythm.

Theorizing Free Verse Rhythm

The emergence of free verse in the 1910s and 20s called for a new understanding of rhythm in poetry. As discussed in Chapter One, one of the earliest champions of free verse was Kim Ŏk, who helped introduce it to Korea through his translations of French Symbolist poetry. Kim's theoretical musings about poetry show an incipient attempt to unearth a new language to

[22] Cho Chang-Whan argues that it was Ch'oe Nam-sŏn who popularized the 7 5 syllable meter that is now widely used in Korean poems. He notes that even though the 7 5 syllable meter was an import from Japan, it proved to be quite amenable to Korean poetry due to many traditional forms having already employed variations of five and seven syllables as standard metrical patterns. Cho Chang-Whan, "*Hyŏndae si unyul yŏn'gu ŭi pangbŏp kwa pangyang"* [The Methodology and Goal of the Metrical Study of Modern Korean Poetry], *Han'guk sihak yŏn'gu* 22 (August 2008): 77.

describe the rhythm of free verse, which he referred to as breath. As a theory of rhythm, Kim's meditations are unquestionably vague, but offer a useful perspective in understanding the development of critical language about free verse during its adoption in Korea:

> Wordsworth said that poetry is breath. What a remarkable line. Poetry is breath, and the breath of an entire book is expressed in an instant by a single constituent poem. Generally, if breath and impulse are harmonized in a poem, anyone will be able to appreciate it. A poem without meaning is nothing more than a poem of silence—understood only by its poet who alone feels its breath and beat—and cannot be expressed.[23]

Kim identifies breath, a metaphor for rhythm, as a poem's defining component. Poems are released into the world like air expelled from a nose, but for Kim, this is not an involuntary action, but a process that must be carefully controlled. His barometer for the success of a poem depends on how well it is appreciated by others. A poem whose breath and impulse are harmonized is bound to find acceptance in the world, whereas a poem that lacks this essential harmony will also be in want of meaning. The latter kind of poem, Kim explains, can only be appreciated by its creator, who alone can feel its beat. These stipulations are coached as instructions for aspiring poets to follow.

For Kim, breath is the backbone of a poem's rhythm: "Put simply, character is the harmony of the power of the body, and that power—breath—forms the rhythm of a poem. A simple poem, in this way, imparts more poetic beauty, becoming like music, and inevitably harmonizing breath with language or letters."[24] The equation of poetry and breath, hence, must be taken as Kim's way of emphasizing the importance of rhythm to poetry. His reference to music as being close to the ideal state of poetry is an idea borrowed from Symbolism. Kim

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[23] Kim Ŏk, "Sihyŏng ŭi ŭmnyul kwa hohŭp: Yŏlchorhan chŏnggyŏn ŭl Hae-mong hyŏng ege" [The Rhythm and Breath of the Poetic Form: A Narrow-minded Opinion for Hae-mong], *T'aesŏ munye sinbo*, January 13, 1919, 5.
[24] Ibid.

nevertheless makes a distinction between music and poetry. Poetry must become like music, not actually become music. In other words, poet must strive to create the same harmonizing effect as music, but with language and letters as their tools.

In this sense, Kim understood his predicament to be the conversion of the rhythm of an aural medium to one that was written. His metaphor of breath as rhythm locates the link between the two in the physical being of a poem's creator. In being tied to one person rather than the institution of a shared literary form, Kim rejects standardization and appeals for flexibility in rhythm. Breath in particular calls to mind the particular tempo of an individual's body. In a much later era, the American poet Theodore Roethke also described pauses in poems as breath units, which he understood to be the key to rhythm.[25] Kim is less specific, for in his eyes, the problem of how to implement his ideas had yet to be resolved. The ideas conjured by his suggestive, if circuitous, language nevertheless set the stage for how rhythm was to be conceived as the specific product of an individual sensibility, able to be articulated in written language like music is expressed with sound.

Thanks to efforts of Kim and others, free verse poetry became associated with Symbolism by the early 1920s. This perceived connection was taken up as grounds for criticism by skeptics, who attacked Symbolism for being foreign. Hyŏn Ch'ŏl (1891-1965), the head of the literature department of *Kaebyŏk*, was one such detractor. He denounced the poet and critic Hwang Sŏk-u (1895-1960) for pushing free verse and Symbolism, not only questioning its

[25] In an article originally written for the October 1960 issue of *Poetry*, the American poet Theodore Roethke noted: "It was Lawrence, a master of this sort of poem (I think I quote him more or less exactly), who said, 'It all depends on the pause, the natural pause.' In other words, the breath unit, the language that is natural to the immediate thing, the particular emotion." Theodore Roethke, "Some Remarks on Rhythm," in *On Poetry & Craft*, eds. Ralph J. Mills Jr. and David Wagoner (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2001), 72.

appropriateness for Korean poetry as a form that originated elsewhere, but also lamenting the characteristic indistinctness of its style.[26] Hwang shared many of the same aesthetic sensibilities of Kim Ŏk, and the two were founding coterie members of the literary journal *P'yehŏ* (1920), a short-lived bastion for Symbolism and Decadence. The disagreement between Hyŏn and Hwang sparked one of the first prominent literary debates about modern poetry in Korea.[27]

Hwang viewed the global reach of free verse as a merit. For him, this designation meant that it belonged to no specific culture, but to all cultures equally. This opinion was predicated on the belief that poems should be distinguished from their form. In Hwang's own words, "Poems composed by contemporary Japanese poets and those written by us (even if their forms are an imitation of Western poetry) are both independent creations. Poetic form and poetry are different."[28] His ultimate point was that poems could be written in a foreign style and still be considered Korean, an assertion meant to address Hyŏn's concern that the adoption of free verse would stymie the indigenous development of Korean poetry.

The debate between Hwang and Hyŏn reveals the extent to which questions of literary form were implicated in the formation of national identity. The problem of rhythm too was consequently not just an issue of poetic technique, but intimately entangled in perceptions of what it meant to be Korean. For Kim Ŏk and Hwang, the free verse of Symbolism and

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[26] Hyŏn Ch'ŏl, *Sowi sinsi hyŏng kwa mongnongch'e* [The So-called New Poetry Form and Indistinctness], *Kaebyŏk*, February 2, 1921, 129.

[27] As Chŏng U-t'aek points out, the debate, which concluded in the following year, directly broached a number of pivotal topics related to poetry that were being raised by members of the literary community in the early 1920s such as the generic difference between *sinch'esi* and free verse, ethnic characteristics versus globalism, Symbolism and its merits, lyricism, and cultural nationalism. Chŏng U-t'aek, *Hwang Sŏk-u yŏn'gu* [Hwang Sŏk-u Research] (Seoul: Pagijŏng, 2008), 83.

[28] Hwang Sŏk-u, "Hŭisaengwa wa sinsi rŭl ilgo" [Reading and "Sacrificial Flower" and New Poetry], *Kaebyŏk*, December 12, 1920, 91.

Decadence was a form that befitted the modern era and did not belong to any one nation. To write free verse was to participate in a global artistic movement, in which Korea had the potential to be an equal participant. Hyŏn's critique of free verse for its foreign origins nonetheless spoke to a larger concern among intellectuals about the need to find an idiom of poetic language that was specific to Korea. While for him, this task necessitated the active incorporation of traditional forms in the composition of new poetry, Kim and Hwang were less interested in the past. Both believed that the cultural identity of a poem was determined by the poet who wrote it. A Korean poet working in free verse and following the natural meter of their own body could not help but write a Korean poem. The underlying assumption behind this logic, however, was that the poem in question would be written in Korean. Chŏng, however, suggests a complication to this issue: what if a poem was written in Japanese?

Chŏng Chi-yong as Self-Translator

The first Korean-language poem that Chŏng Chi-yong published was "Café France." It arrived in 1926, his third year in Kyoto, shortly after he had begun a program at Dōshisha daigaku (Dōshisha University) in composition and English literature.[29] The venue was the inaugural issue of *Hakcho* (*The Wave of Learning*, 1926-7), the organ of the Kyŏngdo Chosŏn yuhaksaeng haguhoe (Fellow Korean Students Association in Kyoto). It was not uncommon for Korean students like Chŏng, who were interested in literature, to publish texts in their own

[29] Chŏng entered the preparatory division of Doshisha in 1923. Three years later, he enrolled in the English department, where he in majored in composition and English literature. His graduating thesis on William Blake was penned entirely in English. Song Ki-han, *Chŏng Chi-yong kwa kŭ ŭi segye* [Chŏng Chi-yong and His World] (Seoul, Tosŏ ch'ulp'an pangmunsa, 2014), 31-35.

language while abroad in Japan. As discussed in Chapter One, *Hakchigwang* (Light of Learning, 1914-1930), the periodical distributed by the larger Tokyo branch of the Fellow Korean Students Association, was an early hub of Korean-language literary activity.

But "Café France" was not the first poem Chŏng ever published, nor was the version that appeared in *The Wave of Learning* the earliest to appear in print. Rather, he had already begun submitting Japanese-language poems to student publications at Dōshisha in 1925. These magazines—*Machi* (Street), *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi* (Dōshisha Preparatory Division Student Magazine), and *Jiyū shijin* (Free Verse Poet)—bore no particular affiliation to Korea or other groups of foreign students. The journals were organized by Japanese students for members of the general student population who were passionate about literature. Chŏng's participation can be taken as an indication of his competence in Japanese and as a sign of the extent to which he integrated himself into Dōshisha despite his identity as an outsider.

In this way, Chŏng's student publication record reveals two parallel tracks separated by language. He was Korean by heritage, but also a student at a Japanese university, and his early writing reflects both aspects of this split identity. Rather than choose one or the other, Chŏng opted to pursue both lines for the time being. For him, literature was a mixture of languages and cultures in which the duality of his pursuits as an amateur writer was normal. The peculiarity of Chŏng's relationship to literature during this stage of his life is perhaps best exemplified by his graduating thesis, a twenty-six-page handwritten document about the poetry of William Blake. He penned the entire essay in English, a testament to his linguistic skill in a third tongue and a confirmation of a disposition already evident from his publications at the time: for Chŏng, literature did not belong to a single language.

Although it was unusual for a Korean poet of the early twentieth century to publish in both Japanese and Korean, Chŏng was not the only such case. Among well-known figures, two other notable examples are Chu Yo-han (1900-1979) and Yi Sang, who chronologically appeared before and after Chŏng respectively.[30] Chu debuted as a Japanese-language poet and published a total of twenty-seven original poems in the journals *Bansō* (Accompaniment) and *Gendai shika* (Contemporary Poetry), both run by one of his mentors, the poet Kawaji Ryūkō (1888-1959). He was only active as a Japanese-language poet for two years between 1917 and 1919, after which he switched to writing in Korean.[31] Around ten years later, between 1931 and 1932, Yi published twenty-eight poems in the Japanese-language periodical *Chōsen to kenchiku* (*Architecture and Korea*). As Kwon Youngmin notes, several of these poems served as the basis for Korean-language poems Yi would pen in the following years.[32]

In comparison, Chŏng published forty-seven Japanese-language poems between 1925 and 1929, a larger number of texts over a longer duration. Twenty-four of these poems, amounting to a little over half, were subsequently published in Korean. These numbers alone reveal the extent to which Chŏng's Japanese and Korean-language poetic writing were entangled. His Korean-language poems began to appear in print in 1926, meaning that for around two years, he was simultaneously releasing poetry in both languages, unlike either Chu or Yi. The longest gap between a Japanese and Korean version of the same poem was seven years. "From the Train

[30] For a more comprehensive list of Korean writers who penned Japanese-language poetry, see: Shim Won Sup, *Ilbon yuhaksaeng munindŭl ŭi Taejŏng Sohwa ch'ehŏm* [The Experiences of Korean Writers and Poets Studying in Taishō and Shōwa Japan] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2009), 241-242.
[31] Yi Yong-ho, *Chu Yo-han yŏn'gu* [Chu Yo-han Research] (Seoul: Tonggwang munhwasa, 2002), 46-48.
[32] Kwon Youngmin, "Yi Sang ŭi ilbonŏ si rŭl ŏttŏk'e pol kŏdin'ga" [How Should Yi Sang's Japanese-Language Poetry Be Read?], *Sŏjŏng sihak* 19, no. 3 (September 2009): 234-235.

Window" (Shasō yori) and "Pebbles" (Ishikoro), both originally published in 1925 in *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi*, resurfaced as "Train" (Kich'a) and "Pebbles" (Choyaktol) in *Tongbang p'yŏngnon* (Eastern Review, 1932), three years after Chŏng had ceased publication of poetry in Japanese.[33] On some occasions, Chŏng drastically reworked a poem before it reappeared. On others, the gap between the two versions is much smaller.

Chŏng's poems that appeared in Japanese and Korean blur the lines between translation and revision. He is credited as the sole author in each language, with neither version of his poems being marked as a translation. Yet more often than not, mutual correspondences indicate a shared source. Translation is ordinarily premised on the notion of a copy and an original, but for these poems, it is often difficult to tell one from the other. The close proximity of many publication dates between languages casts doubt on the prospective of identifying the initial variant. Preconceptions about language and literary composition may lead one to imagine Chŏng composing these poems first in his native language before translating them into Japanese, but most were published in Japanese first, a detail that throws this assumption into question. The sequence of dates could also be a red herring, a matter of when he chanced upon the opportunity to be published, rather than a reflection of the language of origin.

Chŏng's bilingual poems also raise questions about translation in relation to reception, not just the particulars of their creation. The idea of an original and a copy is not only a matter of pragmatism in the practice of translation, in which the former serves as a prerequisite for the latter's existence. It also functions to create a hierarchy of value that assigns the original a position of authority. Despite the efforts of New Criticism to decouple the author from the text, it

[33] *Eastern Publication* ceased publication in 1932, the same year it first appeared, after printing only three issues.

would be disingenuous to say that this schema is unrelated to perceived closeness to the creator of the original work, especially given the way in which questions of literary fidelity are oftentimes couched in terms of authorial intent. Cases of self-translation beg the question of what happens to the reception of a translated work when the author and the translator are the same person. Given the unlikeliness of identifying the original version of many of Chŏng's poems, this line of inquiry is especially pertinent.

Perhaps the most germane question to ask is if either version of Chŏng's bilingual poems should even be considered a translation at all, the alternative being two original poems penned by the same author. Susan Bassnett characterizes self-translation as a form of rewriting in which a bilingual writer shifts between languages.[34] Rewriting or creative reworking can explain the differences between many texts that have been self-translated.[35] What is surprising about many of Chŏng's poems is that correspondences between the two versions are more prominent than differences. The case is remarkable not as an unbelievable feat of linguistic dexterity, but for how Chŏng, a writer no doubt attentive to the limitations and possibilities of each language, refrained from further differentiating the two versions. When held side by side, these poems invite comparison in a fashion analogous to an ordinary translation. The reader scans for inevitable points of departure amid a sea of convergence.

One reason to place Chŏng's bilingual poems within the spectrum of translation is because to do so serves as a reminder of the external contingences that precipitated his decision to write a Korean and Japanese version of the same poems. As Christopher Whyte, a Scottish

[34] Susan Bassnet considers the term "self-translation" to be problematic because translation presupposes the idea of an original, which in this case, does not necessarily exist. Susan Bassnett, "The Self-Translator as Rewriter," in *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, ed. Anthony Cordingley (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 15.
[35] Ibid., 24.

poet and translator, observes, if "translation is about crossing barriers, contaminating one language with the experience and the rhythms of another, self-translation occurs in situations of exile or of crude subjugation, where one language is attempting to take the place of another."[36] No one presumably forced Chŏng to translate his poems, but as a colonial subject with aspirations of a literary career, there were clear incentives for entering the literary establishment in Japan at a time when the government-general was actively pushing Japanese-language acquisition on the peninsula with the eventual goal of permanently replacing Korean. Whyte also points out the inherent dangers of self-translation, namely the presumption that once the reader is supplied with the author's personal translation, the original version is susceptible to being perceived as inconsequential. According to this logic, the marginalized writer who serves as their own translator unwittingly acts as a participant in the erasure of their own language.[37]

Chŏng's choice to cease publishing poetry in Japanese after 1929 may reflect the poet's awareness of the dangers of self-translation that Whyte identifies. However, the association between self-translation and the suppression of a marginalized language obscures the way in which the practice can also be generative for a bilingual writer. As Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson point out, the history of self-translation is as long as that of literature. And yet, this past has been concealed by the widespread acceptance of the German Romantic philosophy of language, which celebrates linguistic purity, with the ideal of the mother tongue linked to a particular country or nation. This ideology lead to the rise of linguistic nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hence, critics have repeatedly overlooked the early

[36] Christopher Whyte, "Against Self-Translation," *Translation and Literature* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 69.
[37] Ibid., 70.

translations of seminal figures like Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), even though such work constitutes an important part of their development as writers.[38]

Until recently, Chŏng's Japanese writing rarely figured into studies of the poet. One reason for this absence is that many of these poems had yet to be discovered. The announcement in 2014 that a number of Chŏng's early publications had been unearthed by Kumaki Tsutomu, a Japanese scholar, was publicized in general newspapers alongside the declaration that a revised volume of collected works would be released in the coming years.[39] Chŏng's previous collected works, first issued by the publisher Minŭmsa in 1988, did include some Japanese-language poetry, but its contents were hardly exhaustive.[40] Although the existence of these poems was acknowledged since the 1980s, they were not extensively discussed until later. In his 1982 study of the poet, Kim Hak-tong lists a handful of Chŏng's Japanese poems and speculates that the attention they brought him likely spurred the aspiring poet to become more serious about his craft. Kim reserves his commentary and praise, however, for the Korean-language poems that Chŏng published during the same period of his life.[41] In recent years, a number of Korean and Japanese scholars, including Sanada Hiroko and Kim Tong-hŭi, have begun to look more closely at Chŏng's Japanese-language poems in the attempt to integrate them into the understanding of his trajectory as poet.[42]

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[38] Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson, *The Bilingual Text* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1-3.
[39] Ch'oe Chae-pong, "'Hyangsu' siin Chŏng Chi-yong chakp'um saero palgul" [New Poems by "Nostaliga" Poet Chŏng Chi-yong Discovered], *Han'gyŏrae*, July 28, 2014.
[40] Chŏng Chi-yong, *Chŏng Chi-yong chŏnjip* [The Collected Works of Chŏng Chi-yong] (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1988).
[41] Kim Hak-tong, *Chŏng Chi-yong yŏn'gu* [Chŏng Chi-yong Research], rev. ed. (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2007), 155-156.
[42] Sanada Hiroko asserts that Chŏng's decision to pen Japanese-language poems was a natural consequence of a dearth of suitable models in Korean when he began his literary activities in the 1920s. Precursors in vernacular free verse poetry such as Kim Ŏk and Han Yong-un did exist

The relegation of Chŏng's Japanese poems to cursory mentions in early research can also be explained by how these texts implicitly challenge the prevailing narrative that much of this scholarship projects of Chŏng as Korea's first master of modern poetry. A critique of earlier poets, whose work is deemed noteworthy for their historical value, but not necessarily perceived to hold up to contemporary standards of taste, the prevailing assessment lionizes Chŏng for his virtuosity in the Korean language at a time when most of his peers were still figuring out the mechanics of vernacular poetry. This reputation was bestowed upon him as early as the 1930s when the poet and critic Kim Ki-rim (1908-?) famously referred to him as Korea's first modernist, praising him as the one "who unearthed (primarily) the value of the sound of language and 'image' in addition to fresh and innate poetic 'images' with almost genius sensitivity and thereby introduced the sensibility of a newborn son of civilization to our poetry."[43] The moniker was the highest compliment Kim could give to another poet. He understood modernism to mark a monumental advance that superseded past modes of expression

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and could serve as useful examples for the prodigious Chŏng, but as seen in previous chapters, their poetry largely tackled traditional subject matter despite innovations in poetic language. Meanwhile, Kim Tong-hŭi reasons that Chŏng's Japanese-language poetry should be understood as preparation work, undertaken in a more familiar literary language, for the eventual goal of composing poetry in Korean. According to her, these poems are analogous to early unpublished manuscripts commonly developed by writers when they are still perfecting their craft. Chŏng's case is somewhat particular not only due to the language he employed, but because the poems from his student era were published in public venues and hence are available to be examined in detail. Kim notes that although countless critics and scholars have identified Chŏng as a groundbreaking poet who changed the literary landscape, comparatively little research has been conducted on what factors contributed his unique style. She identifies his Japanese-language poetry phase as an important stage in his development. Sanada Hiroko, *Ch'oech'ŏ ŭi modŏnisŭt'ŭ Chŏng Chi-yong: Ilbon kŭndae munhak kwa ŭi pigyo koch'al* [Chŏng Chi-yong, The First Modernist: A Comparative Study with Modern Japanese Literature] (Seoul: Yŏngnak ch'ulp'ansa, 2002), 60-61; Kim Tong-hŭi, "Chŏng Chi-yong ŭi ijung ŏnŏ ŭisik kwa kaejak yangsang yŏn'gu" [A Study of Chŏng Chi-yong's Bilingual Sensibility and the Character of His Revisions] (PhD diss., Korea University, 2017), 4-17.

[43] Kim Ki-rim, "'Modŏnijŭm' ŭi yŏksajŏk wich'i" [The Place of "Modernism" in History], *Inmun p'yŏngnon*, October 1939.

to become the most suitable means to capture the experience of the current era. Chŏng, who at the time was only in his thirties, was already the embodiment of this new development in Korean poetry for Kim. In a 1933 evaluation of the state of poetry in Korea, Kim singled out Chŏng as an innovator in poetic style:

> He was the first poet to truly call forth the 'breath and pulse' of modernity in our poetry. At the same time, he brought out poems out of the faint music of Symbolism that had dominated the poetic establishment.
>
> Dissatisfied with the tedium of the time-based poetry of Symbolism, he was surely the one who introduced spatiality to our poetry.[44]

In the above excerpt, Kim frames Chŏng as the first modern poet of Korea, a title he earned on the basis of his poetry's advances in rhythm. Kim Ŏk is not mentioned by name, but the reference to the prolific translator and champion of Symbolism would have been clear to insiders of the literary community. For Kim Ki-rim, Symbolism was but an intermediary stage of development for modern Korean poetry. He saw Chŏng as fulfilling the promise of Kim Ŏk's notion of breath by moving away from the domain of music and into the arena of space. The language Kim Ki-rim employs is ironically vague for someone who chastises Symbolism for its faintness, but it is clear that he is discussing a transformation in poetic rhythm. Symbolism is associated with music, an allusion that connects it to sound. The element that Chŏng's poetry introduced to Korea was the image, a new facet of language that Kim Ki-rim felt befitted the modern era.

The emergence of images in poetry provided the basis for Kim's understanding of modernism and its significance. He associated the change with a renewed focus on language, a medium that was no longer just a means of expression but an object that carried value of its own:

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[44] Kim Ki-rim, "'1933-yŏn sidan ŭi hoego wa chŏnmang 3" [Retrospect and Prospect of the 1993 Poetic Community], *Chosŏn ilbo*, December 9, 1933, 2.

> In the West too, one of the defining features of twentieth century literature (especially for poetry) is an unprecedented effort toward uncovering the value of language. According to the compositional methods of the past, language was thought of in terms of expression, the pitch of a melody, the unit of a beat. In Korea, it was evaluated in relation to the number of syllables. But now poetry was to be written under a kind of architectural design where one is conscious of the value of language as sound, its visual shape, the value of its images, and the cumulative effect of all these interacting values. Language in poetry is more than a simple device. In this way 'modernism' defied the methods of the past era and created its own grammar. The connotations of language shifted, and the new 'rhythm' that corresponds to the speed of civilization—completely unlike the rhythm of the old era, which could not go beyond the depiction of waves, a procession of sailboats, or at most a cavalcade—was discovered in the internal 'rhythm' of conversation that reflects trains, airplanes, the commotion of a factory, the shrieks of a crowd only to again be created anew.[45]

Modernism for Kim was a movement that resulted in the proliferation of possibilities for language. The old paradigm of literature as mimesis did not disappear in the modern world, but was relegated to being one of several options for how language could be used. Sound was still an important aspect of rhythm. Kim envisioned poems reflecting the commotion of the city and its machines, an idea based on the longstanding perception of literature as a reflection of the external world, but updated to suit society's most conspicuous changes. The difference now was that Kim also understood language itself to have its own sounds that could be mobilized for the purpose of rhythm. Language could also generate images, another potential structural implement for poems. Kim saw the power of modernism in what he called "the cumulative effect of all these interacting values," this mixture of sound and image-based metrical elements a central characteristic of rhythm in Chŏng's poetry.

[45] Kim Ki-rim, "'Modŏnijŭm' ŭi yŏksajŏk wich'i" [The Place of "Modernism" in History], *Inmun p'yŏngnon*, October 1939.

The Japanese and Korean "Café France"

In penning Japanese and Korean-language versions of his poems, Chŏng Chi-yong introduced a variant into the trajectory of poetic rhythm. For him, the boundary between these two national languages was porous, able to be crossed by a single poem in translation. It was rare for a poet to produce multiple language versions of their own work despite facility in Japanese being a norm for intellectuals. When translations did appear, they were most often undertaken by a third party, someone presumably less attached to the original and its roots in a particular national language, who could produce a copy, necessarily altered, in a distinct context. What allowed Chŏng to act as his own translator between Japanese and Korean was an approach to rhythm that deprioritized its fundamental relation to sound. Sound remains an important element of rhythm within each separate Japanese or Korean version of his bilingual poems, but another, more abstract conception of rhythm based on repetition structures these poems in a manner that is shared between both. This repetition takes place on the organizational levels of stanza and line, rather than individual words and the sounds they suggest.

Chŏng's method of creating parallel structures of rhythm across Japanese and Korean can be seen in initial version of "Café France." The Japanese rendition of the poem appeared first in the November issue of *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi* alongside three other poems that also bear his name:[46]

カフツエー・フランス	**Café France**
(一)	(1)
	Under the foreign palm

[46] The Japanese version of "Café France" was reprinted two more times in 1926 and 1929 in the literary journals *Kindai fūkei* (Modern Landscape) and *Kūfukusai* (Hunger Festival). Both of these variants included only the second half of the poem. In Korean, the poem was included in his 1935 collection *Chŏng Chi-yong's Collected Poems* (Chŏng Chi-yong sijip).

異国種の棕梠の下に
斜に立てられた街燈。
カフツエー・フランスに行かう。

こいつはルパシカ。
も一人のやつはボヘミアン・
　　ネクタイ。
ひよろひよろ痩せたやつがまつ
　　先きに立つ。

夜雨は蛇の目のやう細い
敷石に咽び泣く燈の散光
カフツエー・フランスに行かう。

こいつの頭はいびつの林檎。
も一人のやつの心臓は蟲ばんだ
　　薔薇。
野良犬のやうに濡れたやつが
　　飛んで行く。

（二）

『おお鸚鵡さん！
　　グッドイヴニング！』
『グッドイヴニング』
　　—親方
　　御気げん如何です？—

鬱金香さんは
今晩も更紗のカーテンの下で
お休みですね。

私は子爵の息子でも何でもない
手が餘り白すぎて哀しい。

The street light set askew.
Let’s go to Café France.

One, a rubashka.
Another, a bohemian necktie.
Someone scrawny, the first to rise.

Night rain slender as snake eyes
Light sobbing along the pavement.
Let’s go to Café France.

One head, a crooked apple.
Another’s heart, a rose nibbled by bugs.
Drenched like a stray dog, someone darts
　　away.

(2)

“O good evening, Mr. Parrot!”
“Good evening!”
—How are you feeling, boss? —

Miss Tulip
Tonight as well
Rests beneath the chintz curtain.

I am nothing, not the son of a count
My hands are too white and sad.

I have no country, no home.
How sad my cheek that rubs the marble table.

O foreign puppy
Won’t you lick my toes?
Won’t you lick my toes? [47]

[47] Chŏng Chi-yong, “Kafueē Furansu” [Café France], *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi*, November, 1925, 50-51.

私は国も家もない。
大理石のテーブルにすられる頬が
　　悲しい。

お々　異国種の仔犬よ
つま先きをなめてお呉れよ。
つま先きをなめてお呉れよ。

Meanwhile, the Korean-language version, which appeared the following summer, reads as follows:

카페 프란스

A

옴겨다 심은 棕櫚나무 미테
빗두루 슨 장명등.
카페— ・프란스 에 가자.

이 놈은 **루파스카**.
또 한놈은 **보헤미안** 네ㄱ타이.
뻣적 마른놈이 압장을 섯다.

밤ㅅ비는 배ㅁ눈 처럼 가는데
페이브메ㄴ트 에 흐늑이는 불빗.
카페— ・프란스 에 가자.

이 놈의 머리는 갓익은 능금.
또 한놈의 心臟은 벌레먹은薔薇.
제비 처럼 저진 놈이 뛰여 간다.

B

「오— 파로트(鸚鵡) 서방! 굿 이부닝!」

「이 부 닝!」

—이 친구. 엇더 하시오? —

Café France

A

Under the transplanted palm
The wall lamp set askew.
Let's go to *Café France*.

One, a *rubashka*.
Another, a *bohemian* necktie.
Someone scrawny in the lead.

Night rain slender as snake eyes
Light sobbing along the *pavement*.
Let's go to *Café France*.

One head, a freshly ripe crabapple.
Another's heart, a rose nibbled by bugs.
Someone drenched like a swallow darts away.

B

"O good evening, Mr. Parrot!"

"**Evening**!"

—This guy. How are you doing?—

Tulip girl
Tonight as well
Slumbers beneath the chintz *curtain*.

추립브(鬱金香)아가씨 는
이 밤 에도
更紗 **커—튼** 미테서 조시는 구려.

나 는 子爵의아들 도 아무것도 아니란다.
남달니 손 이 희여서 슯흐구나.

나 는 나라도 집도 업단다.
大理石 **테이블** 에 닷는
내 빼ㅁ이 슯흐구나.

오오. 異國種 강아지 야
내 발을 할터다오.
내 발을 할터다오.

I am nothing, not the son of a count.
How sad my strange pale hands.

I have no country, no home.
How sad my cheek
Upon the marble *table*.

O foreign puppy
Won't you lick my feet?
Won't you lick my feet? [48]

A number of differences between the two versions of "Café France" can be easily spotted. A street light (*gaitō*) transforms into a wall lamp (*changmyŏngdŭng*) between languages, and the palm tree that was said to be of foreign breed (*ikokushu*) in Japanese is described in more detail as having been transplanted (*omgyŏda simŭn*) in Korean. Despite these differences, the two versions largely share the same content presented in identical order. Even one of the most pronounced disparities between the two versions—the use of accent marks in Korean (italics in the above English translation) to accentuate foreign loan words—can be read as an attempt at establishing parity with the Japanese, where the equivalent words are printed in *katakana* script and ruby text, visually differentiating them from the rest of the poem.[49] As Sanada Hiroko

[48] Chŏng Chi-yong, "K'ap'e P'ŭransŭ" [Café France], *Hakcho*, June, 1926, 89-90.
[49] Chŏng uses an identical strategy in other Korean-language poems to accentuate foreign loan words. See, for example, "poplar," "orange," and "cement" in "Melancholy Portrait" (Sŭlp'ŭn insangwa), "pistol" and "signal" in "From the Journal of My Heart" (Maŭm ŭi ilgi esŏ), both also printed in the inaugural issue of *Hakcho*. Nevertheless, no other Chŏng poem matches "Café France" in terms of ubiquity of foreign loan words. Chŏng Chi-yong, "Sŭlp'ŭn insangwa" [Melancholy Portrait], *Hakcho*, November 1926, 90; Chŏng Chi-yong, "Maŭm ŭi ilgi esŏ" [From the Journal of My Heart] *Hakcho*, November 1926, 101-102.

explains, these foreign words collectively evoke the bohemian culture of artistic circles from nineteenth century France.[50]

Both versions of "Café France" share the same identifiable rhythmic structure. The shape of this poem can be visualized in a schematic by assigning a letter to each stanza: ABABCDEEF. Repeated letters refer to stanzas that correspond to one by repeating images or sound. As the diagram indicates, the first half of the poem alternates between two pairs of corresponding stanzas (ABAB). The second half of the poem's pattern loosens with only one pair of corresponding stanzas (EE), sandwiched between three unpaired stanzas (CDF).

The correspondence between the stanzas become even more apparent when isolated. For example, the two A stanzas from each version appear as follows:

1925 Japanese Version

ikokushu no shuro no shita ni
naname ni taterareta gaitō.
Kafutsē Furansu ni ikau.

yoru ame wa hebi no me no yō hosoi
peibumento ni musebi naku akari no hikari
Kafutsē Furansu ni ikau.

1926 Korean Version

omgyŏda simŭn chongnyŏnamu mit'e
pitturu sŭn changmyŏngdŭng.
K'ap'e P'ŭransŭe kaja.

pambinŭn paemnun ch'ŏrŏm kanŭnde
p'eibŭment'ŭe hŭnŭginŭn pulbit
K'ap'e P'uransŭe kaja.[51]

[50] In Japan, the Parisian bohemian culture of young artists was emulated by the Pan Society (Pan no kai, 1908-1912). Sanada Hiroko, *Ch'oech'ŏ ŭi modŏnisŭt'ŭ Chŏng Chi-yong: Ilbon kŭndae munhak kwa ŭi pigyo koch'al* [Chŏng Chi-yong, The First Modernist: A Comparative Study with Modern Japanese Literature] (Seoul: Yŏngnak ch'ulp'ansa, 2002), 109.

[51] The disparity in spelling between "P'ŭransŭe" and "P'uransŭe" for "France" in the A stanzas of the Korean version is almost certainly a typographical error. In addition, please note that in

As the above example makes clear, structural correspondences occur on the level of stanzas and lines. A stanza may be said to correspond to another if the lines they contain also mutually correspond. For example, the lines of the two A stanzas can both be represented in the following manner: AAB. But how might one identify correspondences between lines? As illustrated above, the solution cannot be pinpointed on the level of language. Certain phrases may reappear, but in some cases, these are only single words in lines that are otherwise linguistically dissimilar. Repetition in phrasing is instead symptomatic of parallelism in image or idea. Connections between sequential lines in each stanza are often ambiguous.[52] The AAB algebra of the aforementioned A stanzas can be decoded as: image, image, refrain. Although not grounded in the repetition of linguistic units such as syllables and stresses, these broader correspondences on the level of line and stanza nevertheless create an overall pattern that the reader can instinctively feel.

The refrain, "Let's go to Café France," that caps off each stanza is the most obvious instance of repetition and the only lines that are linguistically identical. Other sounds, such as *ni* and *no* recur within lines in the Japanese version, generating a pleasant sonic consistency, but these commonplace grammatical particles hardly create a feeling of kinship between the two stanzas. The impression of correspondence is rather fostered through the deployment of imagery. Both stanzas contain three lines: two images, and one refrain.

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order to show the original gaps between words, transliterations due not conform to the spacing rules of the McCune–Reischauer transliteration system.

[52] Kim Yong-Hee argues that the ambiguity of Chŏng's early poems, which she describes as "experimental" (*sirhŏmjŏk*), is a reflection of the influences of Dadaism and Symbolism. Chŏng was exposed to these artistic movements in Japan. Kim Yong-Hee, *Chŏng Chi-yong si ŭi mihaksŏng* [The Aesthetics of Chŏng Chi-yong's Poetry] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2004), 49.

The thread that unites the images of the A stanzas in "Café France" is aberration. "Foreign" (*ikokushu*) is the first word of the poem in Japanese, a redundant description of a palm tree in Kyoto that accentuates the sense of displacement. The lamp of line two has been likewise "set askew." Meanwhile, the images of the second A stanza are linked by metaphors of natural phenomena as animals. The falling night rain shines in the menacing silhouette of a snake's eyes, and a flickering light is described as sobbing along the pavement. Each isolated detail is a metonym for Café France, the mysterious destination toward which the reader is summoned.

The B stanzas also form a pair on the basis of the sequence of their images:

1925 Japanese Version

koitsu wa rupashika.
mo hitori no yatsu wa bohemian nekutai.
hiyorohiyoro yaseta yatsu ga matsu saki ni tatsu.

koitsu no atama wa ibitsu no ringo.
mo hitori no yatsu no shinzō wa mushibanda bara.
norainu no yō ni nureta yatsu ga tonde iku.

1926 Korean Version

i nomŭn nubasshwik'a.
tto hannomŭn pohemian nekt'ai.
ppŏtchŏk marŭnnomi apchangŭl sŏtta.

i nomŭi mŏrinŭn kadigŭn nŭnggŭm.
tto hannomŭi simjangŭn pŏllemŏgŭn changmi.
chebi ch'ŏrŏm chŏjin nomi ttwiyŏ kanda.

Each B stanza of "Café France" provides three descriptions of patrons, presumably acquaintances of the speaker. Unlike the A stanza pair, no refrain tethers the stanzas to one another. Each line instead matches its pair in the use of corresponding phrasing for each man (*koitsu*, *mo hitori no yatsu*, and *yatsu* in Japanese; *nom*, *tto hannom*, and *nom* in Korean). The first B stanza is concerned with surfaces. Individuals are defined by their distinctly foreign

accessories, including a rubashka and a necktie, and for the shape of their bodies. In the second B stanza, the speaker connects the inner character of three—who may or may not be the same group from the stanza number one—to their appearances. A head is compared to a fruit either "crooked" (*ibitsu*) or "freshly ripe" (*kadigŭn*), depending on the version, and another's heart resembles "a rose nibbled by bugs" (*wa mushibanda bara* in Japanese, *pŏllemŏgŭn changmi* in Korean). Each description is offered in the same impartial tone.

Rhythm in "Café France" recreates the sensory experience of the speaker that can be deduced from, but is not directly stated, in its lines. The poem is conspicuously divided into two halves. Part One takes place in an undefined location outside Café France. The manifestly repetitive ABAB arrangement of these four stanzas instills a feeling of hypnosis that mirrors how the speaker is being drawn to the café as if summoned by an invisible force. "Let's go to Café France," the refrain that concludes the A stanzas, functions as the anchor of Part One and indicates the direction in which the actors of the B stanzas are oriented. In Part One, the speaker is not directly referenced, despite the poem being portrayed from their point of view.[53] The appearance of the personal pronoun "I" and accompanying instances of self-description are relegated to Part Two. Because of this absence, the refrain feels strangely disembodied, like an incantation that compels the speaker to action and is given voice with their tongue.

Part Two of "Café France" breaks from the rhythmic pattern of the first half. The speaker has now arrived, their entrance marked by a relaxation of stanza-level repetition to CDEEF. But release from the regimented rhythm of Part One does not coincide with the feeling of freedom.

[53] As Kim Yŏng-mi argues, the detailed descriptions of external objects in the first half of the poem can be read as reflections of the speaker's interiority. When interpreted in this way, the strange, aberrant imagery communicate inner anxiety. Kim Yŏng-mi, *Chŏng Chi-yong si wa chuch'e ŭisik* [Chŏng Chi-yong's Poetry and Sense of Agency] (Paju: T'aehaksa, 2015), 89.

Proponents of free verse historically argued that jettisoning the strictures of external rhythm corresponded to emergence of the individual, whose agency alone would be the compass of a poem's flow. Agency, however, is not the problem raised by "Café France." Ushered into the bizarre environment of the café, the speaker is overcome by befuddlement, a sensation the poem constructs by depriving the reader of context.

The first stanza of Part Two consists of three lines of dialog, each lacking a designated speaker.[54] Lines one and two are enclosed by quotation marks, indicating that these words have been spoken, but also crucially differentiating the statements from the refrain "Let's go to Café France" of Part One, further casting the ontological status of that twice restated suggestion into question. Repetition as a theme of the poem is underlined by the reference to the parrot, one of the interlocutors of an inane quoted conversation. Readers may wonder if the poem invokes an actual parrot, or an individual who has playfully adopted the bird as a sobriquet. "Café France" does not proffer an answer, but the point, given the repetition of the greeting "Good evening" in the reply, is that from the perspective of the speaker, who previously compared men to fruit and animals, the difference is of little consequence.

In the poem, repetition does not function to reify meaning in the typical manner of bestowing emphasis, but instead acts as an agent of obfuscation as words, phrases, and lines reappear without overt logical motivation. The concluding line of the stanza, in which a voice

[54] As Kim Tong-hŭi has observed, unlike the Japanese, the Korean version of "Café France" breaks between each line of dialog, technically resulting in three separate stanzas instead one. She notes that the spacing serves as an additional mark to distinguish between the participants of the dialog. However, this difference does not have a pronounced effect on the overall structure of the poem as the order of the lines remains the same. In either version, the dialog stands out from the rest of the poem as a single unit by virtue of the quotation marks. Kim Tong-hŭi, "Chŏng Chi-yong ŭi ijung ŏnŏ ŭisik kwa kaejak yangsang yŏn'gu" [A Study of Chŏng Chi-yong's Bilingual Sensibility and the Character of His Revisions] (PhD diss., Korea University, 2017), 151.

enquiries about another's well-being, raises even more questions. Why is this statement set off by dashes? Does the line, couched in the polite tone of formal spoken language, represent the unarticulated thoughts of the speaker, and if so, is the speaker Mr. Parrot? Or, do the dashes signify an utterance projected at a comparatively lower volume?

The perplexity that attends the reading experience of Part Two's initial stanza creates a disconnect between the reader and speaker, the former unable to reliably locate the latter on the page. Although this disjuncture might seem to contradict the idea of "Café France" as a lyric, told from the subjective perspective of a single individual, the split can be reconciled as a depiction of a speaker alienated to the extent that they have lost themselves amid a miasma of voices. As the poem progresses, the speaker gradually comes into focus as a subject with the concluding three stanzas dedicated to self-description as the café and its denizens recede to the background. The transition constitutes the speaker's attempt to establish their own identity, an effort that ends inconclusively as they struggle to define themselves in the corresponding E stanzas in terms of what they are not: the son of a count, and the citizen of a nation with a place to call home.

1925 Japanese Version

watashi wa shishaku no musuko de mo nandemonai
te ga amari shiro sugi te kanashii.

watashi wa kuni mo ie mo nai.
dairiseki no tēburu ni surareru hō ga kanashii.

1926 Korean Version

na nŭn chajagŭi adŭl to amugŏtto aniranda.
namdalli son i hŭiyŏsŏ sŭlphŭguna.

na nŭn narado chipto ŏptanda.
taerisŏk t'eibŭl e tannŭn
nae ppaemi sŭlphŭguna.

The repetition of words and sentence structure establishes a clear correspondence in the penultimate stanzas of "Café France." Unlike previous instances of reiteration, the brevity of the stanzas and the grammatical firmness of the sentence-endings generates a sense of emotional exigency as the speaker laments their estrangement from their surroundings. By publishing Japanese and Korean-language versions of "Café France," Chŏng effectively enmeshed the poem within two linguistic communities, to whom its themes would be intelligible in different ways. For Japanese readers, Café France as a metonym for French bohemian culture displaced in Kyoto would be understood as the source of the foreign (*ikoku*) and alienating elements of the poem. Korean readers, especially those like Chŏng who had been sent abroad as students, would recognize a second resonance in the adjective "foreign" as a descriptor that could equally be applied to themselves. The alienation wrought by Café France for them is double as foreigners in Japan encountering an incomprehensible facsimile of a third foreign culture.

Language is not a refuge for the speaker of "Café France." Even though individual lines and words are comprehensible, the poem lacks a connecting logic that binds together its disparate components. In this absence, "Café France" suggests that the link that binds the speaker to others is mutual alienation. The poem concludes with a last attempt at communication, their partner not a human capable of speech, but a dog, also foreign, who the speaker unabashedly implores to lick their toes. Despite all the linguistic talent mustered in the creation of this poem, language has failed. It is no coincidence that this final request, repeated as if echoed into the void, is left unanswered.

Transcribing Poems in Japanese and Korean

If "Café France" serves as an example of Chŏng Chi-yong's attempt to create an analogous pattern of rhythm across two languages, some of his other Japanese poems demonstrate more willingness to exploit the unique traits of the language. Among the first batch of poems that Chŏng published in Japanese is a short piece titled "Daytime" (Hiruma, 1925) that is written entirely in *hiragana*.[55] A phonetic script that is particular to Japanese, *hiragana* imbues the poem with a visual texture that would be difficult to recreate elsewhere.

The *hiragana* of "Daytime" was not a one-time experiment, but a style that Chŏng occasionally employed throughout his time as a Japanese-language poet. From these poems, it can be inferred that for Chŏng, appearance was an important aspect of poetry, and one that could be tweaked via choice of script. His *hiragana* poems represent one extreme of this methodology. The opposite pole can be found in "A Recollection of Incheon Harbor" (Nigawakō no aru tsuioku, 1925), a poem that, from its title onward, is comparatively dense with *kanji*.[56]

During the 1920s, it was common for Korean-language writing to appear in mixed script. Comparable to the way written Japanese typically combines a phonetic script like *hiragana* with *kanji*, this mixed script blended *han'gŭl* with *hanja*, the latter peppered onto the page to signify Sino-Korean words. Vernacular poems too, including most of Chŏng's collective work, were regularly printed in a combination of these two. In this sense, modulating the ratio of Chinese characters (*kanji*, *hanja*) to phonetic script (*hiragana*, *han'gŭl*) was a potential consideration for poets writing in both Japanese and Korean. The decision to use Chinese logograms or not often reflected syntactical choices, and in this sense, was more involved than merely weighing the

[55] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Hiruma" [Daytime], *Machi*, July, 1925, 38.
[56] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Nigawakō no aru tsuioku" [A Recollection of Incheon Harbor], *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi*, November, 1925, 52-53.

relative visual aesthetics of one writing system over another. Poems composed primarily using native words, as opposed to Sino-Korean diction, contained fewer Chinese characters by default.

Readability was also a consideration. Poems printed in *han'gŭl* were theoretically more accessible because they could be read by people who did not have the education necessary to parse mixed script. But it is also true that the majority of Chŏng's readers during the 1920s and 30s would have been more familiar with *hanja* than *han'gŭl*. For them, a poem in mixed script would be easier to read than one in *han'gŭl*, an experience that is the opposite for most contemporary readers. (Most reprints of poetry since the 1990s are edited to remove *hanja* in a concession to this reality). Chŏng's generation was raised in an era of transition, many still taught the classical Chinese literature from an early age as had been the tradition, but later educated in modern institutions in Korea and Japan. The prominence of mixed script during this time reflects the needs of these individuals.

And yet, despite these correlations between Japanese and Korean, *hiragana* and *han'gŭl* are more dissimilar than alike. For one, *han'gŭl* is the only phonetic script of Korean, but *hiragana* shares this distinction with two others in Japanese: *katakana* and *romaji.* Each of these three scripts carry their own history and are typically employed in specific contexts to different effects. The choice to predominately use *hiragana* in a poem is therefore not just a rejection of *kanji*, but of *katakana* and *romaji* as well. *Hiragana* grew out of a tenth-century phonetic script called *wonnade* (feminine hand) that, as its name implies, has long been associated with women, who were separated from the masculine domain of Chinese letters. For this reason, *hiragana* (or simply *kana*) literature has been connected to women's literary activities from the Heian period,

a private field of writing that included letters and diaries.[57] Hence, it can be argued that the script is coded as feminine, an idea of which Chŏng was no doubt aware. But rather than necessarily suggest that his poems are pitched in a woman's voice in the vein of Han Yong-un, Chŏng's use of *hiragana* instead reinforces the sense of the poem as a form of personal writing.

In the *hiragana* poem "Pebble" (Ishikoro) for example, Chŏng expresses interiority through the image of a rolling pebble, a metaphor that is plainly established in the first stanza:

いしころ

いしころ　ころころ
そは　わが　たましひ　の
かけら　なり。

やめる　ピエロ　の　かなしみ
　　と
はつたび　に　つかれし
つばくらめ　の
さみしき　おしやべり　もて。
つめつて　なほ　あからむ。
ち　に　にじまれて、
あめ　の　いこくまち　を
われ　さえづり　さまよふ。

いしころ　ころころ
そは　わが　たましひ　の
かけら　なり。

Pebble

Roll, roll pebble
Fragment
Of my soul.

An ailing clown's despondency
Drained upon its first journey
The lonely chattering
Of a swallow.
Pinched but
Red with blood,
I chirp as I wander
The rainswept foreign street

Roll, roll pebble
Fragment
Of my soul.[58]

[57] Scholars like Tomiko Yoda, however, have pushed back against the assumption that *kana* literature was actually developed by women, given the lack of empirical evidence to substantiate this widely accepted claim. Indeed, most well-known forerunners of this kind of literature, such as Ki No Tsurayuki (872-945), were in fact men who sometimes adopted the persona of women in their writing. Tomiko Yoda, *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 84-86.
[58] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Ishikoro" [Pebble], *Dōshisha daigaku yoka gakusei kaishi*, November, 1925, 52.

In three short lines, the first stanza of the poem succinctly sets up the central comparison between the pebble and the soul. The poem begins unassumingly with the image of the pebble in motion: "*ishi koro korokoro*." Next, the speaker of the poem is introduced (*so wa waga tama shi hi no*), and in the third line (*kakera nari*), the connection between the two is cemented. In this last line, Chŏng uses the word *naru* (to become) to construct the central metaphor of the poem, the verb mirroring the reader's experience of moving through the poem line by line, as language seamlessly transforms one object (a pebble) into another (a soul).

The metaphors of "Pebble" all move in the same direction: exterior to interior. In the second stanza, the speaker compares a clown and a swallow to themselves, and in each instance, emphasizes their essential loneliness. Chŏng begins each metaphor by describing exteriors in the original Japanese. The reader encounters the adjective *yameru* (ailing), the first word of the second stanza, before learning of the clown's *kanashimi* (sadness) at the end of the line. In the same vein, Chŏng states the hardship of the swallow's first journey before describing the loneliness of its call. The connective logic of these images only becomes apparent at the stanza's conclusion, in which the speaker ambles through a rainy street, their feelings of alienation mirroring those of the clown and the swallow.

If the general theme of isolation in a foreign country is shared between "Pebble" and "Café France," the key difference between the two lies in the way they depict the relationship between the speaker's exterior and interior, a dissimilarity that is reflected in Chŏng's choice of script. In "Café France," the reader is submerged in sensory details that overwhelm the page in a manner that replicates the speaker's disorienting experience of the café. "Pebble," on the other hand, depicts the interiority of its speaker. Although the reader is told that the rainswept street of

the poem is foreign, unlike in "Café France," no other details are provided. The focus of the poem remains the speaker's state of mind, given visual form in the shape of a pebble, clown, and swallow. Each continues to make their way through the world despite the loneliness that defines their existence. The understated optimism of the poem is conveyed through this motion, propelled forward by the blood that flows through the speaker's veins, a sign of the vitality that they harbor within.

Chŏng's decision to use *hiragana* in "Pebble" not only resonates with its focus on interiority, but also calls attention to the poem's rhythm on the level of syllables. In a departure from convention in written Japanese, each word is followed by a space, a move that helps distinguish one from the other in the absence of *kanji*. The reader is thus compelled to momentarily ignore meaning and instead parse each word as the composition of discrete syllables, each taking up an equal amount of space on the page. As a phonetic script, *hiragana* not only invites the reader to imagine the poem as sound, but more crucially, makes sound visible as text. Nowhere is this more evident than the first line of the poem, where the final two syllables of "pebble" (*koro*) are immediately echoed in the onomatopoeia for rolling (*korokoro*). The repetition would be obvious when the poem is recited aloud, but by transcribing each syllable in *hiragana*, Chŏng ensures it is also discernable in silence.

When Chŏng published a Korean-language version of "Pebble" (Choyaktol) seven years later, the aspects of the poem derived from *hiragana* were unsurprisingly absent. Still, as was the case with "Café France," the basic structure of the poem is shared between the two languages:

조약돌

조약돌 도글 도글……
그는 나의 魂의조각 이러뇨.

Pebble

Roll, roll pebble
Fragment of my soul.

The despondency of an ailing clown

알는 픠에로의 서름과,	The grieved chattering
첫길에 고달핀	Of a blue swallow
靑제비의 푸념겨운 지줄댐과,	Drained upon its first journey,
꼬집어 아즉 붉어 오르는	Pinched but
피에 매치여	Red with blood
비날니는異國거리를	I lament
嘆息하며 헤매노나.	As I wander
	The rainswept foreign street.
조약돌 도글도글.....	Roll, roll pebble
그는 나의 魂의조각 이여니.	Fragment of my soul.[59]

The Korean version adheres to the order established in the Japanese, beginning with external description before revealing the inner states of the clown and swallow. Likewise, the direction of the poem's metaphors remains exterior to interior. In terms of structure, Chŏng preserved the one major element of repetition in the poem: the mirroring of the first and final stanzas. The pair, shortened from three lines down to two in Korean, sandwiches the middle passage as in the Japanese, lending the poem a sense of organization it would have otherwise lacked. The links between the two versions suggest that Chŏng understood these elements to be the foundation for his vision of the poem, a structure of rhythm that was to remain unchanged despite the gap in languages and time between publications. His adjustments alter details of the poem, but do not impact its core structure: the swallow is now specified as being blue, the speaker no longer laments but chirps.

Chŏng made no perceptible effort in the Korean iteration of "Pebbles" to reproduce the effect of *hiragana* in the Japanese, a choice that indicates he approached transcription as an issue separate from rhythm. One option that could have more closely approximated, but not replicated, the consistency of the *hiragana* in Korean would have been to transcribe the entire poem in

[59] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Choyaktol" [Pebble], *Tongbang p'yŏngnon*, July, 1932, 178.

han'gŭl. Chŏng, however, ignored this obvious solution, adding *hanja* to a number of places: the "soul" of the first and last stanzas, the "blue" of the swallow, etc. This use of mixed script matches the majority of his poems from the period. Still, a pure *han'gŭl* poem would not have been unprecedented. "Night" (Pam), published earlier in the same year, is one such example.[60] One may therefore conclude that Chŏng was either not concerned with emulating the feel of *hiragana* in Korean, or believed it was not possible to do so. However, despite the use of mixed script, the shape of the poem is not drastically altered in Korean. Whereas in Japanese, the split between *kunyomi* and *onyomi* readings of *kanji* obscures the number of syllables each character represents until parsed or read aloud, each *hanja* in Korean accounts for a single syllable. In this sense, like the *hiragana* version of "Pebble," it is possible to imagine the length of each line by just glancing at the page.

For Chŏng, to rewrite "Pebble" involved translating the poem's structure, preserving its rhythm, but expressing it in a necessarily different manner that utilized the specific properties of Korean. A third-party translator might have felt obligated to mimic the texture of *hiragana*, but as the author, Chŏng was free to go another way. In re-transcribing his text into another language, he was afforded the opportunity to completely reimagine the poem, even change every word should he so desire. What is noteworthy about poems like "Pebble" and "Café France," then, is despite differences in detail, how closely their Korean and Japanese versions resemble one another.

Chŏng Chi-yong's accomplishments are his own, but his story, that of a bilingual intellectual caught between two languages, speaks to a reality that his entire generation

[60] Chŏng Chi-yong, "Pam" [Night], *Sinsaeng*, January, 1932, 40.

confronted. They were a group of writers who were born in Korea, but educated in Japan. One language was their mother tongue, the other a language of many hats: a language of business, culture, and literature. This split often registered as a burden for intellectuals, who were expected to navigate two worlds, but were susceptible to being alienated from both.

Since the postwar era, Japanese-language writing by Korean intellectuals has been seldom discussed due to the stigma of collaboration.[61] As a result, much still remains unknown about this important period in Korea's literary history, even about figures as celebrated as Chŏng.[62] In order to understand the poet that he would later become, it is crucial that we look back to the formative period of his life when he was just a student in Kyoto, aspiring to see his poems in print. Contemporary scholars have consistently praised Chŏng's facility with Korean,

[61] Among English-language scholars, Nayoung Aimee Kwon attempts to reframe *ch'inil* collaboration literature in terms of the ethically neutral notion of intimacy by examining the role of desire in the relationship between Japanese and Korean during the colonial period. Nayoung Aimee Kwon, *Intimate Empire: Collaboration and Colonial Modernity in Korea and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 12.

[62] Another past complication for research about Chŏng was his status as a figure who was forcibly relocated to North Korea. In postwar South Korea, the examination of colonial period literature was stymied by a 1948 rule, established in the first year of the state, that banned the works of authors who had gone North. The decree indiscriminately targeted writers in North Korea, making no distinction between those who had moved there voluntarily and those who had been relocated against their will. Altogether, this was no small number. In light of the 1980s democratization movement and ongoing preparations for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the Roh Tae-woo administration overturned the ban as a demonstration of South Korean society's newfound openness. An article in *Chungang ilbo* celebrated this reversal, promulgated on July 19, 1988, as the restoration of a segment of literary history that had been absent for a period of forty years. The directive allowed for the publication and distribution of approximately one hundred and twenty writers, excluding only a handful who had held political positions in North Korea. Ki Hyŏng-to, "Wŏlbuk chakka chakp'um haegŭm e tamgin ttŭt: 20-yŏnyŏn munhaksa kongbaek pogwŏn" [The Ramifications of Unbanning the Literary Works by Writers Gone North: The Restoration of Around Twenty Years of Literary History], *Chungang ilbo*, July 19, 1988; Kim Seong-su, "Chae wŏlbuk chakka haegŭm choch'i ŭi yŏn'gusa munhwasajŏk ŭimi" [A Study on the Cancellation of the Ban on 'Wolbuk' North Korean Writers from the Perspective of the History of Research and Cultural History], *Sangŏ hakpo* 55 (February 2019): 14.

but as this chapter has demonstrated, his tenuous foray into the word of Japanese letters had a significant impact upon how he would envision poetry as an art form.

Given the way that prosody has been conventionally understood in terms of sound, it might seem daring to propose that Chŏng conceived rhythm as simply structure: a pattern of repetition that did not rely on aural effects to take shape. His innovation, however, was birthed in an environment in which sound was being increasingly deprioritized in the consumption of poetry. As this chapter has demonstrated, this transition took place in the span of a heartbeat as print ushered in a new era of literature during the 1920s. The emergence of literature as a consumer product that had the potential to reach a mass audience corresponded to developments in free verse rhythm. Even poets like Kim So-wŏl, who continued to modulate his poems through the precise allocation of syllables, experimented with techniques to visually represent rhythm on the page. Given this context, it is hardly a surprise that someone like Chŏng would attempt to untangle rhythm from sound.

But as anyone who has read "Café France" and experienced its cacophony of voices could tell you, it is not precisely accurate to say that Chŏng did not care about sound at all. On the contrary, his poems in both Japanese and Korean evoke rich sonic landscapes that are specific to each language. Nevertheless, in the comparison of his bilingual poems, it becomes clear that Chŏng conceived rhythm in terms of a pattern of repetition that could be easily translated. In this way, these poems share an invisible structure that serves as a sign of their common heritage, despite the difference in linguistic context. For Chŏng, this style of rhythm was not likely the result of an epiphany, but a natural consequence of reading and writing literature in multiple languages from a young age.

It is certainly important to reconstruct Chŏng's efforts as a young writer in order to understand the impact of his decisions upon later generations of poets, including Yun Tong-chu (1917-1945), who looked up to him as a towering model to follow. But another reason to revisit this chapter in Korean literature is to resist the shroud of neglect that has clouded Chŏng's bilingual literature from its inception. "Café France" concludes with its speaker alone, separated from everyone who could possibly constitute a community, save for a lone dog, who is said to be foreign and also not belong. In a way, the poem predicted the eventual fate of its Japanese version, which languished outside the consideration of literary critics until recently.

What little we know about bilingual writing from this era, however, suggests that Chŏng was anything but alone. As this chapter has argued, actors like himself who worked between languages were responsible for transformations that would forever alter the landscape of Korean literature. In "Nostalgia," the speaker of the poem of mourns the loss of their hometown, an idyllic location untouched by foreign elements. But such a place never existed, in the same way that a modern Korean literature untainted by linguistic mixture was always an illusion.

CONCLUSION

THE LEGACY OF LYRICAL TRANSLATION

In this dissertation, I have examined three major ways that translation shaped the formation of vernacular poetry in 1920s Korea. Translation's impact was not confined to a single aspect of poetry, nor was its role limited to the beginning of the literary modernization process. Rather, as demonstrated in the three body chapters, translation weighed heavily upon poetic production in multiple ways throughout the decade. For Kim Ŏk in the early 1920s, the translation of Western-language literature was provisionally undertaken to cultivate poetic language, resulting in a new style of poetry that privileged indirect expression as a means to articulate a single individual's point of view. In 1926, Han Yong-un expanded the scope of vernacular poetry beyond the domain of the individual to address an entire community, his abstract language deliberately calibrated to channel translated discourses of love. Around the same time, Chŏng Chi-yong began to submit Japanese and Korean-language poems for publication as a student in Kyoto, the act of bilingual composition enabling him to reconceive free verse rhythm in terms of structural patterns, rather than metrical units based on sound.

To begin with Kim and conclude with Chŏng implies a sense of progression as I move from the decade's start to conclusion. This order happens to accord with general critical perception about the three poets—Kim is treated as a figure of primarily historical importance, whereas Chŏng is lauded as an exemplary artist—but it was not my intention to heedlessly reinforce this assessment. The structure of the dissertation, instead, was intended to reveal a transformation in the way translation could be mobilized in the production of vernacular poetry during the 1920s. As is evident from his critical writing, Kim's project at the start of the decade

was to develop a national poetry commensurate to the vernacular poetry he had encountered abroad. He and other likeminded intellectuals recognized the lack of such a form of writing in their own culture, but rather than registering this void as an inherent deficiency, they were spurred by the conviction that a Korean vernacular poetry could be rapidly constructed. Building upon the incipient accomplishments of Kim and his kin, who effectively demonstrated how short form poems could be mobilized as a vehicle for individual expression, Han exercised the latent potential of verse to speak to a larger community, inviting Koreans to imagine a shared connection to one another in the absence of the nation. For Han, like Kim, translation served as a tether that connected Korean poetry to writing outside of the peninsula. Despite their investment in foreign ideas and literature, which they each highlighted in different ways, Kim and Han were focused foremost on the development of Korean poetry. In this way, translation inflected in their writing in one direction: inward. Chŏng, however, was different. Having benefited from early 1920s experiments in vernacular poetry, the most pertinent question for him was no longer how to erect a national poetry specific to Korea, but how to thrive as a poet whose chosen art form inevitably crossed multiple languages in a colonial context. Translation, hence, was a tool of artistic liberation, allowing Chŏng to negotiate the implicit pressure to write in Japanese without being confined to this imposed foreign tongue.

The decision to foreground a single poet in each chapter was made for pragmatic reasons. Despite the renown of especially Han and Chŏng in their own country, relatively few English-language studies have been published on modern Korean poetry, and therefore, I have assumed no familiarity with the subject, let alone the largest names in the field. Translations of their poems into English have also not been widely circulated, the most significant examples appearing in monographs distributed by academic publishers for a learned, rather than general

audience.[1] Hence, although my overriding intention was to center the work of each poet as a key example of how translation was incorporated into poetic production, the chapters also by necessity function as limited introductions to Kim, Han, and Chŏng. Nevertheless, I sought to depart from the strictures of the author study, and none of the chapters can be described as a comprehensive examination of its central figure. In particular, Kim and Chŏng had long careers that I only discuss in part. For Kim, the time period that I examine has been heavily studied before (although his original poems have seldom held the interest of other scholars). In the case of Chŏng, the opposite is true: his early Japanese-language poems are only beginning to be explored in detail. Of the three, Han is the outlier, given that *The Silence of Love* (Nim ŭi ch'immuk) constitutes his only significant venture into the field of vernacular poetry.

Due to their mutual their differences, the choice to focus on Kim, Han, and Chŏng out of the many poets who were active during the 1920s might strike some to be unusual. Historically, the three did not belong to the same coterie circles, nor have they been generally categorized under the umbrella of a shared artistic movement. In addition to being recognized for introducing Symbolism to Korea, Kim, for example, was associated with Romantic literature in the early 1920s due to his association with the journals *Ch'angjo* (Creation, 1919) and *P'yehŏ* (Ruins,

[1] For interested readers, a good resource is *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry*. Another more recent book, *The Colors of Dawn: Twentieth-Century Korean Poetry*, featuring Korean poems from the modern and contemporary periods, is also worth exploring. Han Yong-un's poems have been translated in the collection *Love's Silence and Other Poems* by Jaihiun Joyce Kim and Ronald B. Hatch, and a number of Chŏng Chi-yong's poems appear in *Distant Valleys: Poems of Chaong Chi-Yong* by Daniel A. Kister. David R. McCann, ed., *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Frank Stewart, Brother Anthony of Taizé, and Chung Eun-Gwi, ed., *The Colors of Dawn: Twentieth-Century Korean Poetry* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015); Han Yong-un, *Love's Silence and Other Poems*, trans. Jaihiun Joyce Kim and Ronald B. Hatch (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 1999); Chŏng Chi-yong, *Distant Valleys: Poems of Chaong Chi-Yong*, trans. Daniel A. Kister (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1994).

1920-1921). Meanwhile, Han was not an active member of the literary community, whereas by the 1930s, Chŏng's reputation as a modernist was secured. In this later decade, he would embrace the mantra of *sunsu munhak* (pure literature) and become a key member of the central coalition of this movement, the Kuinhoe (Group of Nine).[2] Although it is certainly valid to examine these figures in accordance with these labels, such classifications can also be a limitation should one try to see this history from a wider perspective. I selected the central term of this dissertation, "vernacular poetry," to be general enough to encompass the more circumscribed projects of each individual poet, and yet still pinpoint a shared, central locus of concern: the composition of poetry in an idiom that approximated everyday language. As I noted in various places in the dissertation, the artistic philosophies of people like Kim, Han, and Chŏng were not necessarily consistent throughout their lifetimes. And yet, as prominent poets in the 1920s, all three were invested in the formation of vernacular poetry in their own way.

It is my hope that this dissertation contributes to a growing body of English-language research on the formation of modern literature in Korea in the early twentieth century. In the last decade, the landscape of scholarship on this subject has greatly transformed with the release of book-length studies by the likes of Janet Poole, Christopher P. Hanscom, Heekyoung Cho, Yoon Sun Yang, Aimee Nayoung Kwon, Samuel Perry, Dafna Zur, and Theodore Hughes. Many (but not all) of these monographs primarily focus on the later decades of the colonial period and deal with prose narratives instead of poetry. The intervention that I aim to stage is not to fill this conspicuous absence, nor is it to simply demonstrate that the Korean poetry community encountered the same formative obstacles as prose writers. Instead, by examining the

[2] Other members of the Kuinhoe included Yi Hyo-sŏk (1907-1942), Yi T'ae-chun (1904-?), Kim Ki-rim (1908-?), Yi Chong-myŏng (?-?), Kim Yu-yŏng (1907-1940), Yi Mu-yŏng (1908-1960), Yu Ch'i-chin (1905-1974), and Cho Yong-man (1909-1995).

relationship between translation and the formation of vernacular poetry, I aim to show the swiftness of literary invention that characterized the work of poets during the 1920s. The examples of Kim, Han, and Chŏng covered in the three body chapters are all united by the speed in which they produced literary texts that had no precedent in their own culture. For Kim, the gap between *The Dance of Agony* (*Onoe ŭi mudo*) and *The Jellyfish's Song* (*Haep'ari ŭi norae*) was just one year. Han is said to have drafted the complete manuscript of *The Silence of Love* over the course of a couple months, whereas Chŏng was producing Japanese and Korean-language versions of poems that sometimes appeared in print within the span of the same year. These rapid experiments in composition were enabled partly by the inherent concision of the lyric form, resulting in the establishment of an accepted practice of vernacular poetry within the span of the decade.

As a study of colonial literature, this dissertation illustrates how linguistic pressures shaped the formation of vernacular poetry in Korea and offers three examples of the way in which poets adapted to the specific demands of the 1920s. As shown in the body chapters, Japan played a mediating role in this process as the location where many intellectuals were first educated in modern literature and tested the waters of vernacular writing. This observation is not meant to suggest that Koreans would not have developed their own formulation of vernacular poetry, recognized now to be modern, without the intervention of Japanese intellectuals. In many ways, intellectuals in the Meiji and Taishō periods went through a similar process of a modernization that involved the mass translation of Western practices into their own culture. The key difference, as described in this dissertation, is that Korean intellectuals were not only cognizant of developments in the West, but they were also intimately aware of what was taking place in Japan. Poets like Kim, Han, and Chŏng negotiated the pressure that came with this

knowledge in the composition of their poems. The vernacular poetry of the 1920s may have been written for a Korean readership, but it was penned from a vantage point that included multiple international literary discourses. Far from removing their creative agency, translation enabled Korean poets to navigate these streams of ideas, only to return to their own language and reinvent it.

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