

TRANSPACIFIC POETICS IN THE WORKS OF
SIJONG KIM, INHWAN PAK, AND THERESA HAK KYUNG CHA

by

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(Under the Direction of Hyangsoon Yi)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines transpacific poetics through three important literary figures: Sijong Kim (キム・シジョン, 1929-), a representative Zainichi Korean writer; Inhwon Pak (박인환, 1926-1956), a Korean poet who was deeply concerned with postcolonial Asian solidarity in the 1940s and left poems and essays on his travels along the West coast of the U.S. in the 1950s; and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982), a highly-respected Korean-American artist. Their subjectivity has been constructed on the borders of multiple nation-states. Specifically, their literary works were produced along the Pacific coast, crossed the ocean, and reached the opposite shores. The cultural-historical context of their transpacific multilingual literary works goes far beyond the Korean national border and encompasses a broad area along the Pacific Rim. The most prominent feature of transpacific poetics is “minor writing.” Minor writing includes deterritorialization of major languages, multilingualism, denial of conventional genres, negation of mother tongue, constructing literary montage by various images, text, and quotation without quotation marks. In doing so, transpacific poetics continually problematizes imposed hierarchies embedded in language. Asia-Pacific is imagined in the

works of the three writers in similar ways: the region is viewed as a space of exile, migration, repatriation, and resistance against imperialism. Transpacific poetics pays great attention to the historical scars which are inscribed in the Asia-Pacific area. In transpacific poetics, the Pacific is a textual space of untold stories, numerous deaths, European imperialism and American involvement in Asia, and transpacific international relations. As a result, transpacific poetics represent a myriad of forgotten or underrepresented stories and constructs “counter-memory” and “counter-history.” A transpacific subject is located in liminal space. The subject is alienated from both ends of the Pacific. This sense of alienation yields melancholy and fragmented self-understanding. Also, this liminality is frequently expressed in the contrapuntal structure of transnationalism and the rediscovering of the locality. However, liminality is the seedbeds of cultural creativity. The sense of the liminal as an interstitial or in-between space opens up the possibility of cultural creativity. A transpacific subject presents their literary works as a liminal space of contestation and change.

INDEX WORDS: Transpacific Poetics, Transnationalism, Asia-Pacific, Counter-memory, Counter-history, Historiography, Shijong Kim, Inhwan Pak, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Zainichi literature, Korean-American literature, Minor writing.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
TRANSPACIFIC POETICS	4
GENEALOGY OF IMAGINING ASIA-PACIFIC	12
2 SIJONG KIM’S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS AND POETRY	22
A PORTRAIT OF A ZAINICHI WRITER	24
<i>POEMS OF IKAINO</i> : ETHNO-HISTORICAL ARCHIVE.	28
IMAGINING THE PACIFIC (1)	45
MINOR WRITING AND THE POETICS OF BECOMING.	56
3 INHWAN PAK’S POSTCOLONIAL PAN-ASIANISM AND THE	
TRANSPACIFIC JOURNEY TO THE FUTURE	69
POSTCOLONIAL IMAGINATION OF ASIA IN 1940S’ POETRY	72
IMAGINING THE PACIFIC (2)	83
CRITIQUE OF CAPITALIST AMERICA	91
4 THERESA HAK KYUNG CHA’S MINOR WRITING, RE-WRITING	
HISTORY, AND IMAGINING ASIA-PACIFIC	108
DICTÉE AS THE MINOR LITERATURE	111

THE IDEA OF HISTORY IN DICTÉE	123
TRANSPACIFIC CROSSING AND THE LIMINALITY OF THE	
TRANSPACIFIC SUBJECT	132
5 TOWARD TRANSPACIFIC POETICS	142
REFERENCES	148

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Three transpacific writers	2
Figure 2: Zainichi, transnational entity	24
Figure 3: Poetics of <i>Poem of Ikaino</i>	41
Figure 4: Sijong Kim’s image of the Pacific	56
Figure 5: Sijong Kim’s looped movement.....	64
Figure 6: Sijong Kim’s Poetics	68
Figure 7: Inhwan Pak’s geopolitical interest on Southeast Asia in the late 1940s	70
Figure 8: Inhwan Pak’s transpacific Journey in 1955	71
Figure 9: Inhwan Pak’s postcolonial representation of Southeast Asia	83
Figure 10: Inhwan pak’s imagining the Pacific in the 1950s.....	91
Figure 11: Inhwan Pak’s Critique of Capitalist Modernity in the U.S.	107
Figure 12: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s Amer	116
Figure 13: <i>Dictée</i> , frontispiece	120
Figure 14: <i>Dictée</i> , photo	120
Figure 15: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s Minor Writing in <i>Dictée</i>	122
Figure 16: Calligraphy in <i>Dictée</i>	128
Figure 17: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s idea of history	132
Figure 18: National Division of Korea	135
Figure 19: Cha and Her Mother’s Concentric Movement	136

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is twofold. I will examine transpacific poetics through three important literary figures: Sijong Kim (金時鐘, キム・シジョン, 1929-), a representative *Zainichi* Korean writer; Inhwon Pak (박인환, 1926-1956), a Korean poet who was deeply concerned with postcolonial Asian solidarity in the 1940s and left poems and essays on his travels along the West coast of the U.S. in the 1950s; and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982), a highly-respected Korean-American artist. Their ethnic origins are commonly Korean. However, their subjectivity has been constructed on the borders of multiple nation-states. Specifically, their literary works were produced along the Pacific coast, crossed the ocean, and reached the opposite shores. The cultural-historical context of their transpacific multilingual literary works goes far beyond the Korean national border and encompasses a broad area along the Pacific Rim. At the outset of the discussion on transpacific literature, I will outline the constellation of transpacific literature through the multilingual literary works of the three aforementioned authors that are written in Japanese (Sijong Kim), Korean (Inhwon Pak), and English, French, Korean, Latin, Greek, Chinese (Theresa Hak Kyung Cha).

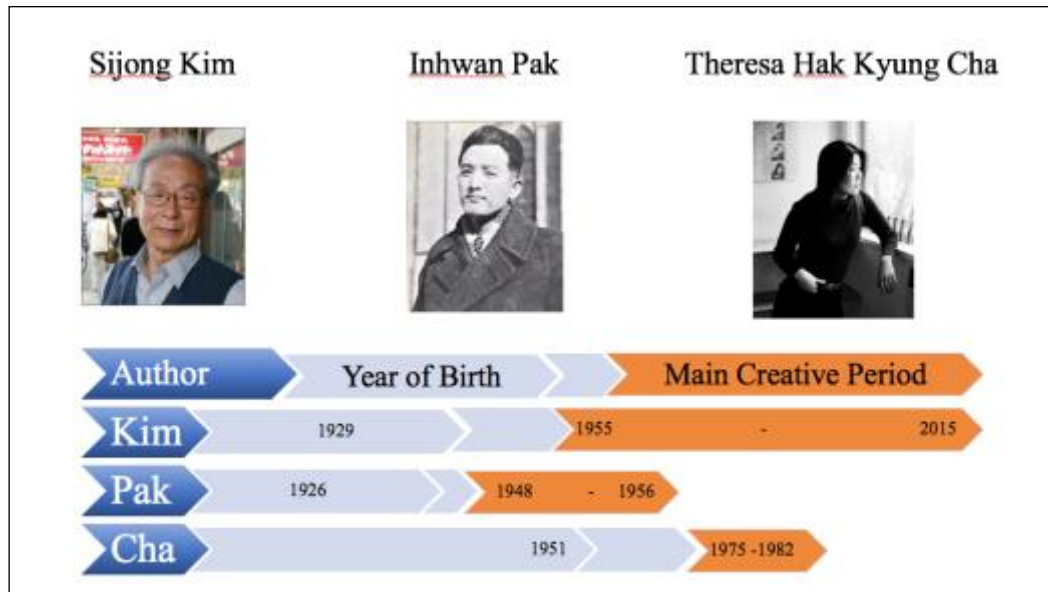


Figure 1. Three transpacific writers

These three writers share transpacific experiences of exile, migration, and travel across various historical contexts. The multilayered chronotopes of their literary works allow us to examine transpacific literature both diachronically and synchronically. I will examine those literary works in order to crystalize the notions of transpacific poetics, subjectivity, and geopolitics. In doing so, I will propose a concrete and persuasive model of transpacific literature.

Diachronically, I will re-contextualize the ways in which Asia and the Pacific were imagined from the Japanese colonial to the late Cold War periods by analyzing their literary works and many forms of prose writing such as autobiographical essays, travelogue, and interview. Their literary works and prose writing provide an insight into the ways in which Asia and the Pacific were imagined from the Japanese colonial to the late Cold War periods.

“Imagining” Asia and the Pacific means, as Rob Wilson puts it, “articulating a situated and contested social fantasy of the regions” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 236). Thus, imagining Asia and the Pacific involves ongoing transformations in the language and the space of identity by representing power, location, culture, and subjectivity. The Orientalist tradition of the West, Pan-Asianism originating from Japanese imperialism, the “Pacific Rim discourse” in the field of American Studies in the late Cold War period¹, and contemporary “transpacific studies”² have had regulative discursive power in the envisagement of Asia and the Pacific.

The above perspectives and their tropes have obliterated the diversity of Asia and the Pacific region and projected unreal homogenous attributes onto the region.³ More crucially, they are oblivious to the geopolitics of imperialism and colonialism that have marked the regions’ long history. Contemporary American Studies, among others, tends to decontextualize the traumatic history of Asia and the Pacific but valorize the capital flow between Asia and America as well as the Asia-Pacific economic dynamism under the influence of neoliberalism.⁴ I intend to problematize lingering imperialist legacies.

¹ According to Christopher L. Connery, the term ‘The Pacific Rim’ is almost exclusively an American usage. By 1973, it meant the United States and East Asia and the psychic center of the Pacific Rim are all parts of the United States-Japan relationship (Wilson and Dirlik 32). For details of the Pacific Rim discourse in American Studies, see Bruce Cumings, “Rimspeak; Or, the discourse of the ‘Pacific Rim’” (Dirlik 53-72) and Christopher L. Connery, “Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years” (Wilson and Dirlik 30-56).

² For transpacific studies, an emerging field of American studies, see Hoskin and Nguyen, *Transpacific Studies*.

³ For more comprehensive research on the pluralist-Asias, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s *Other Asias*.

⁴ Rob Wilson indicates that imagining Asia-Pacific today is “forgetting Colonialism and Cold War traumas in the magical free markets of the American Pacific” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 231-36). For the historical relations between the American dominion and the

This dissertation will investigate a critical genealogy of imagining Asia and the Pacific by analyzing three transpacific writers' literary works, in which the multilayered scars and traces of modern history are very densely inscribed.

TRANSPACIFIC POETICS

With regards to the theoretical and methodological frameworks, I will employ ideas put forth by various critical thinkers, including Deleuze and Guattari, Walter Benjamin, and Mikhail Bakhtin. Specifically, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical concepts, "minor literature," "becoming," "de/reterritorialization," "refrain," and "smooth space/striated space" will make a key contribution to formulating the poetics of transpacific literature. Benjamin's idea of history and critique of capitalist modernity will also contribute to theorizing transpacific literature. In analyzing transpacific subjectivity, Giorgio Agamben's philosophical discourse on "homo sacer" and "bare life" will be employed. Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the "carnivalresque," and "grotesque" will also be employed. Previous discussions of transnationalism and globalism will also shed light on these theoretical issues.

The three writers on whom this study focuses share the characteristics of "minor literature," which is articulated by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*.⁵ Kim's literary works are a representative example of "minor literature" in a East-Asian context. Kim was born in Korea during Japanese rule and educated in Japanese. He became a Korean exile in Japan after the Liberation due to his deep

Pacific, see Bruce Cummings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*.

⁵ For three characteristics of minor literature, see Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 16-18. For details on the concept of 'the minor' see, Bogue, "The Minor" in Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuz: Key Concepts*. pp. 110-20.

involvement with communist activities in the late 1940s in Korea. Although Japanese is not his native language, it is his first language from the cradle. However, he did not want to be “tamed” by the conventional Japanese language adopted by the majority of Japanese writers. Also, he does not adopt conventional genres such as tanka and haiku. His language is different from that of lyrical tanka and haiku. His poetry is historico-political and lengthy. He believed that his minor usage of Japanese was an act of revenge against the Japanese language. He says, “by extending the range of Japanese through its minor usage, I might present the new possibility of Japanese. At the very moment, my revenge will succeed” (Toyoko 213-14). Kim’s idea of the “minor usage” of Japanese is a “deteritorialization of language” in the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari 18).

Kim’s poem is deeply related to *Zainichi* history. The literal meaning of *Zainichi* is “living in Japan.” It refers in general to foreign citizens residing in Japan. However, this epithet specifically refers ethnic Koreans residing in Japan. *Zainichi* Koreans became exiled subjectivities not only physically and geographically but also psychologically as they underwent a process of displacement and alienation. The representation of *Zainichi* Koreans in Kim’s literary works and autobiographical essays resonates with Giorgio Agamben’s philosophical analysis in *Homo Sacer*. Noting the etymology of the word “life” in the works of Aristotle, Agamben emphasizes that the Ancient Greeks had two semantically distinct terms for it: “*zoe*, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and *bios*, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or group” (*Homo Sacer : Sovereign Power and Bare Life* 9). “Bare life,” the life of *Homo Sacer*, is neither *zoe* nor *bios*. It is produced when

biological life (*zoe*) is detached from ethico-political life (*bios*) by sovereign power. Bare life is the life that is excluded in the space that is supposed to guarantee its protection. All excluded forms of life are reduced to the status of bare life. As is widely accepted, the theory of sovereignty is the theory of the state. Exiled subjectivities in Kim's poetry and essays are marginalized and even excluded by both states, Korea and Japan. I will analyze the representation of such exiled subjects in view of Agamben's philosophical notions of bare life, the state of exception, and sovereignty.

Previous discussions of transnationalism in the context of globalism provide a useful theoretical background for examining Pak's work. The term "trans" is widely used today. All borders between nations, genders, races, and cultures are in doubt. Globalism seems to accelerate the blurring of borders and it requires radical change in the way in which we understand the world and practice within it. However, literature seems to persistently stay in the paradigm of nation-literature. In comparison with other art forms, which have digital reproducibility, literature should undertake the careful and relatively long process of translation in order to transgress national, cultural, and linguistic borders. Furthermore, a great deal of cultural, political, and linguistic misunderstanding arises through translation. This aspect may hinder the transgression of literature. In order to overcome an intra-national perspective on literature, an "exotopic" or transnational view should be adopted.

One of the widely-dispersed misconceptions concerning transnational literature is that the term refers only to a specific category of literature or a specific genre, which goes beyond national bounds, such as diaspora literature, travel literature, or multilingual literature. This is a narrow perspective in that transnational literature ultimately provides

a radical critique of national literature: transnational literature undermines national literature by criticizing the fundamental postulates of national literature, such as the author's national identity, the geographical concept of nation, and the concept of national language. First, a transnational perspective casts a doubtful gaze on any national essence or national character. Such an "essence" or "character" has been constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through historical processes. As is well known, national character was a concept popular in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Western social psychology and anthropology.⁶ This is part of the development of the modern concept of "nation" and its accompanying nationalism and national identity. Without a doubt, literature plays a crucial role in the formation of nationalism and national identity. Benedict Anderson aptly points out that print capitalism, which includes the literary establishment and the rise of the press, consolidates the unity of heterogeneous groups of people (Anderson 24-36). Literature, especially in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is an expression of national essence and national identity. The author is considered a literary genius who provides the resource of national identity via literary products. In the light of nationalism, an author cannot be understood apart from national identity; the author's national identity is one of the postulates of national literature. A transnational perspective calls into question relevance of an author's national identity in the global era. It is hard to deny that transnational socio-cultural movements take root

⁶ During the Second World War, the study of both friends and foes became intensified and "the national character" analysis was developed. However, the concept of national character was debated and criticized due to impossibility of generalizing and the need to take into account variations within national groups. Such categorizations just encourage ethnocentric attitudes by perpetuating inflexible definitions of national character. For the comprehensive history of 'national character' research, see Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture*.

among pre-existing social strata and everyday practices that shape identity, but transnational forces reshape identities in the modes of hybridity, bricolage, and creolization (Bermann and Wood 15-27).

Transnationalism also problematizes the idea of the nation as a place, which provides a sense of belonging associated with the place of origin. A transnational approach to literature reconceptualizes the sense of location, the nation. Location does not exist merely as a physical territory. It is intermingled with cultural historical experiences and various discursive practices. Henri Lefebvre's "space," Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus" (72-95), and Edward Said's "orientalism" show us how we reconceptualize place with regard to our own purpose or ideology. Transnationalism reconsiders the demarcation of "nation" within the imaginary dimension of geography. In the imagined geography, widely accepted hierarchical dichotomous demarcations such as inside and outside, the West and the East, the center and the periphery, and the national and the foreign are dismantled. They all turn out to be mutually interdependent in the imagination and in reality as well. Eventually, this transnational perspective on space deconstructs the territorial foundations of national literature.

The role of language in the discourse of nationalism is both powerful and complex. As a means of communication that is notably tied to national identity even when the nation has become diasporic, national language seems to enhance the solidarity of the national. However, a transnational perspective emphasizes the multiplicity and heterogeneity of language and its essential mobility. Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia emphasizes the fact that language within discourse cannot be reduced to the order of any single, self-authorized voice or code. For Bakhtin, every linguistic utterance

arises from a heteroglossic multitude of meanings, values, social discourses, cultural codes and so on. Put simply, there is no self-enclosed or monolithic language; every language has been historically constructed by the engagement of the heterogeneous (Bakhtin and Holquist 275-331). National literature gives the native speaker the authority to interpret literature through close reading. However, a transnational perspective does not focus on finalizing the meaning of literature based on a close reading in terms of the national language; rather, it is interested in revealing the meaning in motion, circulation, and adoption throughout the countries based on the creolity of language and oblique reading (Bhabha 1-7).

The Korean modernist poet, Inhwan Pak, who wrote in the 1940s and the 1950s, is an exemplary transnational writer who traverses the periphery and the center. As Jahan Ramazani puts it, transnational literature engages various issues, such as globalization, migration, travel, influence, modernity, decolonization, and diaspora (xi). Pak's poetry engages almost every issue that Ramazani discusses in *A Transnational Poetics* (xi). Pak came to the U.S. in 1955 and traveled primarily to cities on the northwestern coast, including Tacoma, Seattle, Everett, Anacortes, Port Angeles, and Portland. Although it was not a very long trip, it made a strong impression on Pak, because it was the very first time that he experienced modernity as the contemporaneity of "the center" of the world system.

Pak's transnational poems show us the possibility of cross-national micro-communities. There was an elective affinity between Pak, who was from the periphery, and an African-American from "the center." Their *sensus communis* is none other than melancholy. This melancholy does not refer just to an individual emotion, for it has been

forged by a hierarchical social structure. Melancholy in the poem below is the result of the hierarchy in the world.

“One day”

With a black man who bought a bottle of wine
For Easter on April 10th,
Passing through the forest of buildings,
Talking about Abraham Lincoln’s story,
I see an advertising poster of the movie
theatre.

-Carmen Jones -

.....
America - I thought it was the country of
Whitman, but
America – I thought it was the country of
Lincoln, but
As bitter tears flow,
“Brave Korean”, says
The blackman and drinks the wine⁷

Pak thought that America was the country of art represented by the great poet Walt Whitman, and the land of freedom and equality. Pak’s understanding of the United States represents his fantasized core. However, the reality is different. A member of the minority group at the center is crying bitterly in this poem. When the poet encounters the African American, he becomes disillusioned about the center. A bitter tear cracks the fantasized homogenous center and reveals one of its hidden aspects. In this poem, the

⁷ All translations of the Korean texts are my own.

center is “de-scribed,” and the poet from the periphery is “de-colonized” through an elective affinity with the minority from the center. Ironically, an affiliate community or a transnational micro-community is forged between them through the melancholy of *sensus communis*. The African American bought a bottle of wine to celebrate Easter, a festival and holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, the more significant implication in this context is that Christianity is the religious foundation of the United States, and that Easter is one of the important rituals of this religion. The African-American is, indeed, isolated from this crucial ritual and its spirit. The black man’s tear proves that the center of the world system is not homogenous. This social atmosphere of the core country provokes the African American man to melancholy and leads him to sympathize with the poet from the “Far East.” Their shared sense of alienation and melancholy create a transnational or cross-national community. Pak as a transnational subject can go beyond regional ethnocentrism and attain a pluri-local identity in melancholic sympathy.

I have found helpful Benjamin’s idea of history, theory of remembrance, and literary montage in analyzing the imagining transpacific imagination of the three writers. This is especially the case with Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s transpacific imagination, best exemplified by *Dictée*, which shows us how the transpacific experience is articulated in the form of the allegorical use of multiple languages and fragmented images. Her transpacific imagination traces back to her parents’ historical experiences in Korea, Manchuria, Hawaii, and California. Consequently, her transpacific remembrance ranges from the Japanese colonial period in Asia and the Pacific region to the late Cold War era in the United States. In her large-scale remembrance, individual historical and

geographical scenes are juxtaposed without any emplotment. Those fragmented and non-linear scenes can be considered the literary montage from which a historical image of the transpacific is elicited.

The way in which Cha presents the image of the transpacific reminds one of Benjamin's ideas of history. As is well known, Benjamin denies linear time which progresses from the past through the present into the future. Instead, he emphasizes a constructive time that consists of *jetzzeit* (now-time) of the past and of the present. For him, each moment of the past can be actualized as it is constructed with a moment of the present. In his last essay, "On the Concept of History," Benjamin says "the true image of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability" (Benjamin et al. 3: 390). Cha's *Dictée* seizes the historical image of the transpacific from the past and actualizes it in the present.

GENEALOGY OF IMAGINING ASIA-PACIFIC

The contemporary understanding of 'Orientalism' is derived from Edward Said's groundbreaking study *Orientalism*. This term refers to the myths and stereotypes produced by generations of Western writers, artists, and administrators of the Orient and the Oriental as exotic, indolent, devious, and untrustworthy. As is widely accepted, this is the way in which Euro-Americans' images of Asia have been constructed.⁸

Said's argument on Orientalism should be considered in relation to the concerns of his later work *Culture and Imperialism*. Here, Said persuasively argues that Orientalism is an outcome and effect of imperialism and is understood as a persuasive

⁸ For the ways in which European thinkers have imagined Asia, see Wang Hui's "The politics of imagining Asia" (Wang and Hutters 10-62).

influence on the present world. Even though the interpellation of imperial ideology on Asia has been radically reconsidered during the decolonization era under the influence of postcolonial discourses, its imperial perspective still seems to give Asia false-homogenous attributes.

In her recent book, *Other Asias*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak emphasizes that Asia cannot be reduced to only one regional identity; Asia should be reconsidered and refigured in all its plurality (213).⁹ She insists that “pluralized comparative Asian [cultural-regional] studies” (234-35) are required to deconstruct the false unity of the “Asias” and reconfigure the broad and heterogeneous spectrum of the plural “Asias.” Spivak herself grapples with the plurality of “[pluralist] Asias” through the mixed methodologies of comparative literary studies and regional studies in this book. In doing so, she undermines traditional Asian Studies in the West and the U.S. educational machine in particular, which is saturated with imperializing intellectual gestures.¹⁰

Area studies programs in the U.S. educational system were launched in the immediate post-World War II era to gather information and data about enemies. The hegemonic polity in this era was the nation-state, so the object of area studies was the particular national unit. Later, the investigation of area studies was extended to other regions in the world. The most distinctive areas of concentration were the Soviet Union, East Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa (Miyoshi and Harootunian 5). We

⁹ Spivak says that “we cannot expect root-searching or anti-colonialism to activate a new continentalism, not pan—but pluralist—imaginary, cultural, not directly productive of the political, although at the end of politics” (213).

¹⁰ For area studies as a prehistory of postcolonial studies, see Harootunian, “Postcoloniality’s Unconsciousness / Area Studies’s Desire” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 150-74).

may call the discipline with the above traits and history “traditional area studies,” which existed in the U.S. educational system from the 1950s to the 1970s.¹¹

According to H. D. Harootunian, traditional area studies failed to respond to changes introduced by postcolonial and cultural studies. Traditional area studies’ national unit also has been blurred in the global era, so transnationality and flexible-hybrid cultural identity has become more important than the putative homogenous nationality and national culture (Miyoshi and Harootunian 12-15).

Harootunian’s critique of traditional area studies echoes Spivak’s problematization of established Asian studies in the field of American education. Their theoretical and practical endeavors to deconstruct traditional area studies and the Orientalist metanarrative of Asia alert us to the pernicious effect of an ongoing ideological domination of the West by way of culture and its ruling representations. Its modification of the traditional perspective on area studies, which includes Asian Studies, parallels the stance of post-national American studies in terms of avoiding U.S. imperialism and one-way capitalist globalism. John Carlos Rowe, a leading scholar in American studies, emphasizes the necessity of comparative American studies to relativize American imperialism in the global era (Hoskins and Nguyen 134-50). Scholars who have similar views seem to suggest that a pluralistic exotopy may help overcome Euro-American centrism in the global era.

¹¹ H.D. Harootunian even argues that American education has never been freed from the Cold War narrative because “the Cold War can best be understood as a continuation of capitalism/imperialism that still goes on in the guise of neoliberalism and globalization” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 12).

An imperial vision of the region of Asia is not just an exclusive appropriation of the West. In the modern history of the transpacific area, the large-scale imperial ideology of Pan-Asianism is known as “the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (大東亞共榮圈 Dai-tō-a Kyōeiken),” as proposed by Japanese intelligentsias at the very beginning of the Pacific War.¹² This Pan-Asianism was, as Sven Saaler puts it, “a tool for legitimizing Japanese hegemony and colonial rule” in Asia (Saaler and Koschmann 1).¹³ As we shall see in Chapter III, the rhetoric of this imperial Pan-Asianism continued to be employed in various anticolonial Pan-Asianist poetry after the Pacific War. The trace of Japanese imperialism is one of the predicaments of Asian studies in Asia.

Starting in the mid-1970s, American studies also began to view ‘Asia-Pacific’ as a new critical space. In his recent book, *Dominion from Sea to Sea*, Bruce Cumings maintains that America’s relationship to the World and its ascendancy shifted from the transatlantic to the transpacific. Other significant Americanists, such as Rob Wilson and

¹² Pan-Asianism, as a general term, refers to a wide range of ideas and movements that called for the solidarity of Asian people and civilizations to counter Western influence in the late- nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. This notion is inevitably connected with modernity from the West. However, this general term should be differentiated from its imperial use in the 1940s.

¹³ Pan-Asianism in the history of Japan dates back to the Meiji era (1868-1912). Sven Saaler explains that Pan-Asian ideology was an omnipresent force throughout modern Japan’s foreign policy, and it was quintessential to the creation of Japanese identity (Saaler and Koschmann 2-3). In this sense, Pan-Asianism had a decisive influence on the course of Modern Japanese history. Japanese Pan-Asianism might be considered an early effort for regional integration. However, this discourse was largely discredited after the Pacific War, because this Pan-Asianism was appropriated as an ideological justification for Japan’s military expansionism under the banners of “the Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” and “New Order in East Asia.” For propaganda of “the Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” during the Pacific War in Japan, see, Barak Kushner (7-18).

Arif Dirlik, hybridize their research by imagining a new cultural space called “Asia-Pacific.”¹⁴

Asia-Pacific discourse has multiple genealogies, and we can better understand this region through multiple discursive trajectories such as Orientalism, modernity, the Cold War discourse, and globalization. However, as Donald M. Nonini persuasively puts it, American studies has reevaluated Asia-Pacific only as a space of capital flow and American geopolitics (Dirlik 73-96). That is why Harutoonian criticizes the new ‘Asia-Pacific paradigm’ in American studies as “an extension of America into the Pacific” and “reaffirmation of the utopia of a free-market space that is inscribed in the older model” (Miyoshi and Harootunian 15-16).

As a way of exploring Asia and the Pacific as a multi-layered cultural-historical space, I will reexamine representative transpacific literary products. The three writers’ micropractices of transnationality in their literary works have multiple, paradoxical or even irreverent relations with the economic transnationalism of contemporary empires along the Pacific Rim, which is known as ‘a form of transnationalism from above.’¹⁵ Their transnationality, transpacific-ity in particular, shows us the Pacific as a place of cultural transference and negotiation.

¹⁴ See Dirlik 15-36, 283-308; Wilson and Dirlik 1-14; Wilson and Dissanayake 312-36. For the stereotypical stance of ‘Asia-Pacific’ discourses in American Studies, see Bruce Cumings’ “Rimspeak; or, The Discourse of the ‘Pacific Rim’” (Dirlik 53-72) and Christopher L. Connery’s “Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years” (Wilson and Dirlik 30-56).

¹⁵ Transnational capital flow, global mass media, and emergent supra-national political institutions debilitate the nation-state “from above.” However, this compelling transnationalism from above “faces the decentering “local” resistances of the informal economy, ethnic nationalism, and grassroots activism” (Smith and Guarnizo 3-6).

I will investigate the autobiographical essays, poetry, and literary criticism of the first-generation *Zainichi* Korean (在日韓国人) writer, Sijong Kim (金時鐘, キム・シジョン) in chapter 2. His major autobiographical essays and literary criticism such as *ChōSen to Nihon Ni Ikiru: Chejutō Kara Ikaino E* (*The Life in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*) , *Waga Sei to Shi* (*Our Life and Poetry*) , and *At the interstice of Japan* (在日のはじぎまで) provide us with opportunities to reconsider transnational subjectivity in the historical context of modern East Asia. His recollections in these works contain fragments of the modern history of East Asia that are captured from a Korean perspective, such as Japanese colonial rule, the Pacific War, the Liberation, the Korean War, and the emergence of the communist movement in Japan. As Kim was seriously involved in communist demonstrations in South Korea and experienced severe violence under the U.S. military regime, he fled from the threat of the U.S. military regime and the extreme anti-communist South Korean provisional government, via the Pacific Ocean. In the aftermath of his exile to Japan, the Pacific emerged as a privileged image in his poetry and autobiographical essays. Throughout his literary works, the Pacific represents fragmented East Asian history and the Cold War era in particular, and state violence committed in Korea and Japan.

Kim's floating transnational subjectivity on the nation-state borders was formed amid socio-historical turmoil, and the scars of history are inscribed in his self-understanding as a diasporic writer. One of the main themes of Kim's poetry in *Niigata* (新潟) and *Ikaino Collected Poems* (猪飼野詩集) is nostalgia. Interestingly, his nostalgia is not for his home country, but for the specific places that are relevant to his diasporic life in Japan. His *Ikaino Collected Poems* is dedicated to a Korean diasporic

town in Osaka, Japan, which is no longer in existence today due to the Japanese forced expulsions of its inhabitants who were unwelcomed immigrants. His poetry is an archive of cultural memories of Ikaino dwellers.

This archive is investigated in view of the politics of representation, nostalgia, the construction of the fluid transnational subjectivity, and the poetics of transpacific literature. Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as “a longing for a place but it is a yearning for a different time” (19). For Kim, his nostalgia for Ikaino is a longing for a qualitatively different time from the Japanese imperial period and the Cold War period in which Ikaino, the Zainichi Korea town, was forcefully established.

In chapter 3, I will focus on the poetry and travel writings of Inhwan Pak, who came to the U.S. in 1955 and visited cities on the West coast. His transnational poetry provides critical perspective on colonial Pan-Asianism and the capitalist modernism of the U.S.

In the late 1940s, Pak’s main theme in his poetry is the solidarity of Asia and its emancipation from European colonizers. His notion of Asia is, surprisingly, similar to that of expressed in Japanese Pan-Asianism. Pak’s notion of Asia is posited in the context of the late 1940s anti-colonial war period. He foregrounds Pan-Asia not for its similarity to Japanese imperialism, but for anti-colonialism against European countries. However, its ideological structure and tropes are similar to those of Japanese imperial discourse on Pan-Asia and its power to overcome Western modernity. I will discuss Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism and its changes in the anti-colonial period as they are reflected in Inhwan Pak’s poetry.

Pak's notion of Asia and Western modernity sharply changed after the Korean War. This change culminates during his travels in America in 1955. Pak traversed the periphery and the center of the World in the 1950s. This travel made a strong impression on him, because it was the very first time that he experienced modernity as contemporaneity of "the center" of the World. He wrote poems throughout the journey and published them under the title of *Amerik'a sich'o* (*America: Selected Poems*). His poetic works on his experience at the center of the world system can be approached as a rich archive of transnational literature.

Pak's poetry allows a re-examination of the cultural landscape of the U.S. in the 1950s and its modernity from the perspective of a literary intelligentsia from the periphery. The images of the U.S., and Pak's shocking experience triggered by the spectacular urban culture, sublime nature, and the splendid capitalist everyday life of the U.S. will be analyzed. Pak's critical observation of the capitalist modernity of the U.S. and his elegiac-nostalgic nationalism will also be scrutinized. The characteristics of transnational subjectivity, such as an ambivalent attitude toward the nation-state, the possibility of a transnational micro-community, and critical melancholy will be described as well.

In the penultimate chapter, I will examine the works of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, a prominent Korean American author, video artist, and performer. Her avant-garde novel *Dictée*, which is a document-image-fictional writing assemblage, has been included in almost every Asian American literature course syllabus in the United States. *Dictée*'s experimentalism has received a great deal of attention from Asian American literary scholars, feminists, and post-colonialists. The previous research, however, overlooks its

poetics, its idea of history, and the geopolitics of the transpacific. Modern Asian history of Japanese imperialism, the Pacific War, the division of Korea, and the transpacific emigration of Asians, are ubiquitously embedded in Cha's text. The geopolitical images in her work, which covers the entire Pacific Rim, have been enhanced by her autobiographical remembrance. In the chapter "Caliope-Epic," for instance, Cha recounts her own parents' crossing of national borders and wandering around Manchuria, Hawaii, and California. Cha describes the intense transnational movement of her family with a juxtaposition of various genres, such as retrospective writing, pictures, letters, and poetry. This continuous migrational experience forms her transpacific subjectivity. Cha's experimental art lucidly shows us how the image of Asia can be connected with the Pacific and how transpacific subjectivity was formed in the context of modern Asian history, especially the Japanese colonial period and the Cold War period.

"Corporeality, Cha says, "corporeality is nothing but written" (132). This statement resonates with the Deleuzoguattarian concept of "incorporeal transformation," which is attributed to the bodies of society (80). Examining her notion of corporeality, one encounters the fact that it is a constructive discourse which has been formed by transpacific-migrational action and diasporic passion. Even though Cha's subjectivity blurs distinct borders, such as nationality and continent, this corporeality has a cartographical background, so it could be called "transpacific Asian corporeality."

In the last chapter, these three writers' literary works' poetics will be compared with each other. In doing so, common attributes will emerge, helping theorize transpacific literary works and the image of Asia and the Pacific in modern Asian history.

Also, transpacific subjectivity will be discussed by analyzing the literary works of Kim, Pak, and Cha.

My dissertation will articulate fundamental elements of a poetics of transpacific literature. This dissertation diachronically reconstructs the historically imagined Asia and the Pacific from three transpacific writers. As mentioned above, contemporary Asia-Pacific studies overlook or decontextualize the colonial trauma which has been deeply inscribed in its long history. Considering multilayered histories of the region, I will re-contextualize the genealogy of imagining Asia and the Pacific region. By doing this, my dissertation will produce a critical perspective on Asia in the fields of Asian Studies and comparative literature and will offer a critique of the Cold War ideology and capitalistic America in the 1950s as an example of the “counter-memory” and “counter-history” of neo-imperial American studies.¹⁶

¹⁶ In the terminology of Yunte Hwang, this counter-narrative could be called “counterpoetics” (99).

CHAPTER 2

SIJONG KIM'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS AND POETRY: ZAINICHI, ETHNO-HISTORICAL ARCHIVE, IMAGINING THE PACIFIC, AND THE POETICS OF BECOMING

In the voices we hear, isn't there an echo of now silent ones?

- Walter Benjamin (4: 390)

In this chapter, I investigate the *Zainichi* Korean writer Sijong Kim's (金時鐘, キム・シジョン, 1929-) autobiographical essays, dialogues, and poetry.¹⁷ For this task, the concept of "Zainichi" has to be explained first. Referring to "living in Japan," "Zainichi" has a specific connotation that is different from the hybrid-identity in American multiculturalism. Zainichi is an exclusive epithet that refers to non-Japanese citizens and Korean in particular. Many Koreans emigrated to Japan following the annexation of Korea in 1910 by Japan, which made all Koreans Japanese citizens. Japan's lack of manpower during the Pacific War led to a forced conscription of Koreans, who were displaced to Japan to work in factories and on farms, often in oppressive circumstances. The Government-General's mobilizing of Koreans was first accomplished

¹⁷ Niigata (新潟), *Poems of Ikaino* (猪飼野詩集), *In the Interstices of Zainichi* (在日の
はじぎまで), *Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino* (朝鮮と日本で
生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ), and *Our Life and Poetry* (わが生と詩)

through voluntary enlistment and later through conscription.¹⁸ By the end of the war, nearly two million Koreans were in Japan, and many were quickly repatriated. With the end of the war, Koreans living in Japan were no longer Japanese citizen. So their citizenship reverted back to Korean. More than 600,000 Koreans remained in Japan throughout the postwar turmoil, acquiring the *Zainichi* epithet (Ryang and Lie 21). They have lived with multiple identities. They have divided into factions following the North-South divide of Korea and are ambivalent about their Korean identities in the Japanese context. Under the huge influence of Cold War ideology, the *Zainichi* label became dichotomous, splitting into *Zainichi Chōsenjin* (在日朝鮮人) and *Zainichi Kankokujin* (在日韓国人) that refer to North and South Koreans respectively. As Kim puts it, from the beginning, the *Zainichi* existence itself was political (Suzuki and Oiwa 180). It cannot be understood apart from East Asian history. In other words, the entity of the *Zainichi* originated from the historical turmoil of modern East Asian history, which has gone through colonialism, World War II, the Korean War, and the Cold War (see fig. 3). It can be said that the history of modern East Asia is folded into the existence of the *Zainichi*.¹⁹

¹⁸ To see participation rates of Koreans in the Japanese military and those who supported wartime industries before and during the Pacific War, see Brandon Palmer's recent comprehensive studies.

¹⁹ After the first generation, the concept of *Zanichi* became more complex. Japanese-born generations were born "as strangers in a foreign land, a land that may have become their cultural and practical home, but was not their homeland." See Ryang and Lie, p. 3

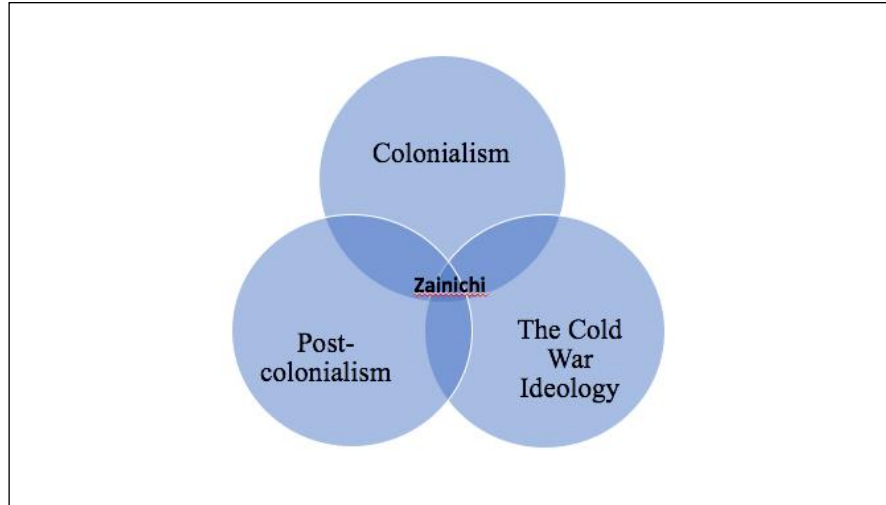


Figure 2. Zainichi is a transnational entity that reflects modern East Asian history.

A PORTRAIT OF A ZAINICHI WRITER: KIM'S TRANSNATIONAL SUBJECTIVITY

Sijong Kim was a political exile and is now viewed as one of the first generation of Zainichi Korean writers. His entire body of work, prose, and poetry, is written in Japanese. Kim's autobiographical essays, literary criticism, and poetry provide us with opportunities to approach transnational subjectivity, the politics of nostalgia, the language of exile, and transpacific poetics in the historical context of modern East Asia. This is due to the fact that his memoirs and literary works span the colonial period to the post-colonial diasporic life as a political exile in Japan. His floating transnational subjectivity on the borders of several nation-states was formed amid the great socio-historical turmoil, and the inexpugnable historical trauma is inscribed in his self-identification as a Zainichi diasporic writer.

Kim spent his boyhood in Korea as a colony of Japan. In his memoir, *Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*, he remembered having been an “imperial youth

(皇国少年)” rather than a Korean. He remembered his desire to make himself into a worthy child of the emperor, so he was willing to attend a military school and become a soldier (40). In 1938, the Japanese Government-General in Korea strengthened the *Naisen Ittai* (内鮮一體, literally, Japan-Korea, one body) policy, which was a radical assimilation strategy under wartime conditions meant to mobilize Koreans for the 2nd Sino-Japanese War following the Pacific War. The colonial education system was an effective tool to disseminate to Koreans the spirit that was necessary in the modern total-war circumstances. From that time, as Mark Caprio explains, “the focus of Korean education shifted from training students as members of the local (Korean) community to training them as members of Japan’s extended empire” (Caprio 153). Japanese imperial ideology interpellated Koreans as loyal “nation-people,” and Kim was one of the subjects who responded to this call. Indeed, he was a child of that era. However, his father was strongly against Kim’s decision to become a soldier, so the boy ended up applying to a teacher’s school as his father wished (朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino] 40-46).

Meanwhile, the Korean language, whether spoken or written, was strictly banned from the school system in 1938, and Japanese was the only “national language” during the entire colonial period. In 1945, after four decades of Japanese colonial rule, liberation came to Korea, and Sijong Kim, then a 17-year-old “imperial youth,” was suddenly inundated with the Korean language, which he had never used, but yet learned in public settings. The homeland was liberated from the colonizer, but the Japanese language has remained indelibly in him. In an autobiographical essay, Kim even says, “my body embraces a memory colored through Japanese, and it even awakes a bit of nostalgia” (朝

鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*] 46). However, Japanese became a taboo language once Korea was liberated. He had lost the use of the Korean language during the colonial period and now he lost Japanese, which was initially imposed on him, but nonetheless nourished his mind and emotions later in the post-colonial period. We might say that Kim experienced the double losses of speech through these colonial and postcolonial eras.

After the liberation, Kim became a member of communist party in South Korea. When Sijong Kim became seriously involved in the “April 3rd Uprising” on Cheju Island in 1948, Cheju Islanders, including Kim experienced severe state-violence in the name of anti-communism. The violence was committed by the extreme anti-communist South Korean provisional government and the United States Army Military Government, which was the sole legal authority in South Korea at the time. In South Korea, Cold War ideology was synonymous with anti-communist ideology, and the state used violence to enforce it. About 60,000 people died as a result of the uprising, 40,000 others fled to Japan, and officially 39,258 homes were demolished (H. J. Kim 13). Bruce Cumings estimates that “one in every five or six islanders had perished, and more than half the villages were destroyed” (“The Question of American Responsibility for the Suppression of the Chejudo Uprising” 20).

Kim also fled from the threat of the U.S. military regime through the Cheju Sea. His father urged him to embark on a small and very old fishing boat as a way of smuggling him out of Korea to Japan. Arriving on the shores of Japan, Kim went to Osaka and settled in the old, traditional Korean town of Ikaino on the outskirts of Osaka. Then, he joined the Japanese Communist Party, dedicated himself to communist activities. In this

communist group, Kim started his public career as a poet (S. Kim 朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*] 230-54).²⁰ Sijong Kim eagerly participated in communist activities as a member of a small literary group. This group published several magazines called “*Jindare* (ヂンダレ)” and “*Kaion* (カリオン),” which are considered the origin of Zainichi literature (JindareKenkyūkaihen 32-44). All of the works in the magazines were written in Japanese. After the Korean War, North Korea’s doctrinaire policy on literary creation and nationalistic “Juche” ideology²¹ excluded Kim and his literary works written in Japanese because he was not subject to their doctrinaire policy on literature and did not welcome the idolization of Kim Il-sung, the leader of North Korea at that time.²² Finally, he and his literary works were abandoned by the North Korean communist group in Japan (S. Kim 朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*] 281-83). As mentioned above, Kim was exiled to Japan, the former colonizer, because he was committed to the communist movement in South Korea

²⁰ For Kim’s literary works, criticism, and his communist activities as a writer in the 1950s, see チンダレ研究会, 「在日」と50年代文化運動—幻の詩誌『ヂンダレ』『カリオン』を読む.

²¹ “Juche (literally self-reliance)” is the official state ideology of North Korea. It was designed in the 1950s in order to depart from the huge influence of the Soviet-Union. It defined the characteristic of North Korean national identity as “self-reliance.” This ideology plays a crucial role in sustaining the state’s monocratic system with its complementary ideology “yuiljido ch’eje (monolithic guidance system). For North Korea’s national identity in the 1950s, see Saadia, pp. 439-443.

²² Sijong Kim argues that pseudo-Korean guided by North Korea cannot be the language of Zainichi because Japanese is, whether we like it or not, already embedded in the Zainichi’s body. He insists that the creator of Zainichi literature is the person who consciously explores and expresses Japanese with a specific purpose. For Sijong Kim’s idea of the Japanese language in the 1950s, see Yun, Kōn-ch’a, “Zainichi” *No Seishinshi* vol.2, pp.73-74.

where the postwar “Red Scare” reached its highest pitch. After being abandoned by the communist group that was subjected to the directions of North Korea, Kim was distanced from every nation-state with which he might have had ties. As Seo Joong-Seok aptly observes, North and South Korea took bipolar trajectories that were characterized by anti-communism and Juche ideology in the 1950s. Cold War ideology was inevitably connected with political legitimacy in the two Koreas (9-18). These ideological oppressions during the Cold War era heavily influenced Kim’s life, compelling him to live his entire life as an exile. He has lived on the multiple national borders of Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. His transnational subjectivity is overdetermined by the multiple ideologies and *zeitgeist* that have shaped East Asian history and culture. Thus, his portrait is problematic and emblematic as well.

POEMS OF IKAINO: ETHNO-HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF ZAINICHI

As an exile at the risk of his own life, Sijong Kim settled in Ikaino, which was the oldest and the largest Korean neighborhood in Japan at the time.²³ Many Cheju Islanders emigrated to the Osaka area, hoping for a better job in the prewar era. Their voluntary emigration was accelerated after a ferry named Kimigayomaru (君が代丸) launched its service between Osaka and Cheju Island in 1923 so that Osaka, and Ikaino in particular, became a large Korean neighborhood. The Korean population of Osaka increased through the Japanese government’s compulsory mobilization of Korea during the Pacific War. After Liberation, a huge number of Koreans who did not repatriate flew into Ikaino to

²³ Ikaino, the earliest Korean ghetto [buraku] appeared by the early 1890s. For the origins of the Korean population in modern Japan and Ikaino, see John Lie’s *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity*, pp. 4-12. For interesting oral testimonies of the first generation of Zainichi Koreans and Ikaino residents, see Yi, Bung-ŏn’s *Zainichi Issei* (2005).

capitalize on the network of established Korean neighborhoods. In addition, the unstable political circumstances of the Korean peninsula before and after the Korean War also caused considerable expatriation. Many exiles such as Kim arrived in Osaka and settled in the Ikaino neighborhood.

The Zainichi in Ikaino suffered from poverty and discrimination. As John Lie describes, most ethnic Koreans in Osaka were from the southern part of Korea, and most of them were peasants who mainly engaged in menial work, such as mining and construction. Their wages were often much lower than those of ethnic Japanese. They were ill-educated and illiterate. In his comprehensive socio-historical research on Zainichi, Lie says that “[B]ecause of poverty and discrimination, migrants congregated in Korean ghettos [buraku]” (5). Ikaino was the oldest Korean ghetto in Japan. Ikaino was a shanty town, the least desirable site in Osaka, and the Zainichi’s life there was precarious. Kim remembered wretched, filthy, and crowded Ikaino in the 1950s:

Near the end of the year [1949], I moved into a middle aged couple's house, adjoined with chicken coop-like houses in the South of Ikaino. It was a wooden floored, one bedroom in a shanty. It was an inconceivably impoverished life for Zainichi Koreans. Dozens of families resided in this temporary boarding house, sharing only one water pipe. Because the waterspout is behind the public restroom, when it rains, feces rises from the hole where people collected drinking water. It overflows onto the concrete floors. It's hard to believe this is a suitable place for people to live in. It seems like an alienated island tucked away in the back alley of the

city.²⁴ (朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*]; my trans.; 246)

This shanty town was isolated and discriminated against in Japanese society. However, it was a nostalgic locality for all the Zainichi, who had to rely on each other for work, food, and everything to survive in Ikaino. In other words, the Zainichi, including Kim, created a close-knit, self-contained world of their own--the Ikaino neighborhood of Osaka. It was a miniature version of home inside the foreign country and became the heart of Zainichi nationalism. According to Melissa L. Wender, “Ikaino has almost iconic stature” and “served as a center of both political and literary activity” (Wender 91). However, this town is no longer in existence today. The post-war redesigning of the urban landscape systematically excluded a shanty town. The Ikaino neighborhood was split up and merged into other cities, eventually disappearing altogether from the Osaka map.

Kim’s *Poems of Ikaino* (猪飼野詩集), which was published in 1978, contains memoirs of the invisible town from this period. This collection of poems addresses the shanty dwellers’ everyday life, which was filled with various antithetical tensions: discrimination and resistance, assimilation and stubborn cultural nationalism, struggling for survival and chronic poverty, an unwelcoming diasporic home and nostalgia for a homeland. *Poems of Ikaino* is an archive of cultural memories of the Zainichi throughout

²⁴ All translations of the Japanese texts are my own.

the prewar and postwar eras. In this sense, *Poems of Ikaino* is a work of anthropological and ethnohistorical value.

Zainich Koreans' politico-administrative status in postwar Japan was always precarious. Most importantly, Japan and Korea had no official diplomatic relations until 1965. The Japanese government recognized Zainichi Koreans as "Chosen people" of a provisional nationality derived from the name of the premodern dynasty in Korea. Japan and South Korea normalized their relations in 1965, but North Korea was excluded.

Most Zainichi could be considered "bare life" in the view of Giorgio Agamben. At the beginning of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben observes that "Greeks had no single term to express what we mean by the word 'life.'" Instead, they had two terms: "zoe" and "bios." Zoe refers to "[the] simple fact of living common to all living beings," and bios expresses "the form or way of living proper to an individual or group" which relates to ethics and politics (1). Agamben's concept of "bare life," however, is neither zoe, nor bios; it is produced when zoe is separated from bios. This separation is operated by sovereign power and its intervention. In other words, bare life is naked biological life stripped of its political status; therefore, it exists at the limits of dominant ethical and political categories. This life is internally excluded within the political sphere.

Agamben's definition of bare life sheds light on the ontology of the Zainichi, which Kim represents in his poems. Zainichi were removed from the continuum of social activity and communal legislation. The only law that applied to them was casting them irrevocably out of the public sphere. This fragile position of Zainichi in postwar Japan is portrayed in the poem "Ikaino Song 1." This poem epitomizes the bare life of Zainichi from the 1950s to the 1970s:

“Ikaino Song 1”

Escaping from the dirty and cramped place like a chicken coop.

Where he left for the past 16 years

A man returns to Ikaino

Wherever he goes,

he can't erase his Korean identity.

His last result is to always fight

It's the same every day

Meth, battery, criminal records all pile up

Bartender,

sewing factory,

he hurriedly applies for another sweepstakes event.

Again, a bartender.

Since he can't hide his Korean identity anyway,

he openly embraces it

living reckless

He slowly climbed Dokaido

but now he wanders and comes down.

He doesn't forget to trim his

English-like mustache.

As he gets lost here and there

did he eventually end up at Ikaino?

One man returns to a chicken coop

as cramped and dirty²⁵

What is intriguing about this piece is that Kim does not portray Ikaino as a location of “an ‘abject’ and ‘bare life.’” Rather, he describes the shanty town as being part of Zainichi’s vibrant and carnivalesque ethnicity. His remembrance of Ikaino can be found in the poem “Invisible Town.” This is a long poem that crystalizes the multifaceted city of Ikaino. Despite its length, the poem deserves to be quoted in its entirety, given its significance.

“Invisible Town”

The town doesn’t exist anymore, but still seems to remain

The town entirely disappeared

The train is running as far away as possible,

Only a crematory is swiftly installed close by

Everyone knows it yet

It’s not on the map

It’s not on the map so

It is not Japan

It is not Japan so

It will be fine even if it did disappear

Nobody cares so,

²⁵ Kim, *Gen'ya No Shi: ShūSei Shishū (Poetry of Wilderness: Complete Work of Poetry)*, pp. 134-41.

We do as we please.

.....

A local accent is going around, with no shame

Even each bowl has its own garrulous mouth

Huge stomachs

gobble up from nose to tail, even to the corneum of the hoof, as if they are
hormones.

“I took the whole nutrition of Japan,”

proudly bragging

.....

The people and the bus avoid the town

Not even the police can go in and out

Once it closes

the mouth does not open again

It's not easy

to find

A shunned

Neighborhood

So, would you not come?

Of course, there would not be a sign

One way to find it is through recollection

When was the

last time we used this name?

I ran hurriedly and erased it

Ikaino is therefore in my heart

There is no resentment because we were abandoned

There is not even stubbornness because it got erased

Even if you call it by a different name

Ikaino is

Ikaino

It is only easy for people with sensitive noses to find

You ask where it is in Osaka

If I say Ikuno, would you understand?

.....

A bow-legged girl blocks the road

Japanese that is not like Japanese

Yelling, Yelling, she's yelling

No Japanese person can live here anymore

The whole of Japan runs away

.....

The whole neighborhood is stuffed with

the stench of kimchi

Ikaino masked as Yukata

They suck on a mint

They go for a walk

.....

We live by wandering day to day, stretching out our rhizomes

We cannot even erase the hometown we now don't even desire

Ikaino is

throwing up methane gas in one breath

Intertwined

rhizomes entangled on top of the rock

Arrogance on the face of *Zanichi*

The savage's field that cannot be tamed

There's always something overflowing from that place

Otherwise, they will wilt

The Korean Neighborhood that loves to stir commotion

Once they start

Three days and three nights

The sound of gongs and drums overflow from the strange neighborhood

Shaman still rampaging in

The primitive town

It's open wide

As bold as it is

The sadness can be blown away anytime

Far away in Japan, the Korean town
Seen crystal clear at night
but cannot be seen by people
who have never seen it before.²⁶

This poem depicts the Korean town Ikaino in great detail. As mentioned above, Ikaino was occupied by Koreans, an unwelcomed minority in Japan. The town was an historic place that retained the Zainichi's immense collective suffering, encapsulating such nightmarish experiences as compulsory mobilization, discrimination, and chronic poverty. Ikaino was evacuated in 1973, and it disappeared from the public sphere. Kim started this poem with the [in]visibility of the town; "[Ikaino] is not on the map/ It's not on the map so / It is not Japan / It is not Japan so / It will be fine even if it did disappear / Nobody cares so, / We do as we please." These lines clearly indicate that Ikaino was isolated from and discriminated by mainstream Japanese society. But the "so" at the end of the second sentence could be interpreted as "so what?," expressing the poet's rebellious tone. In other words, Ikaino may have been erased from the official Japanese map, but it is not erased from the town dwellers' collective memory. The Japanese might want it to be gone, but the Zainichi are bringing it back for themselves and everyone to know because they hold the memory and the power now, and it is not washed off their "map" because the Zainichi cannot erase their home away from home, Ikaino. What is at stake here is the intersection between poetics and politics. Sijong Kim's mnemonic poem

²⁶ Kim, *Gen'ya No Shi: ShūSei Shishū (Poetry of Wilderness: Complete Work of Poetry)*, pp. 125-34.

seems to rebelliously empower the vanished ethnic culture of Ikaino.

The Japanese language of the Ikaino dwellers was de-territorialized by the Korean language and the Cheju Island dialect in particular. According to Hyun Kim, a young Korean sociologist, the ferry between Cheju Island and Osaka, launched in April 1923, accelerated a mass immigration of Cheju Islanders to Osaka.²⁷ In addition, almost 60,000 Cheju Islanders were exiled to Osaka due to the Cheju Massacre in April 1948, and many of them settled in Ikaino. This successive immigration, displacement, and exile colored Ikaino with the culture of Cheju Island. Among others, the Osaka dialect was intermixed with the Cheju dialect. The “local accent” referred to in the above poem seems to indicate to the de-territorialized and Cheju Island-influenced the Japanese dialect spoken by the Zainichi. Kim describes such a language as “Japanese that is not like Japanese.” This can be taken as an exact description of de-territorialized Japanese.

Sijong Kim deliberately exaggerates the people’s poverty and hunger in the following stanza: “Even each bowl has its own garrulous mouth / Huge stomachs /gobble up from nose, to tail, even to the corneum of hoof, as if they are hormones / ‘I took the whole nutrition of Japan,’/ proudly bragging.” Here, the Zainichi’s poverty and starvation are grotesquely transformed into a great appetite. The literal meaning of Ikaino is “the field of pig farming.” Ikaino was well-known for its pig farming industry. Simply put, pork was an easily-accessible food source. However, the poor Zainichi could not afford to purchase pork or beef. According to many oral statements from the first generation of Zainichi, they suffered from starvation and could barely afford the

²⁷ According to Kim Hyun, almost 10,000 Cheju Islanders emigrated to Osaka every year after the ferry Kimimonomaru was put into service in 1923.

discarded parts of pork or beef, such as the nose, tail, and entrails. The Zainichi grilled these parts and ate them outdoors. They called the grilled discarded pork entrails “horumon (ホルモン) yaki.”²⁸ Over time, “horumon” became a symbolic word for the Zainichi community, connoting their identity.²⁹ This food is currently known as “Yakiniku (焼肉),” and Yakiniku restaurants refer to Korean restaurants in Japan (Ryang *Eating Korean in America : Gastronomic Ethnography of Authenticity* 71).

Kim’s hyperbolic description of the Zainichi’s great appetites resonates with the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque and its sub-categorical notion of the grotesque body that “swallows, devours, and rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world’s expense” (Bakhtin 281). The “huge stomach” gobbling up discarded meat is the metonymy of the Zainichi’s grotesque bodies. The Zainichi’s appetite and thirst depicted in Kim’s poem convey a strong carnivalesque spirit. The grotesque body image appears in the following lines: “A bow-legged girl blocks the road / Japanese that is not like Japanese / Yelling, Yelling, she's yelling / No Japanese person / can live here anymore / The whole of Japan runs away.” Here, “the ‘bow-legged girl’” is a carnivalesque figure. She yells repeatedly in the creolized Japanese language. Her wild temper even marginalizes Japanese residents. Japanese residents and their authoritative utterances are mocked and degraded by the caricatured “bow-legged” girl’s energetic shouts. This

²⁸ Here, “horumon (放る物)” means “things to be discarded.”

²⁹ The word “horumon” is deeply linked to Zainichi identity. The title of the magazine, which Osaka Korean residents published from September 1990 to September 2000, was “ほるもん文化 (Horumon Culture).” This shows that the Zainichi community considered the word “horumon” symbolic of their ethnicity. For the magazine “ほるもん文化”, see Yang, Myung Sim’s article “Korean Residents in Japan and the Place of Ikaino—Focusing on the Magazines Published by Korean Residents in Japan”

carnavalesque figure is followed by a masquerade motive: “The whole neighborhood is stuffed with / the stench of kimchi / Ikaino masked as Yukata / They suck on a mint / They go on a walk.” The personified Ikaino is in yukata (浴衣) and sucking on menthol (仁丹) as if this neighborhood belongs to the Japanese. Yukata is a light cotton kimono (着物) worn in the summer or used as a bathrobe. However, the neighborhood “is stuffed with the stench of kimchi.” Foods can serve as emblems of a cultural group. In this poem, kimchi, Koreans’ staple food, is an “emblem food” that cannot be separated from the ethnic identity of the Zainichi.³⁰ This image refers to persistent ethnic identity of Ikaino dwellers. This image then is a parody of the Japanese. Now, the Zainichi masquerade as Japanese and parade along Ikaino street. The established hierarchy and socio-economic classes between Japanese and Zainichi are abolished by the carnivalesque figure and the parodied shanty town.

Kim’s poem also puts emphasis on the ethno-shamanic ritual that lasts for three days and nights. Ikaino is described as a primitive town in which shamans (called “*mudang*” in Korean) and shamanic rituals still have influence. The Korean shamanic ritual called “*kut*” is the origin of all Korean oral myths and folk music. Choi Won-Oh, a leading scholar of comparative mythology in Korea, even says that “no Korean oral myths would exist without the *kut*” (Choi vii). In this sense, “*kut*” plays a significant role in enhancing the ethnic locality of Ikaino and passing it down to the next generations. Performances of oral epics, folk-music, and dances are common to the shaman rites. Serving as representative folk and religious festivals, they are enjoyed by the people. As

³⁰ For further discussion of various terms such as “emblem food” and “insider food” relevant to the analysis of the roles food plays in ethnic identity, see Robert A. Leonard and Wendy J. Saliba’s “Food and Ethnic Identity Theory” (Leonard 155-63).

Chung Chai-Sik puts it, the popular culture of the masses in the Chosŏn dynasty was based on shamanistic tradition (Wells 62). The three-days-and-nights shamanic rite mentioned in Kim's poem was a festival celebrated in Ikaino. Kim emphasizes its festivity, which is inevitably linked to the ethnic locality of the Zainichi town. This shaman rite juxtaposes the notions of an "untamed savage's field" and "primitive town." It reveals the coarse and primitive ethnic culture of Ikaino. The Zainichi town described in this poem refuses to be tamed, strongly retaining its ethnic locality. Kim deploys various poetic strategies to revel in this locality. They include the ethno-gastronomy, carnivalesque figures, parody, ethno-shamanic rite, and de-territorialized language. In all these ways, the poem "Invisible town" can be considered an exemplary poetic account of the Korean diasporic community in Japan.

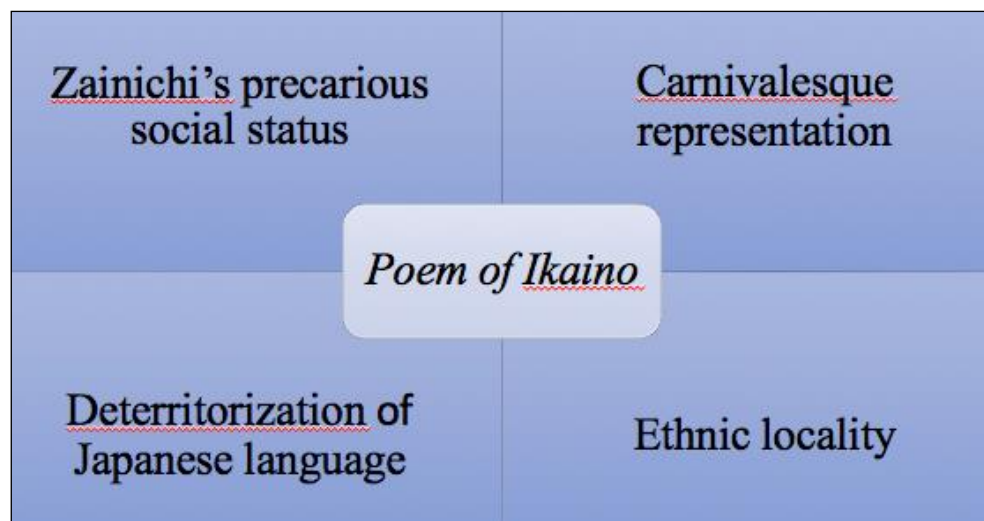


Figure 3. Poetics of *Poem of Ikaino*

The "primitive" town of Ikaino is treated in another poem titled "Ikaino Tokkaebi" as a town where the Korean goblin, called "tokkaebi," is still alive and still

wreaking havoc among the people. The tokkaebi are mischievous spirits that appears in many Korean folk tales and myths. They often carry a club or mallet, rewarding good people and punishing the bad.

“Ikaino Tokkaebi”

There is a chance that

You could encounter him.

For innocent readers,

I will talk quietly about this.

You will not wander around

the city dressed casually.

If he is in a bad mood,

you will be forced to be naked

in the middle of the road.

.....

Your clothes are easily taken off

It is always Korean people

pretending to be Japanese

people in the street that

applaud with their hands up!

.....

Ikaino Tokkaebi

has a twisted mind.

You better believe it.
Only I know the theory of
the injury case
On the last train last night.
A lady by herself
was being wrestled by a guy.
She was getting weal, but everyone let it be.
All the guys around here
turned a blind eye to her
and were just getting drunk.
Finally, tokkaebi lost his patience.
Suddenly, he clinched tight and shoved the guy.
Two gentlemen
who seemed thoughtful
were sitting on both sides.
What are you doing!
Sitting up,
they ogled
the unexpected violence!
Clapping their hands
as if they were saying my fellow!
He once directly
kneaded the drunken man

leaning on
choking the
Japanese!
The train stopped.
It left deliberately.
You said that
you are going to the Ocean Expo
Even if things go wrong,
you better not speak ill of the Korean.
He has
a quicker ear
than an antenna!
Ikaino Tokkaebi is
Elusive.

The folklore is generated and performed in a specific group. In the above poem, the tokkaebi plays the important role of expressing the collective concerns of the Zainichi by representing Korean cultural forms and ethnicity. Kim foregrounds the ethnic locality of Ikaino by introducing this tokkaebi, a folkloric spirit, in the poem. The tokkaebi comes down on the side of the Koreans and makes mischief for the Japanese and people who act unkindly to others. Hence, it can be said that this goblin acts for the marginalized in society. While it makes mischief for the Japanese, it protects the Zainichi woman getting

beaten up by the man. This folkloric figure captures exclusive ethnic traits of Ikaino dwellers.

IMAGINING THE PACIFIC (1)

Kim's memory has no nostalgia for his departed homeland in Korea. It shows no elements of longing; therefore, no idealization or recreation of the past. Rather, his memory is filled with remembering, that is, with never forgetting trauma. Kim's memory is deeply associated with a historical scar. The Cheju Sea, the scene of a massacre, and the route of Korean exile appear as privileged images in his poetry. Among others, the image of the sea in his *Niigata* (新潟) represents an even lesser known state-violence and its cruelty in modern East Asian history and the Cold War era, in particular.

Interestingly, his trauma does not descend into psychological pathology or rise to the level of aesthetic sublimation. Instead, it is stated and archived in the form of poetry. The passage below is from Kim's *Niigata*.

The wind,
escaping from the sea,
is a deep sigh of the sea
The Cheju sea is
already
a gargantuan live fish tank.
In the tank,
father sinks to the bottom,
a boy wanders around,

grandfather crouches down

.....

aged eyes

can't differentiate

man

and

fish being fed on human flesh

.....

The day grows dark,

and the day passes.

The bound bodies of drowned persons,

having broken free from the weights attached to them,

wash up onto the beach in groups.

In the transparent sunlight at the southern end,

the summer dissolves the indistinguishable faces of the dead persons like
soybean flour.

In groups of twos and threes,

their loved ones gather and confirm the battered bodies without speaking.

The tide comes in and goes out.

The beach pebbles on a sandless beach are heard wailing through the
night.

.....

In every single drop of the sea

There lies the untold story
Of the boy who did not get to speak³¹

This poem depicts the tragic scene of a large-scale massacre during the Cheju Uprising. Many people were tied together and thrown into the sea by the national military and local police forces. The next day, the waves pushed drowned and swollen corpses to the shore. The bereaved hardly recognized their loved ones because the sea water deformed the bodies of the victims. Even if they recognized their beloved ones among the corpses, they pretended not to know them “without speaking” because police officers and the military suspected the bereaved families as possible communists or their sympathizers.

The Cheju Sea which marks one end of the Pacific is metaphorized as “a gargantuan live fish tank,” which is filled with “fish being fed on human flesh.” This metaphor of atrocity and the horrible image of the sea graphically describe a myriad of violent and tragic events, which had happened in and around the Pacific during the Cold War period. Every single drop of the sea has an “untold story” of the boy who “did not get to speak.” This boy can be regarded as the synecdoche of the victims of various ideologies and state violence. Now, the sea turns into the textual space of the myriad of untold stories of the persecuted.

The image of the ship, which is associated with the image of the sea, helps untold or underrepresented stories to resurface. If the sea image in Kim’s poem generally

³¹ Kim, *Gen'ya No Shi: ShūSei Shishū (Poetry of Wilderness: Complete Work of Poetry)* 390-96).

suggests the collective historical scars of Korea, the image of the ship reveals the wound in a concrete manner. Below are some images of ships from *Niigata*.

After being forcibly mobilized,
we were transported on board like cargo to the Genkai sea.
It was a year before Japan itself turned into a raging inferno.

.....

at the dead end of Maizuru Bay
Ukishimamaru
Burned in early morning as a haze.
My hometown,
Which was drawn to the deep seabed,
is still crouching in the sea
with the bombed August.

.....

Daydream
Came across the sea
From the West
With the warship.
It began to illuminate
the glittering dollar-civilization
in our eyes
which were uneasy

and unfamiliar with the light

.....

In the boy's eyes,

The General Sherman, as black as ink,

Is dragging innumerable dead people away

and pushing them down.

.....

The Red Cross repatriation center

standing on the very 38th parallel of latitude

is my origin.

Oh, I want to see the [repatriation] ship!

A massive military draft and labor mobilization proceeded during the war.³² Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were mobilized by Japan's colonial government during the Asia-Pacific War (1937-1945). The scale of mobilization was enormous. Many people were uprooted and sent to Japan and other Asian countries to work and fight, and they were subjected to slave-like abuse and exploitation in industries and battlefields. In the quoted poem, Kim depicts the ship carrying mobilized Koreans to Japan (see fig. 5).

³² The cabinet of Japan instituted the National General Mobilization Law (NGML) in April, 1938, and the law was extended to Korea the following month (Palmer 140). Almost 5 million Koreans were mobilized from 1937 to 1945 (Palmer 158). In *Fighting for the enemy: Koreans in Japan's War, 1937-1945*, Brandon Palmer provides comprehensive studies of Japan's mobilization of Koreans during the Asia-Pacific War.

The ship mentioned is “Ukishimamaru.” On August 22, 1945, Ukishimamaru, the Imperial Japanese Navy transport ship, was carrying about 4,000 mobilized Koreans and their families from Aomori Prefecture, headed towards the Korean port of Busan.³³ However, she anchored at the port of Maizuru on the 24th of August, exploded, and sank there. According to the official announcement of the Japanese government, the reason for the explosion was related to the ship’s contact with an American naval mine, and 524 Koreans died in the aftermath of the explosion. This is a very little-known tragedy relevant to the repatriation after the Pacific War. The term “Zainichi” refers to Koreans who did not or could not return to their liberated homeland. Repatriation is inevitably linked to the history of the Zainichi. The exploded ship Ukishimamaru marks the beginning of Zainichi history.

In the poem, Ukishimamaru reads as a metaphor of unachieved repatriation and the returnees who failed in their journey back to their liberated homeland. Evoking this incident that was on the verge of oblivion in history, Kim resurrects underrepresented victims who are “still crouching in the sea” and brings to light their stories.

Kim is also vigilant in his attention to the United States, which had hegemony over East Asia after the Asia-Pacific War. He criticizes American civilization as “daydreaming.” He sees the glaring capitalist American civilization as another form of

³³ According to Japan’s official announcement, passengers on the Ukishimamaru numbered about 4,000, but the actual numbers of passengers and victims are still controversial. Korean survivors say that 7,000 people were jam-packed aboard and up to 5,000 people were killed. This less-known tragic incident still remains opaque except for the obvious fact that numerous people died. For Korean survivors’ testimonies, see Ch’oe sanghyŏn’s newspaper article “Korean ‘Titanic’ Victims Remember.” <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=95e720ac-11a5-4d8a-ab13-b7f8b1e64315%40sessionmgr4008&hid=4213&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#AN=515c8871c0b090de220cc46d76a8dd22&db=n5h> Accessed 5 Mar. 2017.

imperialism. In the context of the poem, American culture metaphorically crosses the Pacific with a “warship.” This image of the warship is immediately transformed into the heavily armed U.S. merchant steam ship named “the SS General Sherman,” which sailed up the Taedong River to the P’yŏng’an provincial capital of Pyongyang in Korea in 1866 and attempted to open trade and obtain commercial advantage. The local officials refused trade offers because Korea continued its isolationist policy at the time. The SS General Sherman fired cannons at soldiers and civilians on the shore, killing many of them. It triggered hostilities for four days. The ship was burnt and the crew who reached shores were killed in the aftermath of the hostilities. This incident caused “The United States expedition to Korea in 1871,” (subsequently shortened to the “1871 Korea Expedition”). While only two American lives were lost, at least 250 poorly-armed Koreans were killed by the U.S. Navy and Marines.³⁴ The Western imperialist approach to East Asia is metaphorized by “the warship” in Kim’s poem.

The last ship mentioned in the poem is the repatriation ship headed to the North Korean port of Cho’ngjin from Niigata, Japan in 1959.³⁵ This repatriation was related to mutual economic interest between Japan and North Korea. The Japanese and North

³⁴ For the details of the Expedition to Korea in 1871, see Library of Congress Web Archives Collection: Navy Department Library, Marine Amphibious Landing in Korea 1871.

http://webarchive.loc.gov/all/20100407175236/http%3A//www%2Ehistory%2Enavy%2Emil/library/online/marine_amphib_korea%2Ehtm Accessed 6 Mar. 2017.

³⁵ The first repatriation ship, which is mentioned in the poem, left the port of Niigata and headed for the North Korean port of Ch’ŏngjin on 21 December 1959. A total of 51, 978 Koreans migrated to North Korea by the same route between 1959 and the early 1970s. This repatriation ended in 1984. For comprehensive research on this repatriation, see Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s *Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan’s Cold War* (2007), *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era* (2010), pp.194-228, and Sonia Ryang’s *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin* (2000), pp.32-54.

Korean Red Cross Societies had a series of meetings in 1959 in Geneva. The postwar Japanese government wanted to decrease the number of unwelcomed minorities that could potentially become subversive in Japan. Japan wanted to reduce the enormous financial burden of supporting minorities. At that time, the South Korean government could not afford to accept Zainichi due to a plethora of domestic problems. Meanwhile, North Korea wanted to supplement their scarce labor force by accepting repatriators.

The successive meetings between North Korea and Japan resulted in an agreement of repatriation of Zainichi Koreans from Japan to North Korea. However, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki pointed out, this repatriation was more accurately a “mass migration” since most of the Koreans who were called “old-comers”³⁶ in postwar Japan originated from the southern part of the Korean peninsula. North Korea was not the homeland they wanted to go back to (M. Kim 306). Ironically, a significant number of Koreans in Japan were more sympathetic toward North Korea than South Korea because of a resurgence of leftist influence and anti-Japanese nationalism in the Zainichi community at the time. Such a political atmosphere drove the majority of Zainichi to advocate the North Korean government (Robertson 90).³⁷

³⁶ The term refers to colonial migrants who moved mainly from the southern part of the Korean Peninsula.

³⁷ Sonia Ryang argues that Zainichi support for North Korea “was based more on nationalism than on communism.” For Koreans in Japan, North Korea seemed to be represented by the former anti-colonialists, including Kim Il Sung. Juche (Self-reliance) ideology, which was mentioned earlier, made North Korea seem relatively free from foreign interference. Furthermore, socioeconomic reformation made North Korea more attractive than South Korea. The reformation included land-redistribution for farmers, nationalization of heavy industry, and gender equality laws (Robertson 90-91). However, this mass repatriation was, ultimately, the result of a complex and confrontational Cold War ideology and has become a major influence on the future diplomatic relations between Japan, North Korea, and South Korea.

Kim was born in Wonsan, one of the major cities of North Korea. He was also a communist. The oppression of his leftist ideology in South Korea even led him to exile in Japan. However, as was briefly mentioned above, he was excluded from a North Korean supporters' group called "Ch'ongnyŏn (The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan)" because he was not willing to agree with idolizing Kim Il sung, the leader of North Korea.³⁸ Also, he denied Ch'ongnyŏn's authoritarianism and monolithic politics. Ch'ongnyŏn deemed Kim an anarchist, and as a result, his literary works written in Japanese were banned from the Zainichi communist group. In this way, "all [his] expressive activities were blocked" in 1958 (S. Kim 朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*] 284). When the repatriation ship left the port of Niigata in December 1959, he could not board because his ideological orientation was questioned by Ch'ongnyŏn, which was an organization affiliated with North Korea. Although he shouts "Oh, I want to see the repatriation ship," his repatriation was destined to fail. His failed repatriation and unhomeliness resonate with Ukishimamaru and the myriad of returnees who were still crouching on the seabed. These two failed repatriations summarize the impact of

³⁸ "Ch'ongnyŏn" is the abbreviation of "Chae Ilbon Chosŏnin Ch'ongnyŏnhap'oe (The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan)" in Korean. This Zainichi organization has close ties to North Korea. It has functioned as a *de facto* embassy because Japan and North Korea have no official diplomatic relations. Chongryun argued that Zainichi were North Korean citizens. It propagated an anti-Japanese campaign based on communist nationalism. For the rise of "Ch'ongnyŏn" and its role in the Zainichi community, see, John Lie's *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity* (2008), pp.39-44. Regarding the ideological conversion of the "Ch'ongnyŏn" and the related literary activity, see Yun, Kŏn-ch'a, "*Zainichi*" *No Seishinshi* vol.2, pp. 56-93.

colonialism, post-colonialism, the Cold War, and the Post-Cold War ideology in East Asia on Kim's life.

Meanwhile, failed repatriation led Kim to identify himself as Zainichi. In his autobiography, he mentioned a moment of epiphany: "I was in a situation where all my expressive activities were blocked and I had to find the meaning of living Zainichi by myself." (朝鮮と日本で生きる- 済州島から猪飼野へ [*Living in Korea and Japan: From Cheju Island to Ikaino*] 285). Here, Kim problematizes the meaning of "living Zainichi." This expression, "living Zainichi," does not simply mean living in a space called Japan. Rather, it refers to a way of life which is based on understanding the Zainichi's origin, historical meaning, and political vision. From this moment, it became Kim's life-long project, which is still ongoing. He is living on the borders between South Korea, North Korea, and Japan. His marginalized transnational subjectivity connotes East Asian modern history. In his poems, history dates back to the early modern period as Western civilization crossed the Pacific and rushed to the opposite shores of the ocean. As we shall see, this history is far extended to the community to come. This historical vision is embedded in his poetics of becoming. Kim tries to overcome colonialism and the Cold War ideology which are still influential in the Zainichi community.

The image of the sea in Sijong Kim's poem seems to have three semantic layers. The sea, the outskirts of the Pacific here, is imagined as the space of massacre, exile, aggression, and failed repatriation with its basis in the actual events of modern East Asian history. The sea is also transformed into a myriad of untold or unrepresented stories of the persecuted. In other words, the Pacific is a textual space for him. Last but not least, the untold stories of the sea are materialized and revived from historical oblivion by the

image of the ship. The image of the Pacific cannot be a temporary homogenous space because each ship has its own chronotope. However, disparate chronotopes are densely interwoven and resonant with each other. This weaving of various chronotopes introduces historicity into the image of the Pacific. In other words, the poet constructs a literary montage with the various images of ships to evoke a consistent historical image of the Pacific. It is important to note that the specific historical incidents from the earlier periods contribute to understanding the present. Several returnees gathered in “the Red Cross Repatriation center” in the port of Niigata waiting for the repatriation ship. Sijong Kim witnessed this spectacular scene. He was actually there. Recollecting the past incidents with the image of ships and constructing them as a literary-historical montage, he is able to capture the historical meaning of the present. The Northward repatriation ship is located in the large-scale context of modern East Asian history and Zainichi history, in particular. In this way, Kim’s imagination is reminiscent of Walter Benjamin’s comment on the historian: “[The historian] grasps the constellation into which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one” (Benjamin et al. 4: 397). All abandoned ships in Kim’s poem echo each other so that they form a specific historical image. In this sense, Kim’s poetic treatment of history corresponds to Benjamin’s idea of history.

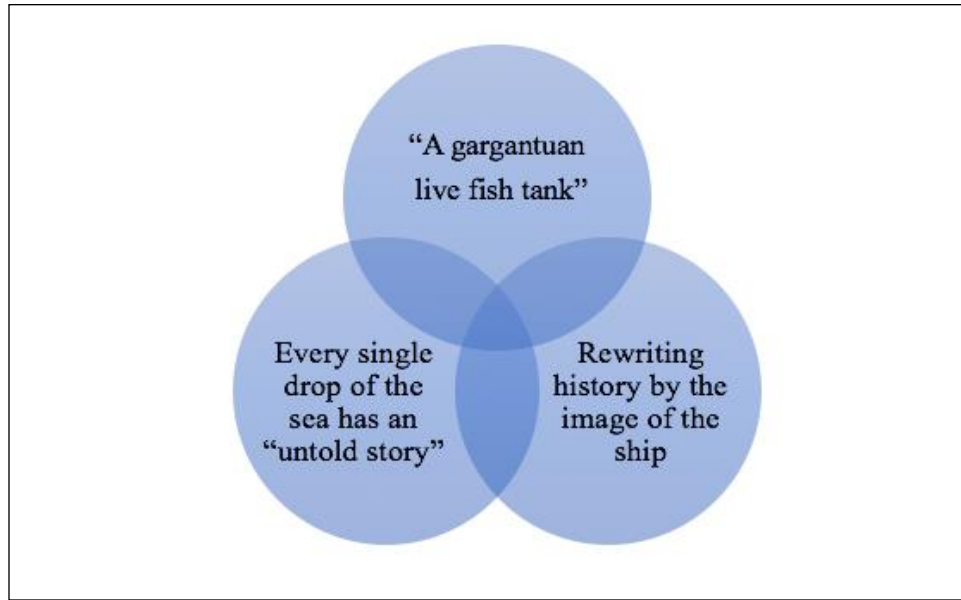


Figure 4. Sijong Kim's image of the Pacific.

MINOR WRITING AND THE POETICS OF BECOMING

Kim's literary engagement is represented by his denial of traditional poetic genres and his peculiar usage of the Japanese language.³⁹ Hosomi Kazuyuki summarizes the characteristics of Sijong Kim's poem, which are different from those of modern Japanese poetry, as follows: 1) He does not grant privilege to poetry, instead engaging the appropriate language of others; 2) He writes well-structured long poems; 3) While postwar Japanese poetry employs the written language, Sijong Kim makes wide use of spoken language in his poem; 4) While Postwar Japanese poetry turns its back on sociopolitical themes, Kim takes sociopolitical themes seriously. His writing is a desperate attempt to free himself from the dominance of the Japanese language and literature which surrounded him during the colonial period. In other words, his literary

³⁹ For more details, see Hosomi Kazuyuki's *Aidentiti, Tashasei* (1999) pp. 86-88.

output is inseparable from the pursuit of postcolonial Zainichi identity. Kim distanced himself from the traditional poetic genres in Japan and their conventions. In his collection of literary criticism, *In the Interstices of Zainichi*, Kim criticizes Japanese traditional poetic genres, such as tanka and haiku. He claims that tanka is full of “the fantastic” and seasonal phrases that have conventional symbolic meanings. The easy and short-syllabic meter of these traditional poetic genres, according to Kim, has influenced Japanese people’s way of thinking and feeling. Kim argues that the lyricism of these genres constructs “a community of sympathy” for the Japanese. Kim’s poetic works are sharply contrasted with traditional lyricism. His works are historico-political as well as lengthy. In addition, his poems are written in a peculiar style of Japanese.⁴⁰ Thus, his poetry opposes many of the traditional poetic conventions that distinguish Japanese poetic genres (S. Kim *Zainichi No Hazamede [at the Interstices of Zainichi]* 265-70)(Zainichi No Hazamade [At the Interstices of Zainichi] 265-70). Japanese literary scholars such as Ukai Satoshi and Hosomi Kazyuki valorize the uniqueness of Kim’s poetic language as “revenge for Japanese by Japanese” or the “denial of tanka-lyricism.” Kim’s minor use of Japanese and deviation from traditional genres’ literary convention extend the realm of Japanese language and literature (Toyoko 52).

The narrative voice in Kim’s work is collective. Kim’s poetry is sharply cognizant of the historical and political significance of Zainichi in East Asia. In an interview with Suzuki David, Sijong Kim states that whether Zainichi writers write under real names or not, they are already committing a political act (Suzuki and Oiwa 180). Indeed, his poetic

⁴⁰ For comprehensive research and discussion of Sijong Kim’s minor usage of Japanese and its meaning, see Noguchi Toyoko’s *Kin Jishō No Shi: Mō Hitotsu No Nihongo (Sijong Kim’s Poetry: Another Japanese)*.

experiment cannot be separated from politics. His works can be referred to as “minor literature” according to Deleuzoguattarian terminology.⁴¹ Ronald Bogue, a leading Deleuzian scholar, argues that “what is central to the concept of the minor . . . is that artistic experimentation on the formal and the political are inseparable” (Stivale 118). Kim’s poetry can be identified as a representative case of minor literature which originates in East Asia.

You have not to expect
morning just for yourself
If there is a sunny side, there will also be dark side
Just believe in the exact spin of the Earth
Sun rises from beneath your feet,
It draws big circular arcs
and goes down beneath your feet.
The horizon is not somewhere we can’t arrive at
The very place where you are standing is the horizon
That is exactly the horizon
Sun is stretching shadows far away
We must say “good bye” to the Sun, which is going down in the evening.

⁴¹ He was essentially helping himself to the Japanese language and literature. His ‘minor literature’ originates from his powerless life - from being exiled from his home country to a country where he was unwelcome and might have come under suspicion. However, he contributes to the expansion of the realm of Japanese literature with his minor literature. In this sense, Sijong Kim’s minor literature as revenge for the Japanese language and literature is paradoxical.

A new night is waiting for us

.....

You should not decide that

the road reflected in your eyes is the road you should take

You should not christen a road, which is newly built by someone else's
steps.

Imagine a bridge hung over the sea

Think about a tunnel which goes underground.

Just let us make a road toward history,

which is harmoniously interlaced with

respect for humans and wisdom

We have to take the road

Our reckless daily life

always swarmed with military shoes from overseas⁴²

In Kim's poetry, the political is immanent within his poetic diction. He rejects the notions of "daylight" and the "road." Daytime is denied since "daylight" is only for the privileged who dominate the real world. The image of the road, which represents social norms and rules, is denied because all existing roads are dominated by the forces and

⁴² Kim, *Gen'ya No Shi: ShūSei Shishū (Poetry of Wilderness: Complete Work of Poetry)*, p. 583.

powers symbolized by “military shoes” and “carbine rifle[s].” Kim suggests that history and civilization have evolved through aggression, war, oppression, and exclusion. How can ‘the minor’ then deterritorialize the world of “daylight” and well-paved “road[s]”? Does Sijong Kim have a poetic strategy to transverse this social reality?

Night starts to rush around violently,
Metamorphosis into a nocturnal animal doesn’t need to take any road.
If I have to lean forward in walking under the rattling sound of a Carbine
rifle,
Throw the way to a dog!

.....

Let us pick rambling around the wilderness at night,
which is available to rampage,
Rather than walking with our heads lowered in the daylight.

Longing for a new history, which is “harmoniously interlaced with respect for humans and wisdom,” Kim contrasts “daylight” and “new night.” Here, “new night” is the time of freedom in which the dominant culture and social norms disappear. The oppressed gain freedom at night. Kim contrasts the concepts of the “road” and the “wilderness” as well. The “road” sets up rigid and static boundaries in space, whereas “wilderness” is open or unbounded space. The former makes space striated and rigid, whereas the latter allows every entity to rampage around. Kim’s contrast of the two spaces as antithesis is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari’s differentiation of “striated

space” and “smooth space.” Bogue explains that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, “smooth space is space undivided and unmeasured.” It is “essentially fluid, heterogeneous, without center or dimensional coordinates.” On the other hand, striated space is “crisscrossed with grids of dividing and measuring lines.” It is “stable and homogeneous with organizational grids” (Bogue *Deleuze's Way : Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* 50, 127-28).⁴³ Kim’s “wilderness” echoes Deleuze and Guattari’s “smooth space.” Wilderness is the habitat various wild lives and nocturnal animals in particular. This smooth space is created by “metamorphosis.” The narrator of this poem metamorphoses himself or herself into a “nocturnal animal,” which does not comply with social norms and rules. Kim’s metamorphosis motif, in fact, has continuously changed throughout his poetry. The poetic narrator in his work has transformed into various modes of existence, such as a nocturnal animal, a female cicada, and even an earthworm. As we shall see, his metamorphic force is rebellious; this force allows him to traverse rigid state borders between Japan, North Korea, and South Korea. Also, it undermines the poetics of the tanka genre. In my view, this metamorphic force is the crux of Kim’s poetics.⁴⁴

⁴³ This distinction is, however, available at the level of *de jure*. The two spaces “exist in mixtures of one another” in reality. The distinction is, also, not exclusively spatial. Deleuze and Guattari extend the concepts to figurative spaces such as music, art, and mathematics. Most importantly, the concepts describe ways of inhabiting, using, and even creating space (Bogue 127-28).

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari call the metaphoric force of deterritorialization a “war machine” (Bogue 50). In this sense, Kim’s metamorphic poetry is also a “war machine.”

This argument can be confirmed by the following poem.

Eventually, I became an earthworm
I even abhorred the sun for the fear of bright light
And became an outcast
Since then, I have never had any road
I don't trust anything in the existing roads.
.....
As for me, I am unable to recognize this land.
However, I am an earthworm reared in this country.
Japan is the first country to have taught me the earthworm's nature.
My human revival has to be achieved in this country.
No, I should achieve the revival here.
I desperately crawled only toward the Northeast
.....
I will try to cross this latitude of destiny
Right in this country
.....
being permeated with blood,
gambling my photoreceptor Cells on this movement,
I started the looped movement
with this body.

In this poem, “I” become an “earthworm.” This earthworm was reared in Japan and learned its nature there. Now, the earthworm desperately digs into the ground to cross “[the] latitude of destiny” and “crawl[s] only toward the Northeast.” It is important to note that “the latitude of destiny” refers to the 38th parallel of latitude.

The Red Cross repatriation center is a significant backdrop of this poem. The center is located in Niigata. This harbor city is, as mentioned above, on the very 38th parallel of latitude in Japan (see fig. 5). If this latitude is extended toward the Northeast, it will soon reach the national border between North and South Korea on the Korean peninsula. As is well known, the 38th parallel of the Korean peninsula is the last Cold War frontier and one of the starkest political borders in the world. According to the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953, neither side is allowed to cross the 38th parallel. Referred to as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), this national border is heavily militarized. The state apparatuses guard the border, and numerous barbed wire fences make this border an extremely “striated space.” Digging into the ground, the earthworm succeeds in border-crossing, which is impossible on the ground surface. Becoming an earthworm is part of Kim’s poetic strategy that hopes for the overcoming of national division in Japan as a *Zainichi*.



Figure 5. Sijong Kim's looped movement. Kim tries to overcome the national division of Korea in Japan by "becoming earthworm." His geopolitical imagination draws a big circle.

Kim's transformation into an earthworm is deeply connected with his Zainichi identity. The earthworm's border-crossing through the underground is for "human revival" in Japan. In this case, the border on the 38th parallel serves as an allegory of all the obstacles that prevent Zainichi from "human revival" in Japan. These obstacles include the Zainichi's inextinguishable trauma, precarious social status, discrimination, poverty, and the political tension between the pro-South expatriate organizations and North-Korean affiliated associations within the Zainichi community.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For the historical and the political conflict between "Ch'ongnyŏn (The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan)" and "Mindan (Korean Residents Union in Japan)", see Yun, Kŏn-ch'ŏ *Zainichi no seishinshi: Mittsu no kokka no hazama de*, vol 2. pp. 186-199.

Becoming “female cicada” in Kim’s poem is inseparable from the representation of Zainichi, which has been underrepresented in Japanese society.

When was the day
that I was surprised by the short life of the cicada?
I guessed it would last throughout summer, but I learnt it lasts barely three
days,
After, I picked up the husk of the cicadas from around the root and buried
them
A long time ago, it happened a long time ago

How long has it been since then?
When the cicadas cry out in the scorching heat,
I listen intently.
what cannot build even voice in this transient world became too disturbing

I have only lived 26 years.
For me, it felt that it took more than one hundred years until I recognized
the wrath of the mute female cicada.
How many years will it take to inform everyone about this feeling?

Kim expresses wonder at the short lives of cicadas and especially the existence of the mute female cicada in this poem. Hosomi Kazuyuki associates this image of the female

cicada with the notion of the “subaltern.” He argues that the female cicada refers to the oppressed who have lost their voices and have been historiographically excluded (*Diasupora O Ikiru Shijin Kimu Shijon [Sijong Kim, a Poet Living Diaspora]* 15).

The word “subaltern,” which suggests that one is of an inferior rank, is a critical term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to minority groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. According to Gramsci, fundamental historical unity results from closed relations between political society and “civil society.” The subaltern class and their history are interwoven with the history of civil society (Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith 52). This term has been adapted to postcolonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies group of historians, who have discussed various subaltern themes in South Asian Studies. This group criticizes the tendency to focus on elites and elite culture in South Asian historiography. In the essay “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” Ranajit Guha, one of the leading figures of subaltern thought, argues that “the historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism” (Guha 1). The notion of the subaltern became an issue in postcolonial theory when Gayatri Spivak critiqued the Subaltern Studies group’s essentializing tendencies in the essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak argues that there is no pure form of subaltern consciousness. She particularly emphasizes the exclusion of women from the work of the Subaltern Studies group. According to Spivak, the female subaltern has no history and cannot speak. They are “even more deeply in shadow” (Nelson and Grossberg 287).

Kim’s female cicada echoes Spivak’s unspeaking female subaltern. Kim’s mute female cicada, however, does not seem to be gendered in image. Rather, it seems to

represent a politically-marginalized Zainichi group which has been underrepresented and even excluded in historiography. Given that Kim's refiguring of the Zainichi's cultural-historical memory is tightly enmeshed with a poetic historiography of the Zainichi, Kim's writing embodies the voice of the mute "female cicada." Hence, his literature can be defined as the literature of "becoming female cicada."

Kim's female cicada needs to be examined in the context of Japanese literary convention. The cicada is primarily an aural image in Japanese traditional poetic genres such as waka and haiku.⁴⁶ It is also a significant seasonal animal. The strident voice of the cicada announces summer. The cicada's cry is a symbol of transience because of its short life. The thin shell of the cicada is a reminder of how soon life comes to an end. Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) is well-known poet in the Edo period in Japan. He is recognized as the great master of haiku. He frequently employs the cicada in his haiku.

392

stillness—

sinking into the rocks,

cicadas; cry⁴⁷

⁴⁶ For traditional use of the image of cicada in waka and haiku, see Haruo Shirane's *Japan and the Culture of the Four seasons*, pp. 176-81.

⁴⁷ This famous verse appears in Bashō's travelogue *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Bashō emphasizes loneliness and tranquility by this work. See *The Narrow Road to The Deep North*, pp. 64-5. English translated version of this haiku is from David Landis Barnhill's *Bashō's Haiku : Selected Poems by Matsuo Bashō*, p. 94

The fleeting transience of life

soon to die,

yet no sign of it:

a cicada's cry⁴⁸

While Basho's cicada dramatizes the stillness of a summer day by its shrill voice, Kim's female cicada foregrounds its abjectness and wrath caused by its muteness. Basho emphasizes the vanity of life by the cicada, while Kim foregrounds the long period of time to recognize unspeakable entities by the female cicada. Kim's female cicada image is confronted with the image of the cicada in traditional Japanese literature.

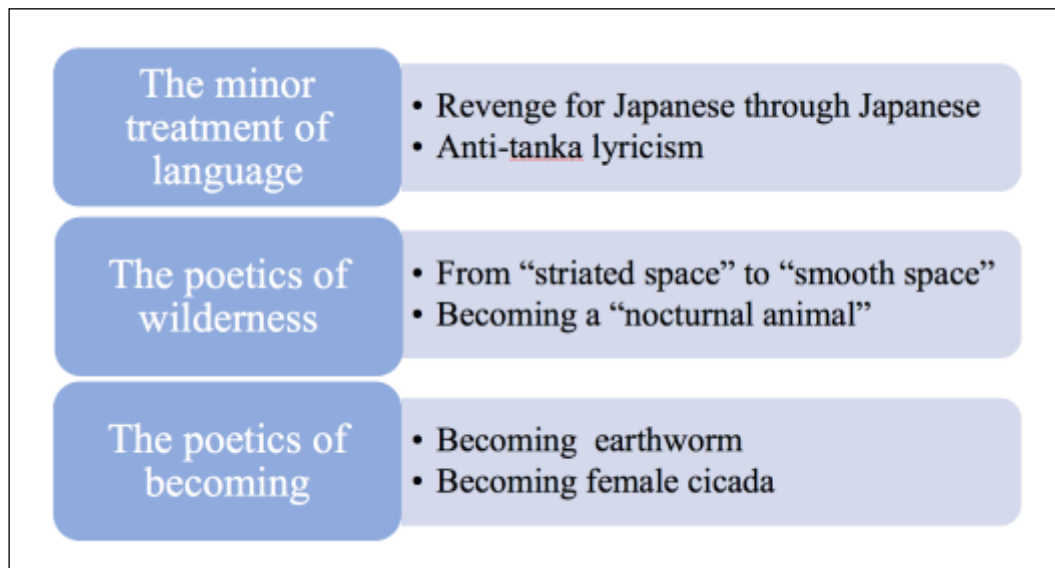


Figure 6. Sijong Kim's poetics.

⁴⁸ See, *ibid.*, p. 114

CHAPTER 3

INHWAN PAK'S POSTCOLONIAL PAN-ASIANISM AND THE TRANSPACIFIC JOURNEY TO THE FUTURE

An uninterrupted work of writing links the center and periphery

-Michel Foucault (197)

In this chapter, I examine Inhwon Pak (1926~1956), a Korean poet who was deeply interested in anti-imperialism and Asian solidarity in the 1940s and who traveled the United States in the 1950s. Pak is a representative modernist poet in Korea. He started his career as a poet in 1946 as a member of a modernist coterie known as Huban'gi (the second half of the century). He covered the Korean War as a war correspondent.

Pak's poems in the late 1940s emphasize Asian solidarity and nation-state building. For a clear understanding of these themes, it is important to note that Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism, known as "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," was the dominant discourse on Asian solidarity during the colonial period. Pak's Asian solidarity can be seen as a postcolonial challenge to Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism. He deconstructs colonial Asian solidarity with postcolonial representations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

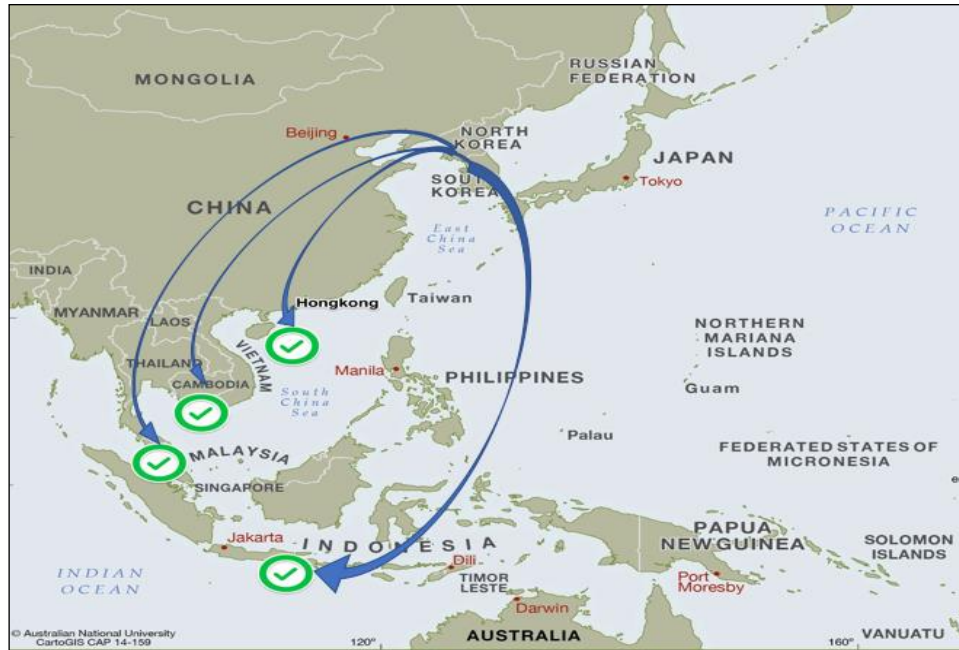


Figure 7. Inhwon Pak's geopolitical interest in Southeast Asia in the late 1940s. Pak challenges the way in which Japanese imperialism represents Southeast Asia during the Pacific War. His poetry covers Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Pak came to the U.S. in 1955. It was very rare for Koreans to travel to the U.S. in the 1950s. He traveled predominantly to cities on the northwestern coast of the U.S. Among these cities were Tacoma, Seattle, Everett, Anacortes, Port Angeles, and Portland (see fig. 8). During World War II and the Korean War, cities on the West Coast rapidly developed because military industries settled there. Pak visited the Western area of the United States when the area was vigorously growing.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*, pp. 299-334.



Figure 8. Pak's transpacific journey in 1955. This journey changed Pak's perspective on Asia. He viewed Asia in terms of anti-imperialism but this journey led him to recognize that Asia is already posited in the world system.

Although the trip was not very long, it had a strong and lasting impression on Pak. He wrote poems throughout the journey. Fifteen selected poems from among these were published in 1955 and were entitled *Amerik'a sich'o* (America, selected poems). This anthology is a rich archive of transnational literature. His keen observations about the core of capitalist modernity deserve to be examined. In particular, his poems show the way in which a literary intellectual from “the periphery” criticizes the world system and modernity.

Pak is an exemplary transnational writer who imagined cross-cultural themes and traversed the periphery and the center of the world system. His imaginary topography includes Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. Narrowly defined, transnational literature refers to literature written by people who have emigrated or in some other way travelled away from their homeland; literature written in a second language; or literature

with a cross-cultural theme. It is concerned with a variety of issues including globalization, migration, travel, influence, modernity, decolonization, and diaspora (Ramazani xi).

The dynamics of the center and periphery in the world system are, surely, an effective framework for the examination of Pak's translational literature in the 1940s-1950s. In the aftermath of the Pacific War and the Korean War, U.S. hegemony in South Korea was further strengthened. "America" was considered the hegemonic core state of the world system and became the most influential referent of nation-building in South Korea after liberation from the Japanese Empire.⁵⁰

POSTCOLONIAL IMAGINATION OF ASIA IN 1940S' POETRY

Nation-building was a watchword of Korea right after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule. In the 1940s, the word "nation" served as a transcendental signifier, so most discourses that appeared in the late 1940s in Korea were reduced to that of nation-building. The literary field was no exception. The Korean literary community during this period was distinctively bifurcated into leftist and rightist groups, which fiercely contested with each other under the influence of the early phase of the Cold War ideologies. In light of this cultural-political atmosphere of the literary field of Korea in the late 1940s, Pak's deep interest in Southeast Asia and Asian solidarity are remarkable (see fig. 7). His treatment of Southeast Asia in his works and his proclamation of Asian solidarity are intriguing because they transformed the colonial discourse of Pan-Asianism

⁵⁰ For the various strands of discourse on the United States and its relation to nation-building in South Korea, see Sejin Jang's *Sangsangdoen amerik'a: 1945nyŏn 8wŏl ihu han'gugŭi neisyŏn sŏsanŭn ŏttŏk'e mandŭrŏjyŏnnŭn'ga*. For American policies on South Korea's nation building between 1945 and 1972, see Gregg Brazinsky's *Nation Building in South Korea*.

in many ways. We can examine the historical transformation of Pan-Asianism before and after the Pacific War by studying Pak's poetry in the late 1940s.

Southeast Asia was a lesser-known world for colonial Korea until Japan advanced on the area. Japan expanded its geographical definition of "Asia" beyond the traditional Sino-cultural sphere.⁵¹ The Japanese government proclaimed that the ultimate aim of establishing "the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" was to achieve "order for co-prosperity, mutual respect for sovereign independence among Asian nations, while calling for the elimination of racial discrimination and full freedom for Asiatics" (Hotta 185-86). This Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism comprised Japan, Korea, China, Manchuria, and parts of Southeast Asia. This Pan-Asianism was much discredited because it served as a tool for legitimizing Japanese hegemony and colonial rule during the Pacific War. As Kristine Dennehy puts it, "Japanese aggression in the Southeast Asia area was similar in many ways to the imperialist advances of European countries" (Saaler and Koschmann 222). Like the European imperialists, Japan's motivation was to acquire natural resources from Southeast Asia such as oil, rubber, and tin that would enable Japan to continue to fight with China and possibly the United States. As is well known, pressed by the heightened necessity for new sources of basic resources, Japan directed its military imperialism towards Western colonies in Southeast Asia. Japan considered military steps to eliminate the hold of the British in Malaysia, the French in Indochina, and the Dutch in Indonesia. So-called "Nanshinron (南進論, The Southern Expansion Doctrine)" was

⁵¹ Most Southeast Asian countries are culturally and ethnically heterogeneous. Their borders are often accidents of history and do not coincide with cultural spheres. In this sense, Japanese imperialism attributed false unity to heterogeneous "Southeast Asia."

emphasized and incorporated into the national ideology in 1940. This ideology was reformulated into the policies of “the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.”

Discourse on Southeast Asia in colonial Korea began to appear at the end of 1939, and the interest in the region peaked when Japan occupied Singapore on December 8, 1941. It was produced along two axes: conquest and development. Economic interest in the natural resources of the region is closely related with Japan’s total war initiatives. Discourse on Southeast mainly appeared in the forms of ethnography and poetry. According to Korean scholar Myung-A Kwon, these Southeast Asian discourses are largely divided into two categories: 1) Economic interest in the tremendous natural resources of the region and their value for the Pacific war and 2) Anthropological interest in the ethnicity of Southeast Asians.⁵² Southeast Asia was mainly viewed as the region where Japan followed a European imperialist model, incorporating the area into “the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Japan advocated and announced a restructuring of the world order, Japanese and Asian superiority, the elimination of modern Western vices, and the restoration of traditional Japanese and Asian virtues through this Pan-Asianism (Hotta 199-223). Thus, the politics of representation of the region were mediated by Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism.

What is intriguing is that strands of discourse on that area in Korea reveal a certain anxiety on the part of colonial intellectuals who actively supported and propagated Japanese radical assimilation policies known as “*Naisen ittai* (Japan and

⁵² For details of Southeast Asian discourse in colonial Korea, see Kwon, Myung-A’s *Yöksajök P’ashijüm: Chegugüi P’ant’ajiwa Chendö Chöngch’I* (*Historical Fascism: The Fantasy of Empire and Gender Politics*), pp. 345-469.

Korea is one body) and “the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.”⁵³ To them, Southeast Asia, a new colony of the Japanese empire, and its huge economic values, seemed to threaten the status of colonial Korea in “the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” This anxiety of the colonial subjects is embedded in the way in which Korean intellectuals represented the Southeast Asia area. Their discourse on Southeast Asia distinctively foregrounded “uncivilized” and “pure” Southeast Asian aboriginals, who were occupied and persecuted by the Western imperialist states. Appropriating Southeast Asians as primitive, uncivilized, and indolent subjects, the intellectuals of colonial Korea differentiate themselves from Southeast Asians and emphasized the superior position of colonial Korea within “the Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Their stereotyping of Southeast Asia and its aboriginals is tightly connected with the colonial subjectivity of Koreans.

Koreans’ stereotypical understanding of Southeast Asia and its aboriginals was surely influenced by the discourse on the region that appeared in Japan. In the 1930s and the early 1940s, wartime ideological mobilization was fully rendered. Anthropological discourses helped inform Japan and colonial Korea about Southeast Asia and its aboriginals. However, the anthropological approach to Southeast Asia was originally conceptualized from a military point of view, which eventually became the view of the government. In other words, anthropologists actively responded to the request from the mobilization agents of the Japanese government. Hirano Yoshitarō (1897–1980), who

⁵³ There was a strict hierarchy between imperial Japan and colonial Korea. This assimilation policy was designed to remold the Korean people into loyal imperial subjects during the Pacific War. For Japanese assimilation policies, see Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*.

proclaimed an “East Asian Universalism,” and who was strongly influenced by Marxist ideas, shared the stereotypical conception of tropical Southeast Asia as an uncivilized region. Hirano argued that Southeast Asia had “the fecund natural resources . . . [however,] tropical peoples have failed to advance towards civilization, so that they stayed in a low level of social and cultural evolution . . . they should be induced to willingly co-operate with Japan on the construction of the Co-Prosperity Sphere” (Shimizu, Bremen and Kokuritsu Minzokugaku Hakubutsukan. 72-73). Southeast Asian discourses in Korea in the early 1940s do not deviate from this argument.

The stereotyped image of Southeast Asia was persistently employed in Korea in the postwar period. Pak is a prime example. As we shall see, Pak partly takes over the colonial legacy of Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism in terms of rhetoric and stereotypical representation. However, he redefines “Asia” as the region of “weak nations,” and proclaims Asian solidarity under the banner of anti-imperialism and the establishment of the nation-state. Also, he transforms the way in which Southeast Asian history and culture are represented. Pak’s poems in the 1940s provide a brief overview of the genealogy of the perceptions of Asia in colonial and post-colonial Korea.

“The South Wind”

Agonizing time rises from the sea
as the turtle crawls to the shore.

Natives were forcefully stripped earlier,
Malaysians lost their sun

Your love withered like jasmine
in a rubber plantation of the whites.

The nation of Angkor Wat.
The destiny of a nation
coincides with the glory of Khmer God
People's army of Vietnam,
Your gunshot of resistance is heard even in this far distant land.
Southern wind slams against my chest
Typhoons come with the change of seasons

In all latitudes of Asia,
Everyone in deep sleep,
Listen up

When I open my eyes
The scent of Southeast Asia
permeates my helpless mind.⁵⁴

In this poem, Pak mentions Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Southeast Asians are represented as the persecuted people who are forcibly working in “a rubber plantation” owned by white colonizers. Describing Southeast Asia as a victim of Euro-American imperialism is not much different from the

⁵⁴ Pak Inhwan *Chŏnjip* (*The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak*), pp. 45-6.

way in which Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism represents the region to legitimize Japan's military advances. It is partly because some parts of Southeast Asia were still struggling to be liberated from European empires until the early 1940s.

However, Pak does not represent Southeast Asians as uncivilized aboriginals. The region is praised as "the nation of Angkor Wat" and the glorious land of "the Khmar God." While Southeast Asian discourse during the colonial period emphasized primitive natives and their uncivilized community, Pak stresses their long history and splendid ethnic culture.

Southeast Asians are no longer represented as passive and impotent colonial subjects who have no power to resist. Pak notably emphasizes Southeast Asians' fierce anti-imperial resistance. Furthermore, he cheers their resistance and urges it to the whole of Asia. Southeast Asians' anti-imperial resistance is depicted in a long poem titled "Dedicatory Poem for the People of Indonesia." This poem deserves to be quoted at length because it shows Pak's ultimate concern with Asian solidarity and his poetic strategy to express it.

"Dedicated Poem for the People of Indonesia"

Oriental orchestra,

The accompaniment of gamelan sounds.

Oh, the people of a small and weak power,

Indonesia, colony, like us.

Euro-American Capitalists stripped you of all resources
for three hundred years.

You couldn't live in a large land as big as half of Europe
unless you have been miserably victimized.

Gamelan was played furiously.

In an area 58 times larger than that of the Netherlands,
In sorrow, the Dutch do not have at all,
but deep in your heart,
And none of you have been living
without staring at the shiny Southern Cross.

.....

Man did not have any place to work

The fragile woman dropped tears
under the white man.

Numerous half-blood children were looking to their white fathers for
survival.

However, merchant ships, leaving Surabaya, already whistled.

.....

You should no longer be an orphan of a colony

People unite, and pour yourself like a squall.

Shed blood for the national defense and people's front.

Response for the painstaking obsession over the past three hundred years,

Sing a song of palm trees, your ancestors sung.

Run into a machine-gun nest of Dutch soldiers.

The barbarous imperialism is an insult
not only to you, but also to us.
Be a hero and fight as well as you can,
not for freedom and self-preservation
but for destroying the desire of empire, violent oppression, and
undemocratic colonial policy on Earth.
Indonesians, the people of resistance,
fight to the last man.

When the horrific times pass,
the red canna will bloom on this bleeding Java Island.
The worth of sacrifice will shine even on us in Korea,
as if it is the Sun of the South Pacific.
Everyone in all lands at which ocean currents arrive blesses the future of
the holy Indonesian people.

Dear people of Indonesia,
at night at Borobudur of the ancient culture,
with the sound of bells announcing peace,
and serimpi is danced to the music of gamelan,
Greet the new nation-state.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Pak Inhwon Chŏnjip (The Complete Works of Inhwon Pak)*, pp. 47-51.

Pak sees Indonesia and Korea as sharing a colonial experience and the same imperative political agenda of establishing a nation-state with self-determination.

Ironically, Pak's Pan-Asian imagination is driven by enthusiasm for the establishment of nation-states. This poem clearly identifies what enabled Asian solidarity to form right after World War II.

What calls attention in his poem is that Pak's geopolitical imagination is not limited to Asia. "Everyone in all lands at which ocean currents arrive" refers to people of all "small and weak power[s]" in the world. Pak asserts the global solidarity of newly liberated nation-states. Here, Pak's Asian solidarity for anti-imperialism has extended to the global level. While Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism is constructed upon the dichotomous division of East and West, Pak's Asian solidarity and its global expansion are proclaimed upon the antithetical contrast between the weak nation-states, which were newly liberated from Euro-American imperialism, and their previous colonizers. In contrast with imperial Japan's Pan-Asianism, the poem does not claim any "Asian superiority" or "Asian values." It does not even valorize exclusive Asian regionalism. "Asia" in this poem is no longer an antithetical opposite of "the West" as it is in the Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism. Rather, it is a metaphor for "small and weak power[s]" of the whole world.⁵⁶

In this poem, Pak emphasizes the rich culture of the Southeast Asian region by means of Javanese Gamelan, the iconic music of Indonesia, and "song of palm trees, your

⁵⁶ Korean intellectuals used the signifier "Asia" as a metaphor of weak powers in the late 1940s. See Jang's *Sŭlp'ŭn ashia: Han'guk Chishigindŭrŭi Ashia Kihaeng* (2012). She provides Korean intellectuals' various discourses of "Asia" from 1945 to 1966.

ancestors sung.” Javanese “Gamelan” music, the largest orchestra outside the West, plays an important role in this poem. Gamelan is indigenous orchestral music of Java and Bali and is played with a variety of percussion instruments that perform a melody set by a bamboo flute or bow-string instrument. It represents the rich cultural heritage of that region. Some ethnomusicologists even call it a “Javanese musical icon” (Steiner 203-15). More importantly, Javanese gamelan repeatedly appears in many stanzas and plays a role as the refrain. “Furiously played” gamelan and the “song of palm trees” proclaim that Indonesia’s territory belongs to Indonesians, not to European colonizers. In this way, the poem is filled with the tension between the severity of European imperialism and the intense resistance of the Indonesians. Indeed, this refrain cannot be dissociated from the indigenous Indonesian community and their territory. This ethno-musical refrain even sounds as if it is a territorial bird’s song which warns and drives out other birds that enter its territory. Gamelan and ethnic songs serve as territorial markers in this poem. They deterritorialize the colonial milieu, reterritorialize it with ethnic culture, and finally proclaim that it is Indonesian “territory” and Indonesia as a “new nation-state.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari differentiate milieu and territory. A territory is “in fact an act that affects milieus and rhythms, that ‘territorializes’ them”(G. Deleuze and F. I. Guattari 314). Also, they assert that the refrain “is essentially territorial, territorializing, or reterritorializing” and it has three basic aspects; 1) a point of order 2) a circle of control 3) a line of flight. An instance of a point of order (G. Deleuze and F. I. Guattari 300). For details of music and refrain, see Ronald Bogue’s *Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (2007), pp. 17-33 and Chapter 1 and 3 of *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (2003), pp. 13-31, pp.55-76.

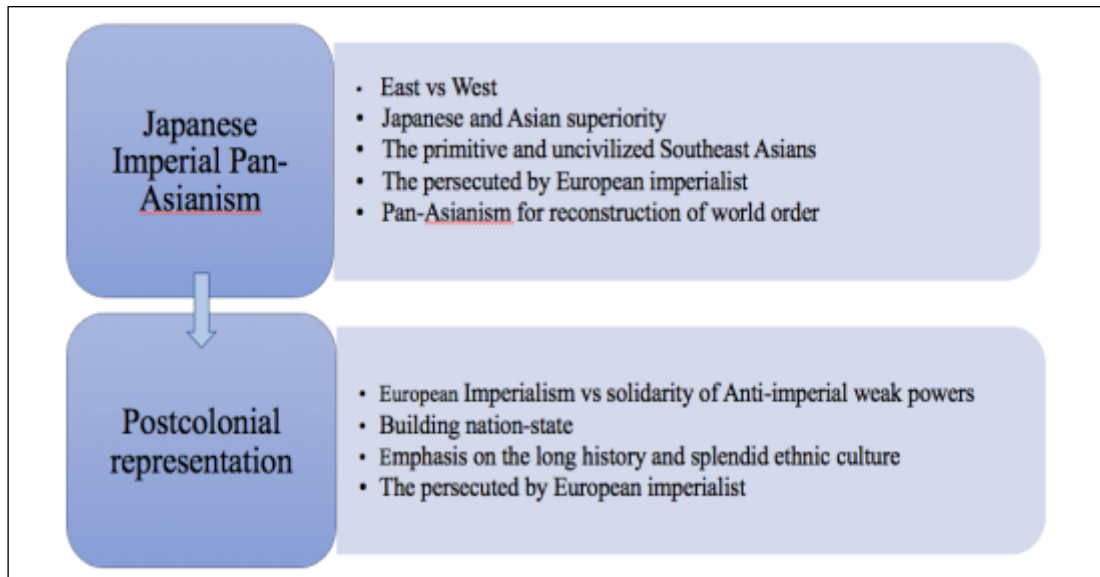


Figure 9. Inhwon Pak's imagining Southeast Asia in the 1940s. He challenges Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism by postcolonial representation of Southeast Asia.

IMAGINING THE PACIFIC (2)

Pak embarked on a freighter named “Namhae (South Sea),” crossed the Pacific Ocean, and arrived at Olympia, Washington on March 23, 1955. Cross-Pacific travel was very rare at that time as only a very limited number of rich and powerful Koreans, intellectuals, and artists could afford to make journeys to the United States. Hence, the majority of Koreans could only experience America through travelogues, Hollywood movies, and literature. Pak was an enthusiastic Hollywood film critic and a modernist poet who admired American poets such as Walt Whitman and Robert Frost. As we shall see, his understanding of America was mediated by representations in American mass-culture and canonized American literature. For him, “America” came into being within what Edward Said describes as an “imaginative geography.” Given this historical and

cultural background, his journey to the United States served as an opportunity to experience America first-hand and modify his pre-conceived imaginary American geography.

It should be noted that Pak recognized the military power of the United States. By virtue of American war efforts against imperial Japan and later during the Korean War, the United States was in a position to influence the fate of Korea. Thus, Pak cast a suspicious gaze on United States' military expansion, regarding it as a new threat of imperialism. This conception of American military power was strengthened as the United States occupation government started to control Korea.

“The Incheon Port”

I remembered the night view of Hong Kong
in a photo magazine.

I regretted the Shanghai port
during the Sino-Japanese War.

.....

The Incheon port,
the profile of poor Korea,
has neither an arcade nor a foreign consulate office.

.....

As the night comes
The American flag is fluttering in a billet,
Neon signs are red on a military base.

It seems to resemble the night view of the colony of Hong Kong,
In which the Union Jack was fluttering.⁵⁸

In this poem, the American flag fluttering in an American military base in post-colonial Korea overlaps the Union Jack that fluttered in colonial Hong Kong. The colonized city of Shanghai in the past also overlaps the post-colonial Korean city of Incheon. Although Korea had entered a postcolonial era, it was not a completely independent state. It was under the control of the United States military government. Korea was devastated after three years of bitter war, left in poverty with no diplomatic rights in regard to international politics. Pak says that “the Incheon port . . . has neither an arcade nor a foreign consulate office.” It is worth noting that Pak worked as a war correspondent for a newspaper during the Korean War. It is obvious that he recognized the imperial power of the United States and its supreme position in the new world order in the early stages of the Cold War era. In this context, Pak’s journey to the United States in 1955 was a journey toward the core state of the new world order. In other words, Pak’s journey was from the periphery to the center of the new world system.

Pak’s journey began by crossing the Pacific.⁵⁹ The Pacific was a stage where both Japan and the United States fought to expand their hegemony and territory during World War II. After the end of the war, the United States achieved military and economic superiority in the postwar Asia-Pacific area (Buckley 12). Bruce Cumings, a leading

⁵⁸ *Pak Inhwon Chŏnjip (The Complete Works of Inhwon Pak)*, pp. 42-4

⁵⁹ For the Pacific discourse that appeared in Korea from 1945 to 1950, see Sejin Jang’s “The Transition of Spatial Imagination and Cultural Politics of ‘the Pacific’ in 1945-1950.”

scholar in Korean history, says that by 1945, “American forces would garrison every valuable strategic point (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Okinawa, Guam, Midway, Wake Island), turning the seemingly limitless North Pacific into an American lake”(Cumings *Dominion from Sea to Sea : Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* 244).

Pak was crossing the Pacific, the American lake, for two weeks, and this experience is well described in his poem “In the Pacific.” In this work, the Pacific is portrayed from a different perspective than that of the United States.

“In the Pacific”

Seagull and one object,

‘loneliness’

I lost the sense of time

and the sun is cold.

I won’t have any desire.

I leave the sentimental emotion in the foamy waves

When the heavy and gloomy waves,

like the look of a dying man, are angry

I couldn’t cry out that I’m still alive.

I’m just flowing over the deep and quiet sea

To believe the power of will

When it rains with fog in the Pacific

Seagulls with black wings and black lips mock me
in my presence.

‘illusion’

I don’t know how much I’ve lost and how much remains.

We talked about angst in the past,
The battleships sank to the bottom of the sea, and
Hundreds of thousands of people died.
Everything fell asleep in the dim and deep calm sea.
What am I aware of now?
Is it only the consciousness of being alive?

The wind rises.
Blow as you wish. I smoke a cigarette
to commemorate this moment leaning on the ‘deck.’
Infinite solitude,
Where is the cigarette-smoke going?

Oh, Night,
put me to sleep between the boundless sky and the sea⁶⁰

“The Journey”

⁶⁰ Pak Inhwon Chŏnjip (*The Complete Works of Inhwon Pak*), pp. 117-8

I went on a journey to a distant land
without recognizing it.
I, the poor poet, even having no food at home
Without money in hand,
Whose trick it is?
Or is it my illusion?
On the ship, I crossed the ocean
in which many people died.
I am now roaming an unfamiliar country.⁶¹

The distinct image of the Pacific in this poem is death. “The heavy and gloomy wave” is metaphorized as “the look of a dying man.” The Pacific is a space permanently covered with a myriad of waves. This metaphor transforms the Pacific into the space of countless deaths. The death image is also symbolized by the seagulls with “black wings” and “black lips.” The color black is associated with darkness, death, and putrefaction. Every winged being is symbolic of spiritualization and transcendence.⁶² The bird is interpreted as symbolic of the soul in folklore and religion all over the world. The main cause of the myriads of death is war. Pak describes miserable war in the Pacific: “The battleships sank to the bottom of the sea / Hundreds of thousands of people dead. / Everything fell asleep in the dim and deep calm sea.” While the Pacific is symbolically represented as a space of death in “In the Pacific,” it is directly described as a space

⁶¹ Pak Inhwan *Chŏnjip* (*The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak*), p. 127.

⁶² See C.G.Jung's *Man and His Symbols*. pp. 149-57.

where “many people died” in “The Journey.” Pak’s major pathos in handling the Pacific is melancholy. The myriad of death in the Pacific, which is represented as numerous waves, seagulls, and abandoned battleships, evokes survivor’s guilt and sorrow in him. He “cannot cry out that I’m still alive” because he is encircled by the dead. Phrases such as “cold sun,” heavy,” “gloomy,” “lack of desire,” and “losing sense of time” reveal Pak’s psychological state of being unable to release his sorrow for the dead. His inner landscape is overshadowed by his pain, memory, and angst.

This libidinal economy causes a lack of desire and the loss of temporal sensation. Freud differentiates “mourning” and “melancholia” in his article “Mourning and Melancholia.” The “work of mourning” is a gradual and automatic attenuation of the suffering caused by the death of a love-object. This is the process of retrieving libidinal energy which the subject attached to the lost love-object. This is a very natural psychical operation and is a necessary process to release trauma. In comparison with “mourning,” “melancholia” is a symptom of psychopathology. It appears when the subject does not retrieve his or her libidinal energy from the lost love object.⁶³ In a word, Pak could not engage in the “*Trauerarbeit (Work of mourning)*” yet.⁶⁴ In this sense, the Pacific is the space of melancholy.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker confesses his dyschronometria: “I lost a sense of time.” The experience of crossing the Pacific for thirteen days is sufficient to take away his sense of time. Presumably, this long voyage is the primal reason for the

⁶³ For the relation between libidinal economy, the loss of the love-object, and narcissism, see Freud’s essay “The Libido Theory and Narcissism” (Freud et al. 16: 412-30).

⁶⁴ See, Freud’s essay “Mourning and Melancholia” (Freud et al. 14: 237-58) and J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis’s *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, pp. 485-86.

syndrome of dyschronometria. The dyschronometria in this poem needs to be examined in the light of modernity because Pak has a keen sense of world politics and his poem reflects the sharp political sense he retained. He recognized the United States as a dominant world power and a leading state of capitalist modernity. Pak came to understand the full extent of American capitalism through Hollywood films. In his lengthy essay on American films titled “Amerik'a yŏnghwa shiron (A Study on American Films),” Pak describes America as a country in which its capitalism is fully developed. In an interview with a magazine, Pak even criticizes American films for enticing the audiences’ spirits to follow capitalist civilization.⁶⁵ The Pacific is located between the U.S., a fully-capitalized core state, and Korea, a poor peripheral state in the world order. Peter Osborne argues that modernity is a production of “contemporaneity in terms of a qualitatively new, self-transcending temporality which has the simultaneous effect of distancing the present from even that most recent past with which it is thus identified”(Osborne 14). From the standpoint of geopolitics, this modernity as contemporaneity is ceaselessly produced from the core state of the world system. Then, it is diffused to the semi-periphery and periphery. When modernity as contemporaneity arrives at the periphery, the local temporality is pushed back to the past. In this sense, Pak’s journey to the United States is a journey from the past to the future, or the origin of contemporaneity, which has not yet diffused to the periphery. In this sense, the Pacific is an atemporal space between the past and the future, and it is only natural for Pak to lose his sense of time because he is on a time-traveling voyage.

⁶⁵ See, *Pak Inhwan Chŏnjip (The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak)*, pp. 321-33.

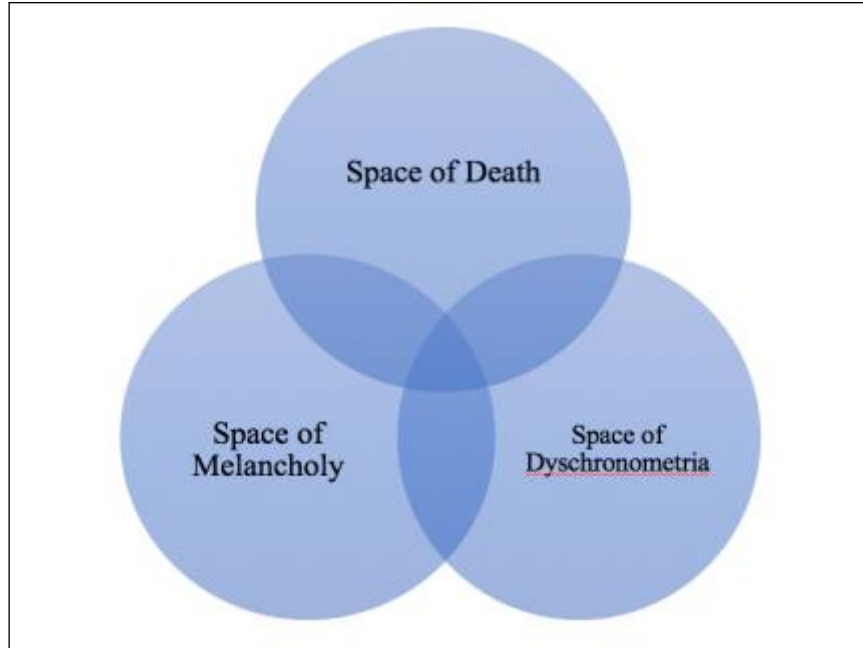


Figure 10. Pak's imagining the Pacific in the 1950s.

CRITIQUE OF CAPITALIST AMERICA

Transnational "flâneur" and the social physiognomy of America

Pak is a transnational "*flâneur*." "*Flâneur*" is the French term for the strolling urban observer. This term was poeticized by Charles Baudelaire in his *Paris Spleen* and popularized by Walter Benjamin in his work on Baudelaire and 19th century Paris' capitalist modernity. Benjamin argues that Baudelaire created the image of the poet as city *flâneur* and that he was the first great poet of the city. The "*flâneur*" moves anonymously through the crowd and observes urban life in the form of compelling and instantaneous impressions. As Pak traveled cities on the West Coast such as Seattle and Portland, he passionately strolled and gazed upon urban streets. He was a keen observer. As reflected in his poems, through his wonderings, he notes the nature and implications of the conditions of capitalist modernity in the core country of the world order. In this

sense, he can be considered as “transnational *flâneur*.”⁶⁶ Pak is not a mere observer who records the urban landscape in an objective manner. As a poet, he rather defines the order of things. While seemingly depicting, he shows us his own poetic vision of the public places and urban spaces of the United States in the late 1950s.

In his poems on this trip, the metropolis is a multi-faceted entity. There is no overarching perspective that can capture the diversity and flexibility of the urban environment. Hence, the metropolis cannot be represented as a big, singular picture. The city is better presented as a picture puzzle. Walter Benjamin argues that the gaze of the physiognomist brings to light the genuine character of the city. According to Graeme Gilloch, “physiognomic reading is no superficial activity, no cursory glance. It must go beneath the surface of things, penetrate to their core” (Gilloch and Benjamin 170). Benjamin and Gilloch’s notion of physiognomic reading resonates in Pak’s poetics. He does not provide a big picture of the metropolis. It is partly because he was shocked by the splendor of the American metropolis, and partly because he preferred observing a fragmented object or single phenomenon and penetrating its surface to find hidden meaning in it. By doing so, Pak critically sketches the social physiognomy of America in the late 1950s. His poems on capitalist modernity in the cities are collected under the title of *Amerik'a sich'o* (*America, selected poems*).

Watching television while quenching thirst with cold beer is a familiar scene of today’s American life. However, television and low-calorie beer were rare commodities in the 1950s. Pak confesses his very first experience of watching television and drinking

⁶⁶ For details of Walter Benjamin’s discussion on “*flâneur*,” see Walter Benjamin’s *The Arcade Project*. pp. 417-55. For the comprehensive discussion on “*flâneur*,” see Keith Tester’s *The Flâneur*.

low-calorie beer in his poem titled “Eböresüi iryoil (Sunday at Everette).” It is not difficult to imagine how Pak would feel as he encounters the popular commodities of America. From the experience of commodities, Pak realizes that an unevenness or insurmountable mountain is located between the center and the periphery of the world system. Pak’s experience of “the center” is comprehensively represented in the poem titled “T’umyöngghan pöraiöti (Transparent Variety).” Although quite long, this poem is quoted because Pak’s reading of the social physiognomy of capitalist modernity is crystalized in it.

“A Transparent variety”

The rusty

bank, theater, and electric washing machine

Lucky Strike

VANCE hotel, BINGO game

In the lobby of the consulate

In the dazzling department store

The cards of Easter

The RAINER beer.

I watched the LATE NIGHT NEWS on television,

thinking of old times.

A frenzy of music on Canada's CBC

A gentleman and prostitute are kissing

A gun aims at her breast

Washington state of America.

.....

Frown as comedy actress,

I place A Korean Grammar book of Dr. Choi, Hyŏnbae
next to handbag.

.....

Like the afternoon of colonies

the company flag is flapping

and the famous song "Papa Loves Mambo" of Perry Como

Ripped Trumpet

Crumpled passion.

Democracy and the naked goddess,

low fat beer and trend,

and a designer, full of enthusiasm, of fashion

and I almost fainted

.....

Strip show

The darkness of cigarette smoke

The neon sign is blindness.

.....
In the street, repeats chaos and order,

the time of confession passes.
.....

In my slender throat like a pencil,

the sound of sorrow comes out, not worth tomorrow.

Dim memories

America, Mona Lisa

Phillip Morris, Morris bridge

It's okay even the heartless happy

Before the coming of the Easter of April 10,

Good-bye

Good and goodbye (Capitalization in original)⁶⁷

Pak is a sharp observer of capitalist modernity. This poem effectively captures the significance of the phenomenon of capitalist modernity. “The bank” is one of the driving forces for the flow of capital. The “movie theatre” is the very place where the masses are mesmerized by fantasy. The “electric washing machine” is a representative appliance that emancipates women from their heavy housework. These three subject matters epitomize capitalism and the change of culture in modern life. Pak’s response to the charm of these symbols of capitalist modernity is negative. His critical stance on capitalist modernity is

⁶⁷ *Pak Inhwan Chŏnjip (The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak)*, pp. 137-41.

expressed in the first line “a rusty.” This adjective alludes to Pak’s disapproval of capitalist modernity.

Pak’s gaze moves to “gambling,” “a department store,” “prostitute,” and “fashion” in successive stanzas. As is well known, Max Weber emphasizes the role of ascetic Protestantism in the history of capitalism (Weber, Parsons and Giddens). Weber argues that protestants’ ascetic compulsion to save inevitably results in the accumulation of capital. Thus, ascetic attitudes and capitalism are interconnected, at least in the early history of capitalism. The ethics of ascetic labor does not allow Puritans to spend time in idleness because according to such ethics, time is equated with money. The accumulation of capital is proportionate to the amount of time spent laboring. Weber even calls it the “popular theology of the time” (Weber, Parsons and Giddens 106). “Gambling” stands opposite to such an ethics of ascetic labor and the theology of time. Gambling thrills people by providing a utopian fantasy of effortless fortune/windfall and the compression of time spent in labor. Gambling negates the equation of labor, time, and money. What is intriguing in this view is that passionate gambling, ironically, uncovers the boredom and fatigue in the daily life of those living in capitalist modernity. This point is illustrated by the “Vincent hotel, Bingo game” in Pak’s poem. “BINGO game” would be an entertainment of the American bourgeoisie, but what drives people to the game is the boredom of capitalist modernity itself. Meanwhile, the characteristics of gambling, such as uncertainty, investment, and risk seem to be embedded in capitalism and are part of its central mechanism. Gambling on the stock exchange would be the best example of this mechanism. In discussing finance capital, David Harvey criticizes the large capitalists’ access to credit and finance capital. He argues that the vast quantities of fictional capital

make room for the most colossal form of gambling and swindling in capitalism (Harvey 303-04).⁶⁸ In light of this rich connotation of gambling in capitalism, Pak's attention to gambling in capitalist America is right on the mark.

Pak is seeing "a splendid department store." In the American cities, a department store is a temple dedicated to capitalist modernity (Benjamin and Tiedemann 61).

Commodities displayed in the window of a department store have more display-value than use-value or exchange-value. Onlookers are mesmerized by a phantasmagoria that the displayed commodities arouse. Indeed, a department store is one of the essential places for the mass of capitalist modernity. Pak's awareness of the significance of such commodities leads him to the images of "prostitute[s]" and "fashion." The figure described as a prostitute here seems to be a character on a TV show. As is mentioned earlier, the poem recounts Pak's first experience of watching television. Interestingly, he picked the figure of the "prostitute" from many others on a TV show as his subject matter for the poem. In the Benjaminian context, the prostitute is an allegory of fetishized commodities and the dehumanization of industrial workers. Benjamin writes that "the closer work comes to prostitution, the more tempting it is to conceive of prostitution at work—something that has been customary in the argot of whores for a long time now" (Benjamin and Tiedemann 360 [J75, 1]). Surely selling one's body is different from selling his or her labor force. However, in capitalist modernity, work and prostitution are interchangeable categories.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, "fashion" is, in the context of the present

⁶⁸ Harvey's discussion and my own understanding on gambling in capitalism owe much to Marx's essay "The Role of Credit in Capitalist Production (1894)." For this essay, see Robert Antonio and Ira Cohen's *Marx and Modernity* (2002), pp. 204-7.

⁶⁹ For detailed analysis of the image of the prostitute in Walter Benjamin's work, see Graeme Gilloch, *Myth & Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the city* (1996), pp. 133-67.

analysis, closely linked to modernity. Fashion is transitory by nature.⁷⁰ It strives for “novelty,” separation from previous modes. Such characteristics of fashion resonate with those of modernity. Modernity is a permanent transition. Here, a designer is mesmerized by fashion. The figure of the designer in the poem can be understood as an allegory of a modern man who is mesmerized by capitalist modernity, which has its guiding principle the “newness” of commodities. Therefore, this figure foregrounds the fetishism of commodities.

Pak’s gaze then shifts to the crowd on the street. In his essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” Simmel indicates that the experience of the crowd is one of the conditions of metropolitan life (Simmel, Frisby and Featherstone 174-85). He argues that “the psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the *intensification of nervous stimulation* which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli” (Simmel, Frisby and Featherstone 175, emphasis in original). The main cause of the stimuli is the crowd. The crowd is the essential element of *flâneur*. Describing Constantin Guys (1802-1892)—the exemplary figure of the popular lithographer—Charles Baudelaire depicts that “the perfect *flâneur* [Constantin Guys], for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite” (Baudelaire and Mayne 9). Baudelaire’s description of Constantin Guys was also a description of himself. According to Benjamin, Baudelaire’s imperative task was to

⁷⁰ For the relation between fashion and modernity, see Ulrich Lehmann, *Tigersprung: Fashion and Modernity*. For Walter Benjamin’s ideas on fashion, history, and modernity, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and Arcade Project*, pp. 97-109.

defend himself from the shock of the crowd and “it is easy to trace in [Baudelaire’s] works his defensive reaction to their attraction and allure” (Benjamin et al. 4: 322). Similarly, Pak seems to be shocked by the crowd on the streets of American cities. He observes that “turmoil and order” take turns on the streets. This poem alludes that the big city crowd arises in Pak’s fear, revulsion, and horror.

In this poem, Pak presents the essence of capitalist modernity in the mode of images in a kaleidoscope. The round dancing images construct the everyday life of capitalist modernity. When Pak arrived at the core state in the world order, his first response was shock and trembling. Pak was not just mesmerized by the mode like a designer; rather he seems to be shocked by the grandeur of the mode and to distance himself from it. But his keen perspective apprehended the core phenomenon of capitalist modernity. Despite this shock, his keen poetic gaze captures the core phenomenon of capitalist modernity. Pak comes to understand the real entities of its contemporaneity. Through his poems, he delicately describes the social physiognomy of the United States in the 1950s.

Transnational Subject

Pak’s shocked experience of capitalist modernity in Seattle evoked melancholy and nostalgia for the periphery where he belongs. He found unevenness and irreversible differences between the center and the periphery. This awareness caused melancholy. “Saepyökh han siüi si (1 a.m. Poem)” was written in Portland, the largest city of the state of Oregon.

“1 a.m. Poem”

Dazzling more than daylight,
In the Portland's evening street,
The monotonous rhapsody by Glenn Miller is heard.
A crying mannequin in the display window.

For a little while I have left,
As I drink commemorate Gin Fizz,
Cold rain is falling on the rusted heart and brain.

Even if I go back to my friends,
I have nothing to talk about
Except the cemetery made with glass
And that I cried in the valley of the city
Inside of brick and concrete.

Like an angel,
The neon sign of vanity captivating me,
You do not have eyes and emotions.
Here the human beings do not sing a life,
And only melancholy thoughts relieve me.

Like a dust blown by the wind,
I am a microbe in this foreign land.

No, I was blown by the wind,
And with the bizarre consciousness of 1 a.m.,
Nevertheless, I am going back to the corroded past that I used to like.
(In Portland)⁷¹

The neon sign is a common method of advertisement, and as such serves as a synecdoche of commodities or an allegory of commodity capitalism. What is intriguing is that commodity capitalism is allegorized as a blind angel. This blind angel recalls Benjamin's *Angelus Novus* (Benjamin et al. 4: 392). While Benjamin emphasizes the destructive and barbaric history of human civilization in his *Angelus Novus*, Pak's angel foregrounds the blindness of commodity capitalism. "Blind" and "vanity," modifiers of the angel, reveal Pak's idea: capitalist modernity absolutely enchants him, for he confesses that he was captivated by the "neon sign." But, at the same time, he suspects that this splendid capitalist modernity is aimless and vain. Although the poet has an ambivalent attitude, the sparkling capitalist modernity easily overwhelms him. Feeling oppressed by the splendor of capitalist modernity, Pak senses himself as "dust" being blown by the wind—a worthless "microbe." The awareness of insurmountable unevenness between the center and the periphery provokes melancholy. Pak is crying "in the valley of city / inside of bricks and concrete." This melancholy occurs when the poet traverses national borders, and thus it can be called "transnational melancholy." Pak's transnational melancholy evokes nostalgia for the periphery from which he has left.

⁷¹ Pak Inhwan Chŏnjip (*The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak*), pp. 133-34.

The overwhelming core state evokes nostalgia for the periphery that he “used to like.” Svetlana Boym argues that nostalgia is “not merely an expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into ‘local’ and ‘universal’ possible” (Boym 15). In other words, nostalgia is an emotion of internalizing the division of universality and locality, and of preference of a specific local past to the contemporaneous universality. In this poem, Pak contrasts contemporaneity and the hybridity of America with the long history and homogeneity of Korea. This contrapuntal structure of the poem reflects tension between the enchantment of capitalist modernity and his nostalgia.

The complicated relationship between modernity as contemporaneity, shock experience, and nostalgia is well described in Pak’s poem “Travel.” Pak’s urban experiences in Seattle and Portland are overlapped in this poem.

“Travel”

A land, known for sacred freedom

It has thick forests,

luxurious buildings, and houses

This is an American city.

I walk down the streets of Seattle where the neon sign shines red.

I almost fainted.

No, my mind is clearer.

I see nostalgia in a tavern

Distorted remembrance,
Immortal solitude,
Korean mud still stuck to the bottom of my shoe,
I smoke “Peacock,” Korean cigarette.
That is my pride,
And my solitude.

Night street again
A stranger drinking on the street in Portland
What does that person going over there think of me?
(In Portland)⁷²

The splendid urban areas of Seattle and Portland shocked Pak. He almost “fainted.” Pak’s self-awareness of ‘locality’ has been developed in an attempt to build an antithetical axis of “the center.”⁷³ Of particular interest is that this antithetical axis is colored by nationalism, which is represented by “Korean mud” and his “Korean cigarette.”⁷⁴

⁷² Pak *Inhwan Chŏnjip* (*The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak*), pp. 127-29.

⁷³ The danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases, it can create a phantom homeland. Unreflected nostalgia can breed phantasmagoria of the world. However, the sentiment itself, that is to say, nostalgia, is provoked by the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, and it is at the very core of the modern condition.

⁷⁴ The “Korean grammar book by Dr. Choi, Hyŏnbae” in “The Transparent Variety” can be analyzed in this context. Choi, Hyŏnbae (1894~1970) is a representative scholar of the Korean language. Criticizing the overuse of Sino-Korean words in Korean writing, Choi claimed to use Korean entirely in Korean writing rather than mixed scripts—Korean words and Sino-Korean words. See Kim, sŏktŭk’s *Oesol Ch’oe Hyŏn-bae hangmun kwa sasang*.

Pak describes the periphery as “the corroded past.” The center and the periphery are not merely geographical coordinates. Rather, they are topographical and temporal coordinates. As was mentioned earlier, the center is the place where “modernity as contemporaneity” is ceaselessly born. When modernity as contemporaneity arrives at the shore of the periphery, it pushes the indigenous temporality of the periphery out and makes everything the “corroded past.”⁷⁵ However, newly-arrived contemporaneity from the center cannot completely exclude locality and temporality from the periphery, making it so that the periphery becomes the place where heterogeneous temporalities unevenly coexist and compete with each other. Modernity as contemporaneity ironically triggers a vivid and instant awareness of the locality and temporality of the periphery. In this sense, the rise of nationalism and the rediscovery of locality in Pak’s poem can be attributed to the dynamics of modernity.

De-scribing the center and the transnational micro-community

Pak’s transnational poems show us the possibility of cross-national micro-communities. There is an elective affinity between Pak, who is from the periphery, and an African-American, who is a minority of “the center.” Their *Sensus Communis* is none other than melancholy. This melancholy does not signify mere individual emotion, for it has been forged by a hierarchical social structure and world order.

“One Day”

With a black man who bought a bottle of wine

⁷⁵ This is the significant aspect of what Peter Osborne calls ‘the politics of time.’ Pak is aware of dynamics of modernity between the center and periphery.

For Easter on April 10th,
Passing through the forest of buildings,
Talking about Abraham Lincoln's story,
I see an advertising poster of the movie theatre.
--Carmen Jones--

Mr. Mohn is driving a truck,
His wife is kissing Cook,
And I am watching the Gillette Company's show on the television.
The mother of a lieutenant killed in combat in Korea,
Now seeing a Korean for the first time,
Takes my hand and invites me for sightseeing downtown Seattle.

Where many people live,
Where many people have to cry,
The white cloud in the American sky,
What does it mean?

America- I thought it was the country of Whitman, but
America- I thought it was the country of Lincoln, but
As bitter tears flow,
"Bravo ... Korean", says

The black man and drinks the wine.⁷⁶

Pak says that he thought America was the country of the great poet Walt Whitman, and a land of freedom and equality, which was established under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. However, the reality is different from his fantasy. When the poet encounters an African-American, he becomes disillusioned about the center. A black person is crying bitterly in this poem. The bitter tear cracks the fantasized homogenous center and reveals its hidden aspect. In this poem, the center is “de-scribed” and the poet from the periphery is “de-colonized” through an elective affinity with the minority from the center. Ironically, an affiliate community or a transnational micro-community between them is formed by the melancholy of *Sensus Communis*. The African-American bought a bottle of wine to celebrate Easter, a festival and holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. However, what is more significant in this context is that Christianity is the religious foundation of the United States, and Easter is one of the important rituals of this religion. The African-American is, indeed, alienated from this crucial ritual and its spirit. The black man’s tear proves that the center is never homogenous and that there is no non-hierarchical “equality.” Unfortunate social reality provokes melancholy for the black man, and it leads him to sympathize with the poet from the East. This common sense of alienation and melancholy sustains a transnational or cross-national community. A transnational subject can go beyond regional ethnocentrism and acquire a pluri-local identity through melancholic sympathy. Pak

⁷⁶ Pak *Inhwan Chŏnjip* (*The Complete Works of Inhwan Pak*), pp. 123-4.

questions the dominant values of the center and embraces a transnational moment. Indeed, melancholy is a dominant pathos of transnational literature.

Pak's traveling poems exemplify traits of transnational poetry: unevenness between the center and the periphery, constellational phenomena of capitalist modernity, the origin of ambivalent attitudes towards the transnational subject, nostalgia and transnational melancholy, modernity as contemporaneity, and the possibility of transnational micro-communities.

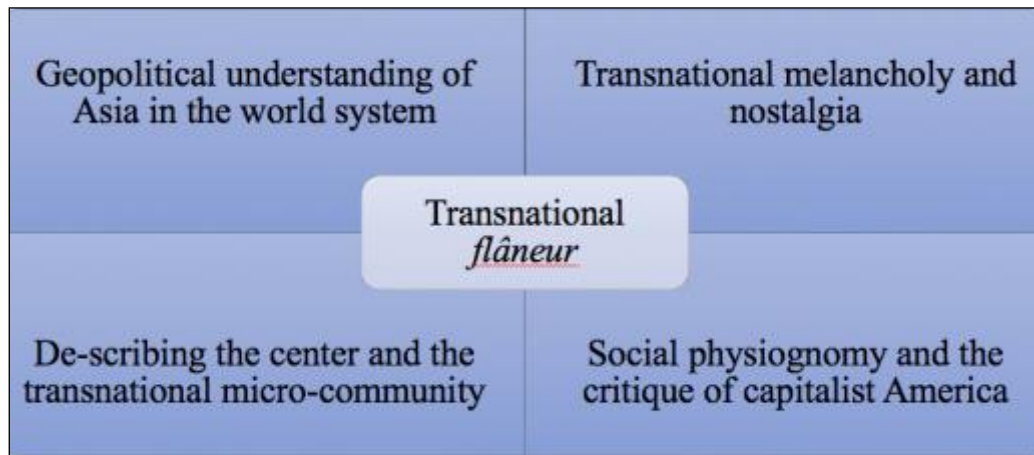


Figure 11. Pak's critique of Capitalist Modernity in the U.S.

CHAPTER 4

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha: Minor Writing, Re-writing history, and Imagining Asia-Pacific

The historical construction is dedicated to the memory of the anonymous

-Walter Benjamin (4: 406)

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha is a quintessential transnational figure. She was born on March 4, 1951 in Pusan, a city in the southeastern part of Korea, during the Korean War. Her family left Korea for Hawaii in 1963 when she was twelve years old. A year later, her family moved to San Francisco.⁷⁷

The chronotope of *Dictée* extends far beyond her own life's time and space. Chronologically, *Dictée* spans many decades from her grandparents' and parents' lives in the early colonial period to her first revisit to Korea in 1980. Spatially, *Dictée*'s experimental writing takes nomadic movement along the Asia-Pacific region, covering Korea, Manchuria, Hawaii, and San Francisco. If one considers Cha's personal journey, she is a transpacific figure as well.

⁷⁷ For Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's biographical information, see Constance M. Lewallen's "Theresa Hak Kyung Cha-Her Time and Place" in *The Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982)*.

Dictée, a central work of Cha, was published in 1982. This work, as Timothy Yu puts it, was “neglected by Asian-American critics” for over 10 years, partly because it was so “experimental” that it was difficult to understand (Yu 102).

Critical rediscovery of Cha’s *Dictée* was triggered by the publication of *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, which was written by Asian-American scholars Elaine H. Kim and Lisa Lowe. This book was published as a response to the crisis of Korean diaspora communities and a Korean-American identity which was shaken by “The Los Angeles Riots in 1992,” also known as the “Rodney King riots.”⁷⁸ This incident occurred as a result of the Los Angeles Police Department’s use of excessive force when arresting Rodney King. It triggered six-day long riots in the L.A. metropolitan area in 1992. The “black-Korean conflict” at the core of the turmoil damaged the fragile foundations of Korean diaspora communities in the Los Angeles area.

In the preface of *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, Elaine Kim states that nationalism is a binding source of strength for disrupted Korean-American communities (Kang, Alarcón and Kim x). Elaine claims that *Dictée* is deeply connected with the Korean diaspora communities and Korean-American identity and that the work is in part driven by a nationalistic impulse. Yet, *Dictée* cannot be fully explained through a nationalistic lens. As Lisa Lowe states of Cha’s subjectivity, she “is unfaithful to the original” (Kang, Alarcón and Kim 35). Immigrants’ lives in *Dictée* are enacted across national borders. Although Cha has a nationalistic impulse, she cannot be defined as a homogeneous

⁷⁸ Nancy Abelmann and John Lie provide the context of the Los Angeles riots of 1992 and problematize American ideologies that appeared through the representation of the event in mass-media. See their *Blue Dreams: Korean Americans and the Los Angeles Riots*(1995).

national figure. Rather, she is a “becoming” entity. Her imagination and experimentalism go beyond “writing nation.” Rather, it is “writing the Asia-Pacific.”

Since the publication of *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, *Dictée* has been actively discussed within Asian-American literary studies for decades. Numerous researchers have grappled with *Dictée* to analyze various issues of this work, such as experimentalism, gender, nationalism, postcoloniality, and Asian-American identity. In reviewing the previous studies on *Dictée*, I will focus on the poetics, idea of history, and geopolitics of *Dictée*. There are numerous isolated analyses of *Dictée*, but there are no previous studies that analyze whole chapters of *Dictée* within a consistent theoretical framework. I will examine Cha’s poetics with a Deleuzoguattarian perspective on literature. Previous research on Cha’s idea of history has mainly focused on the “Clio History,” “Caliope Epic Poetry,” and “Melpomene Tragedy” chapters because these three chapters contain historical events and figures. However, there is no research that examines Cha’s idea of history as expressed throughout entire chapters. I will construct Cha’s idea of history by analyzing whole chapters in this research. The geopolitics in *Dictée* have been analyzed in terms of Cha’s Asian-American identity. Recently, Yunte Huang investigated *Dictée* from the perspective of the transpacific imagination (2008). This research focuses on the meaning of the crossing of the Pacific and of transpacific subjectivity and attempts to resituate *Dictée* in the broad historical context of the Asia-Pacific region.

Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of language and minor literature and Walter Benjamin’s concept of history shed light on Cha’s poetic strategies in *Dictée*. Cha dramatically reveals a language power-relation from the outset of this work and

dismantles this power-relation by using various poetic strategies. I will investigate the way in which Cha deterritorializes the dominant language in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's idea of language and literature. *Dictée* can also be approached from the point of view of Walter Benjamin's *The Arcade Project*. Both *Dictée* and *The Arcade Project* are experimental works that share poetic strategies such as quotation without quotation marks, anti-narrative, historical image, and literary montage.

The history of the Asia-Pacific area is one of the prime themes of *Dictée*. Thus, my analysis focuses on Cha's idea of history and the way in which she represents the historical image of the Asia-Pacific. Cha interweaves her own family's immigrant history and other historical events with multiple forms of media such as photos, calligraphy, handwriting, typed documents, diagrams, historical documents, and movie still-cuts. In doing so, she provides a historical image of the Asia-Pacific region. By using various historical events and presenting documents from the past, Cha claims that Japanese imperialism and the Cold War set the preconditions for the formulation of the concepts of the Asia-Pacific area and the transpacific subject.

DICTÉE AS THE MINOR LITERATURE

After the introduction of the nine muses, which are its chapter titles, *Dictée* begins with a dictation of a French paragraph into English. This exercise of French deviates from the formal rule of dictation as a practice of foreign language learning.

Aller à la ligne C'était le premier jour point

Elle venait de loin point ce soir au dîner virgule

les familles demanderaient virgule ouvre les guillemets

Ça c'est bien passé le premier jour point
d'interrogation ferme les guillemets au moins
virgule dire le moins possible virgule la réponse
serait virgule ouvre les guillemets Il n'y a q'une
chose point ferme les guillemets ouvre les guillemets
11 y a quelqu'une point loin point ferme
les guillemets

Open paragraph It was the first day period
She had come from a far period tonight at dinner
comma the families would ask comma open
quotation marks How was the first day interrogation
mark close quotation marks at least to say
the least of it possible comma the answer would be
open quotation marks there is but one thing period
There is someone period From a far period
close quotation marks (1)

This dictation exercise is a passive activity. The authority of the given original language is irreversible. Foreign language learners are supposed to record exactly the given original words. No deviation is allowed. Here, Cha records the French teacher's instructions and commands regarding punctuation and grammar. In doing so, she foregrounds the target language's authority and the foreign language teacher's regulative

power in the class as well. This initial representation of dictation draws readers' attention not to the process of learning a foreign language, but to the language-power relationships that she brings to the forefront. Cha problematizes the complicated relation between language, power, and representation in a social-political context. This emblematic scene resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of language.

In the first sentences of plateau four of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari seek to dismantle the idea that the essential function of language is to represent our world through the communication of information. They use the classroom to expose the essence of language:

When the schoolmistress instructs her students on a rule of grammar or arithmetic, she is not informing them, any more than she is informing herself when she questions a student. She does not so much instruct as 'in sign,' give orders or commands. A teacher's commands are not external or additional to what she teaches. They do not flow from primary signification or result from information: an order always and already concerns prior order . . . The compulsory education machine does not communicate information . . . the elementary unit of language—the statement—is the order-word. (75-6)

Deleuze and Guattari immediately link language with the idea of "the compulsory education machine," a socio-political institution. Language has an institutional context and an institutionalizing function. When Deleuze and Guattari say that orders do not

come in the form of commands that are “external or additional” to what is taught, that an order “always and already concerns prior orders,” they mean that a certain ordering is expressed immanently through our use of language. The orders or imperatives are not simply marked by explicit imperatives such as “You must,” but are expressed immanently through their institutional contexts—for example, the students obeying their instructor, the instructor obeying the administration, the administration obeying the academic market to meet their contractual obligations with the government. Hence, language is not made to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the politics of language are fundamental to the study of language. They deny the widely-accepted idea in linguistics that “there are constants or universals that enable us to define it as a homogeneous system” (92). Deleuze and Guattari shift the primary task of linguistics from the study of “the abstract machine of language” to the study of “the variation of order-words” and “incorporeal transformations,” “regimes of signs”, and “usages of languages” in a specific sociopolitical sphere.⁷⁹

Cha challenges this imperative aspect of language with halting, stuttering, and fragmenting words and speeches. Especially, she takes language apart and experiments with it in her writing. In doing so, she creates “Speech perhaps” (158) or “Speaking broken. Saying broken. Talk broken” (161). In the view of Deleuze and Guattari, these attributes are the crux of minor literature. Ronald Bogue states that “what is common to minor literature . . . is a minor usage of language, an experimental deterritorialization of the power relations immanent within words” (Stivale 118). This statement is well

⁷⁹ For Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion on language, see their *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 75-148.

illustrated in the writing of Cha. As already seen above, she breaks the formal rule of dictation by adding punctuation commands, rather than simply including the punctuation marks themselves. Cha's deterritorialization of dominant language and its regime is allegorized as "cracked tongue" in the quotation below:

One by one

The sounds. The sounds that move at a time

Stops. Starts again. Exceptions

Stops and starts again

All but exceptions.

Stop, Start, Starts.

Contractions. Noise. Semblance of noise.

Broken speech. One to one. At a time.

Cracked tongue. Broken tongue.

Pidgeon. Semblance of speech.

Swallows. Inhales. Stutter. Start. Stops before starts. (75)



Figure 12. Amer, ca, 1976, *The Dream of the Audience*, p.105.

She frequently omits or changes parts of the spellings of English or French words to transform or parody their original meanings of the word. “Pidgeon” in the quotation above is a good example. Considering the whole context of the quoted paragraph, the “Pidgeon” must be “pidgin.” By using “eo” instead of “i,” Cha emphasizes the fact that her language is as fragmented and hybrid as pidgin English. Cha’s “pidgin” English, which is allegorized as a “cracked tongue,” deviates from the norm of dominant language and cracks its symbolic order.

One of Cha’s artworks, titled “Amer” (1976, Fig 12), shows how she breaks the dominant signification system and the symbolic order of language with hybrid “pidgin.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ See, *The Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyun Cha (1951-1982)*, pp. 104-05.

This art work is a very simple photographic image: she simply wrote “AMER” on the American flag. “AMER” is certainly the first four letters of “America.” Here, Cha omits the last three letters of “ica” on purpose. This omission can cause various effects. Above all, this incomplete word may allude to the imperfection of America, revealing Cha’s critical perspective on the country. This work can also be reexamined from a multilingual perspective. Lawrence R. Rinder argues that Cha creates “consciously imposed detachment” from the English language by mingling her English texts with French, Korean, and Latin words (Lewallen, Rinder and Trinh 19). As is well known, “AMER” is a French word for “bitter.” It may allude to Cha’s painful life in the United States as an immigrant and as a female Asian-American. Her pain is allegorically represented as the process of learning a foreign language in *Dictée*. If we put a space between “A” and “MER,” this French “a mer” means “to the sea” in English. It may allude to her transpacific experience arriving in the United States. Also, it is reminiscent of the French language, which “crossed” the Atlantic and is used in Cha’s artwork. In this context, this work reveals not only the productive signification of the multilingual “cracked tongue” but also Cha’s broad geopolitical view of the United States. In this way, Cha’s “cracked tongue” deterritorializes the oppressive dominant language. Furthermore, she creates her own language and a new signification process.

Cha’s work resonates with Kafka’s minor use of language in his own writing. Deleuze and Guattari assert that Kafka’s writing strategy is “to be a foreigner *within* his own language” (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari 26 italics in original),⁸¹ “to make use of

⁸¹ The translation is from Ronald Bogue’s *Deleuze on Literature*, p. 100. Dana Polan, translator of English version of *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, translates this sentence as “to be a sort of stranger *within* his own language.” Considering Cha’s writing

the polylingualism in [his] own language, to make of this a minor or intensive usage, to oppose the oppressed-character of this language to its oppressor-character, to find points of . . . linguistic third-world zones through which a language escapes” (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari 26-27).⁸² Indeed, Cha is a minor writer who makes her own “linguistic third-world zone” in *Dictée*.

Cha’s “cracked tongue” is inseparable from others’ utterances. Cha gives her body and tongue to the others so that her tongue is cracked. The others swarm in her body. She is gladly occupied by and threaded with them. Finally, her body becomes an “assemblage” of the others, which is “a heterogeneous collection of entities that somehow function together” (Bogue 145).

She allows others. In place of her. Admits others to make full. Make swarm. All barren cavities to make swollen. The others each occupying her . . . She allows herself caught in their threading, anonymously in their thick motion in their weight of their utterance. When the amplification stops there might be an echo. She might make the attempt then. The echo part. At the pause . . . She waits inside the pause. Inside her. Now. This very moment. Now. She takes rapidly the air, in gulfs, in preparation for the distances to come. The pause ends. The voice wraps another layer. Thicker now even. From the waiting. The wait from pain to say. To not to. Say.

strategy using foreign languages such as English, French, Korean, Chinese character, Bogue’s translation is much more specific and accurate than Dona’s translation.

⁸² The quoted translation is also from Ronald Bogue’s *Deleuze on Literature* pp. 100-01.

She would take on their punctuation. She waits to service this. Theirs.

Punctuation. She would become, herself, demarcations. Absorb it. Spill it.

Seize upon the punctuation. Last air. Give her. Her. The relay. Voice.

Assign. Hand it. Deliver it. Deliver. She relays the others. Recitation.

Evocation. Offering. Provocation. The begging. Before her. Before them.

(3-4)

Her pain originates in part from the weight of their utterance. She just quietly waits for the presence of the others and desperately tries to find “the very moment” of delivering the others’ utterance. Cha is neither a ventriloquist nor a shaman. She does not just mimic the others’ utterance or lose herself to deliver the others’ utterance. Instead, she becomes a “demarcation,” a zone of proximity, between the others and the world. Then, she relays the others to the world. In doing so, Cha redeems the others, who are buzzing in her corporeality, in the form of “Recitation. Evocation, Offering.” Who are these “others”? Considering the figures in *Dictée*, they are transpacific subjects represented by Cha’s family and also underrepresented figures from past historical events. For her, the others’ utterance is a “missing narrative” (81) is that recovered in a multitude of narratives. We will return to this historical issue later.

Cha prefers uncaptioned images, which are related to the historical events she wishes to present. *Dictée* has various images, but most of them have no caption, making it so that the reader cannot access detailed historical facts from the images. These uncaptioned images yield remarkable effects. Uncaptioned photography cannot be an

exact documentation of specific historical events. However, ironically, it can refer to any historical event. For instance, the Korean graffito (see fig. 13), which is known as an inscription written by mobilized Korean laborers, has no caption. It refers to all victims of forcible mobilization all over the world.⁸³ The photograph of an execution (Fig 14) also refers to all martyrs who died for the independence of their nation-states.



Figure 13. *Dictée*, frontispiece

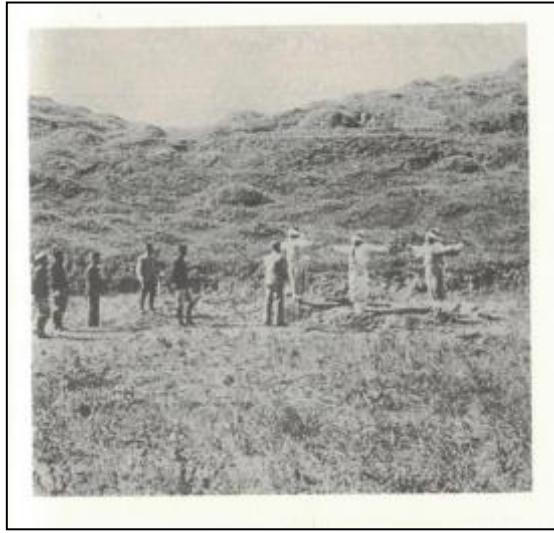


Figure 14. *Dictée*, p. 39.

Cha's "pidgin" and "cracked tongue" call the idea of the "mother tongue" into question. Naoki Sakai states that Cha's multilingual text does not presuppose the distinctive and distinguishing identities of language unities such as English and French, nor the national identity of the literary text (Sakai 25-26). *Dictée* is written in six

⁸³ The graffito (fig 13) is written in Korean. Following the vertical lines, from right to left, it says that "I want to go home," "I am hungry," and "Mother I miss you." Laura Hyun Yi Kang speculated on the authenticity of this graffito. However, the authenticity of this graffito is not important because Cha presents this graffito as an allegory of forcible mobilization, rather than as a historical document. For the authenticity issue of the graffito, see Luara Hyun Yi Kang's "The "Liberatory Voice" of Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*" (Kang, Alarcón and Kim 99).

languages and presents the movement from one language to another. Given the linguistic movement, the putative position of mother tongue as original language is not postulated. On the one hand, Cha speaks in cracked multiple tongues. On the other hand, Cha has a nostalgic longing for a “mother tongue” as she recalls her dead mother’s *langue*.

You are Bi-lingual. You are Tri-lingual. The tongue that is for-bidden is your own mother tongue. You speak in the dark. In the secret. The one that is yours. Your own. You speak very softly, you speak in a whisper. In the dark, in secret. Mother tongue is your refuge. It is being home. Being who you are. Truly. (45-46)

She seems to postulate a sphere where one is secure and comfortable at home in language.

However, it should be noted that her mother’s *langue* is also fragmented from the outset: “You are Bi-lingual. You are Tri-lingual” (45). According to Cha’s remembrance of her mother in a chapter called “Caliope Epic Poetry,” Cha’s mother was born and lived in “Young Jung,” Manchuria (45). Many Korean peasants emigrated to Manchuria starting in the late nineteenth century. “Young Jung,” hometown of Cha’s mother, had one of the most concentrated communities of Korean immigrants in China. This town was settled in 1877 by a few Korean peasants but soon it became a big Korean immigrant settlement. This town served as the base for modern educational institutions for Koreans

as well as for independent activists during the colonial period.⁸⁴ In a word, “Yong Jung” was a central place for immigrants, refugees, and exiles. After the Japanese invasion in 1931, Manchuria came under the control of imperial Japan. Cha’s mother worked for a school in Manchuria in 1940 (48). She was required to teach in Japanese. Consequently, three languages—Korean, Chinese, and Japanese—co-existed in Cha’s mother. The historical experience of Koreans as “refugees, immigrants, exiles” (45) in the early twentieth century was embedded in her multilingualism. In short, the deprivation of a mother tongue is inseparable from colonialism. Hence, Cha finds both the deprivation of a mother tongue and multilingualism in her mother’s *langue*. Cha sees a parallel between her mother’s deprivation of a mother tongue in the colonial context and her own cracked tongue in the context of transpacific exile and immigration. Although she has a longing for a mother tongue, this historical experience elucidate why mother tongue does not exist in *Dictée*. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, there is only “a dominant language” within a political multiplicity, not a mother tongue (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 7)

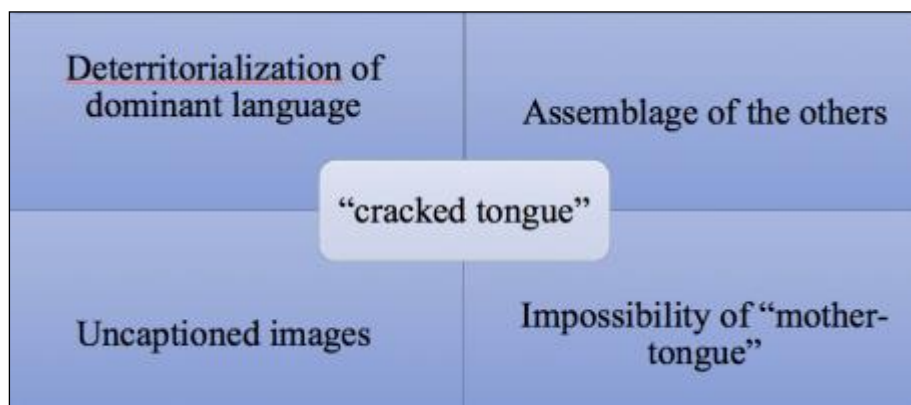


Figure 15. Cha’s minor writing in *Dictée*

⁸⁴ For comprehensive discussion on the relation of Korea and Manchuria and Korean diaspora life in Yong Jung, see *Wŏlgyŏnggwa isan: Manjuro kan chosŏnindŭl*

THE IDEA OF HISTORY IN *DICTÉE*

Cha's idea of history as it is represented in *Dictée* can be appropriately explained in terms of Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history. Walter Benjamin opposes the modern propensity for the historical amnesia of rosy-colored progressivism and exhorts us to remember those whose struggles and sufferings in the past would otherwise be forgotten. In his essay "On the Concept of History," Benjamin states that "the chronicler who narrates events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accord with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost to history" (Benjamin et al. 4: 390). For Benjamin, the past is not something that is over and done with. The past is not something given, but is continually refigured according to the interests of the present. Hence, "[H]istory" is the subject of construction" (Benjamin et al. 4: 395). In Benjaminian terminology, this intersection or interplay of 'then' and 'now' is conceptualized as a 'dialectical image' (Benjamin and Tiedemann [N2a, 3] 462). This image can be considered as a montage of historical events or elements. Benjamin's preferred terminology for such a montage is "constellation." The past is actualized and is constructed with the present in this historical montage or constellation. It is the "dialectical image" that makes history perceptible.

From Benjamin's point of view, the past is revitalized and refigured according to the interests of the present. In other words, the past is waiting to be rediscovered and refigured by the interests of the present. The past is dormant or dead before it is refigured. As Benjamin states, "the past carries with it a secret index by which it is referred to redemption." Benjamin links his discourse on the past to the ethics of "the historical materialist":

If so, then there is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Then our coming was expected on earth. Then, like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* messianic power. A power on which the past has a claim. Such a claim cannot be settled cheaply. The historical materialist is aware of this (Benjamin et al. 4: 389-90 italics in original).

Benjamin claims that the “historical materialist” has an obligation to rediscover and refigure the past generations that have not been figured. The “historical materialist” has a “weak messianic power” because he or she historically redeems the past generations and resurfaces them on the horizon of the present.

Benjamin’s perspective on history sheds an insightful light on Cha’s idea of history and her writing practices. This point can be supported by several passages in *Dictée*:

Why resurrect it all now. From the Past. History, the old wound. The past emotions all over again. To confess to relive the same folly. To name it now so as not to repeat history in oblivion. To extract each fragment by each fragment from the word from image another word another image the reply that will not repeat history in oblivion. (33)

From another epic another history. From the missing narrative. From the multitude of narratives. Missing. From the chronicles. For another telling for other recitations. (81)

The decapitated forms. Worn. Marred. Recording a past, of previous forms. The present form face to face reveals the missing, the absent. Would-be-said remnant, memory. But the remnant is the whole. The memory is the entire. The longing in the face of the lost. Maintains the missing. (38)

Cha comprehends the essence of human history as a “wound” (33). A repetition of trauma is what human civilization has perpetuated through history. Cha even says that “[history has] no destination other than towards yet another refuge from yet another war” (80). There is no room for the concept of “progress” in such a history. History just repeats moments of hurt and trauma: “There is no future, only the onslaught of time” (140). Cha calls this repetitive history “stand still” (80). *Dictée* presents Korean modern history as a recapitulation of human history. When she first visited Korea eighteen years after having left the country at age twelve, Cha confronts the fact that the country still suffers from national division and dictatorship: “April 19th, eighteen years later. Nothing has changed . . . Here at my return in eighteen years, the war is not ended. We fight the same war. We are inside the same struggle seeking the same destination” (80-81). Finally, Cha proclaims that “our [historical] destination” is fixed in “perpetual exile” (81).

What is the cause of Cha's pessimistic understanding of history? She asserts that the main cause of such a traumatic history is historical "oblivion" (33) and the "missing narrative[s]" of the unprivileged (81). Cha's main concern in *Dictée* revolves around the erased or forgotten history of minorities. These unprivileged and un[der]represented figures are "minorities" in Deleuzoguattarian terminology. Deleuze and Guattari assert that "the opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it" (G. Deleuze and F. I. Guattari 105). In other words, majorities and minorities are not defined by their numbers. Rather, they are defined by "functional positions as dominant and dominated groups" (Bogue *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* 128). Cha recognizes that minorities and their untold narratives are buried in historical oblivion and this oblivion is the main cause of their miserable history. She wants efface "points of measure": "No particular distance from center to periphery. Points of measure effaced. To begin there. There. In Media Res" (157). Cha's understanding of history, which is related to the idea of the majority and the minority, is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's idea of history. Deleuze and Guattari assert that "there is no history but of the majority, or of minorities as defined in relation to the majority" (G. Deleuze and F. I. Guattari 292). As Ronald Bogue puts it, "the majority's construction of history is also an obliteration of history, an active force that erases the stories and memories of minorities" (*Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* 128).

Cha's solution for halting repetitive traumatic history is to "restore memory" of "unemployed, unspoken history" (133) and recite the "missing narrative[s]" of the repressed (81). In this sense, *Dictée* is a dictation of counter-history and counter-memory.

Again, *Dictée* is the project of resurrecting the forgotten past and reciting missing narratives to halt traumatic history. *Dictée* is, as Yunte Huang puts it, constructed almost like an archive (Huang 134). Cha's cracked tongue constitutes the "collective assemblages of enunciation" of the minority who have not been fully represented in official historical records. She "allows herself caught in their threading" (4). Her "cracked tongue" actualizes them through the delivery of their utterances and speeches. In *Dictée*, Western readers encounter not only lesser-known historical figures such as Yu Guan Soon, but also unknown ordinary people such as Cha herself and her dead mother.⁸⁵ Cha clearly indicates that "the chronicles" contain a myriad of untold or un-recited narratives. She asserts that written history should consist of a "multitude of narratives" (81). You Guan Soon, a female independence movement activist in Korea, and countless anonymous Koreans who were committed to the democratization movement, are representative of these "missing narrative[s]."

Cha re-writes history from a different perspective than that which supports a privileged narrative centered on the male politician. The biography of Yu Guan Soon in the chapter "Clio History" is juxtaposed with the Korean immigrants' petition letter to president Roosevelt (34). This petition was written by Rhee Syngman and Yun Byōng-gu in 1905 to claim the independence of Korea. They were main figures of the Korean diaspora community in the U.S. and took a leading role in independence activities of the 1900s and 1910s. Most notably, Rhee Syngman was the first president of South Korea.

⁸⁵ Yu Guan Soon is a well-known female independent movement activist in Korea. In comparison with the story of other independence movement leaders or politicians, her story has been a "missing narrative" for a long time. Cha contrasts Yu Guan Soon and Rhee Syngman, the first president of Korea.

He accepted hegemony under the patron of the United States Military Government in 1948 because he was an extreme anti-communist. Cha foregrounds Yu Guan Soon, who died at a young age in prison because of her involvement in the independence movement. Cha presents Yu Guan Soon's photograph and caption on two pages to claim that she is an emblematic figure of the independence movement in colonial Korea (24-25). Also, Yu's gender is emphasized by two Chinese letters, 女男, written in calligraphy (26-27, Fig 16). “女” means women and “男” means men. This Chinese compound noun for men and women is usually written in the order of 男女. However, Cha reverses the conventional order of the word to emphasize Yu's female gender.



Figure 16. *Dictée*, pp. 26-7.

Cha's counter-history writing is undeniably social and political. The main subject matter of the chapter “Melpomene Tragedy” is the democratic movement in South Korea from 1960 to 1980. “The April Revolution” in 1960 was a civilian democratization movement against Rhee Syngman's dictatorship. This revolution was temporarily

successful, but Park Chung Hee, who led South Korea as a dictator from 1961 to 1979, and a handful of army and marine officers swiftly positioned armored units in Seoul at midnight on May 16, 1960, and subsequently almost two decades of military rule began. The democratization movement peaked in late 1979 and early 1980 right after the assassination of Park Chung Hee. The streets of Seoul buzzed with common citizens who demonstrate for democracy. This period is called “Seoul Spring,” a term that alludes to “The Prague Spring” in Czechoslovakia. However, the longing for a democratic society was brutally suppressed by Chun Doo Hwan’s military regime, another dictatorship.⁸⁶ Cha interweaves significant scenes of the democratization movement in South Korea. In this chapter, she writes of those two historical moments and foregrounds numerous Korean civilians’ collective struggles to gain democracy (80-88). Cha makes the collective voice of the streets heard. Throughout this passage, Cha refers to her narrators as “disease.” In French “la disease” is the feminine form of “le diseur,” “the teller,” from the verb “dire,” “to speak.” “Le diseur” is a term for a professional story teller or reciter of tales.

Dead gods, Forgotten. Obsolete. Past

Dust the exposed layer and reveal the

Unfathomable

Well beneath. Dead time. Dead gods. Sediment.

⁸⁶ For a more comprehensive discussion of the democratic movement from 1960 to the present in Korea, see Bruce Cumings’ *Korea’s Place In the Sun*, pp. 342-413. For “Seoul Spring” in 1980 and Chun Doo Hwan’s Fifth Republic, see Jinwoong Kim’s *A History of Korea: From “Land of the Morning Calm to States in Conflict*, pp. 474-81.

Turned stone. Let the one who is disease dust
Breathe away the distance of the well. Let the one
Who is disease again sit upon the stone nine days
And nine nights. (130)

Dead words. Dead tongue. From disuse. Buried in Time's memory.
Unemployed. Unspoken. History. Past. Let the one who is disease, one
who is mother who waits nine days and nine nights be found. Restore
memory. Let the one who is disease, one who is daughter restore spring
with her each appearance from beneath the earth. The ink spills thickest
before it runs dry before it stops writing at all. (133)

Cha revitalizes various figures and events of the past. Furthermore, she evokes the minority of the past through the disease's tongue. As noted earlier, the recital of *Dictée* is inseparable from the "missing narrative[s]" of minorities found throughout traumatic history. In the quotations above, the past is metaphorized as a "buried layer" or "sediment." When the past is buried in time, it is merely "dead words" and "dead tongue." The imperative task of the "disease" is to unearth the layer which is buried in time and to expose it.

Cha's recitation of counter-history appears as an image via her montage-like rewriting strategy. The lesser-known historical figures and events are represented in various forms, such as photographs, graffiti, fictional narratives, calligraphy, newsprint, handwritten letters, and autobiographical fragments. These various forms are juxtaposed

like a cinematic montage. Anne Anlin Cheng argues that *Dictée* is an archive with “anti-documentary desires” (Cheng 139). *Dictée*’s “evidences . . . are conspicuously lacking in proper documentation,” unlike materials in a conventional archive or museum (Cheng 143). However, Cheng does not recognize that Cha suggests her own historiography with historical images. Cha shows us the history of the minority as images.

Cha’s rewriting of counter-history is not limited to Korea alone. Rather, it encompasses the Asia-Pacific area. *Dictée* recollects and transgresses major historical events of modern Korea: the Korea-Japan annexation of 1910, the anticolonial independence movement, the Korean diaspora in China, Japan’s invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the strong assimilation policy that began in 1938, the Pacific war, Japan’s compulsory mobilization of Koreans, massive repatriation of Koreans after the liberation in the late 1940s, the intervention of U.S Military Government, the national division, “The April revolution” of 1960, “Seoul Spring” of 1980, and the cruel military rule and state-violence bloodshed that followed. Each historical event in this long list affected the trajectory of modern Korean history and impacted neighboring countries as well. Cha’s geographical scale inevitably extends beyond the Korean peninsula due to the huge influence of Japan and the U.S. imperialist domination of Korea and her family’s painful experience of transnational displacement. *Dictée* depicts complicated histories of relations between Korea, Japan, Manchuria, and the United States.

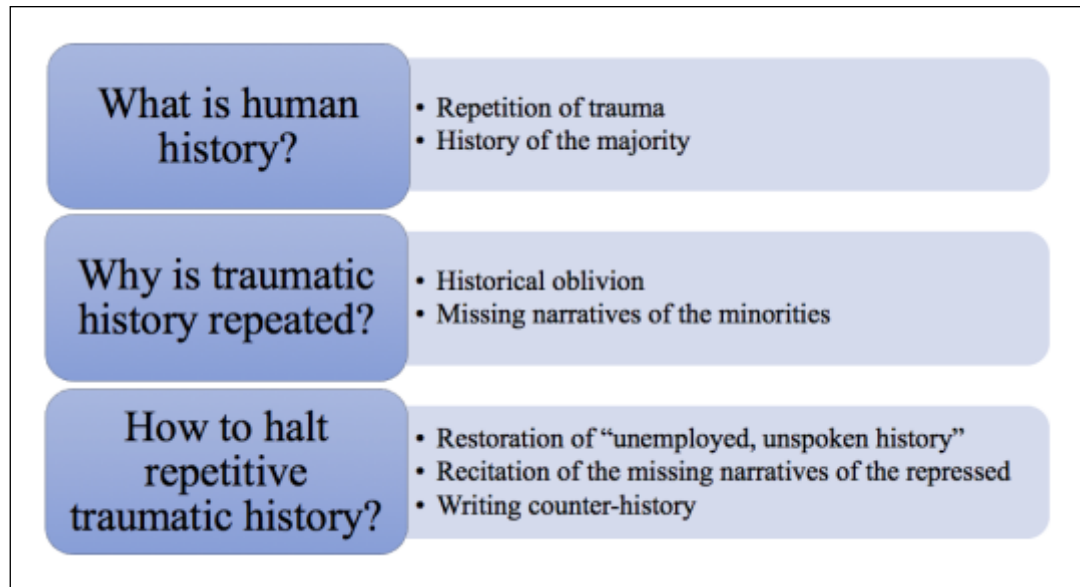


Figure 17. Cha's idea of history

TRANSPACIFIC CROSSING AND THE LIMINALITY OF THE TRANSPACIFIC SUBJECT

Cha's recitation of missing history reflects the history of the Asia-Pacific area, which is interwoven with the Cha family's exile, repatriation, and immigration experiences. The history of the Asia-Pacific area is materialized and recapitulated in Cha's family history.

As mentioned above, Cha's mother, Hyung Soon Huo, was born in Yong Jung, Manchuria to the first generation of Korean exiles who settled there. Cha defines Koreans in the town as “refugees, immigrants, and exiles.” In the chapter “Melpomene Tragedy,” Cha describes her family's migration history and her mother's life in Manchuria as an exile under Japanese colonial rule:

Mother, you are eighteen years old. You were born in Yong Jung,
Manchuria and this is where you now live. You are not Chinese, You are
Korean. But your family moved here to escape the Japanese occupation . .
. You live in a village where the other Koreans live. Same as you.
Refugees, Immigrants. Exiles. Farther away from the land that is not your
own. Not your own any longer.

Mother, you are eighteen. It is 1940. You have just graduated from a
teacher's college. You are going to your first teaching post in a small
village in the country . . . Japan had already occupied Korea and is
attempting the occupation of China. Even in the small village the signs of
their presence is felt by the Japanese language that is being spoken. The
Japanese flag is hanging at the entry of the office. And below it, the
educational message of the Meiji emperor framed in purple cloth. It is read
at special functions by the principal of the school to all the students. (48-9)

Later, Cha depicts her mother's repatriation experience after the end of the Pacific
War. Cha's mother came to Manchuria with her parents to escape from Japanese colonial
rule. She was an exile. This repatriation marked the first time Cha's mother returned to
Korea since her childhood.

You know it would not be in vain. The thirty six years of exile. Thirty six
years multiplied by three hundred and sixty five days. That one day your

country would be your own. This day is finally come. The Japanese were defeated in the world war and were making their descent back to their country. As soon as you heard, you followed South. You carried not a single piece, not a photograph, nothing to evoke your memory, abandoned all to see your nation freed. (80-81)

Her mother's eagerness to return to Korea is aptly described in the above passage. She was not alone. Numerous Koreans repatriated to the newly-liberated Korea from Manchuria, Japan, the Pacific Islands, and the United States. However, the delight of her repatriation narrative is abruptly replaced by the suffering from national division and dispersed families. As Japan relinquished colonial rule of Korea after its defeat in 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union, two world powers of the Cold War era, agreed to divide Korea into two. They controlled each half. Millions of dispersed families in North Korea and South Korea could not repatriate to their hometowns. In Cha's text, the migratory birds allegorize repatriation, an impossible project for the dispersed Koreans:

The population standing before North standing before South for every bird that migrates North for Spring and South for Winter becomes a metaphor for the longing for return. Destination. Homeland. (80)

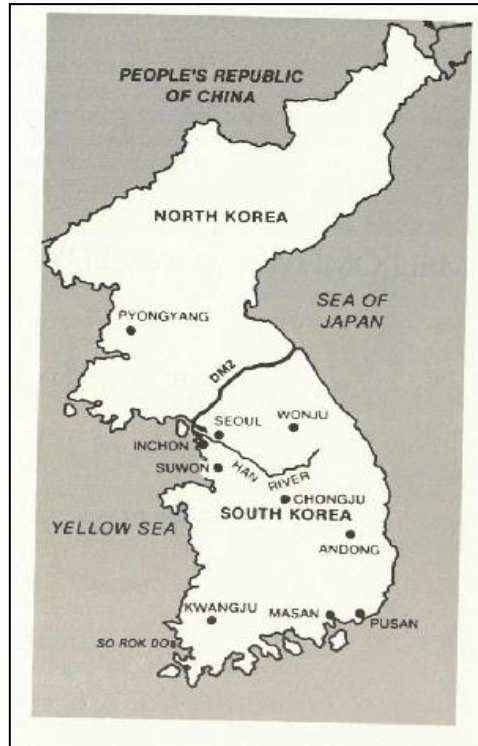


Figure 18. *Dictée*, p.78

The chapter “Melpomene Tragedy” begins with a map of divided Korea (Fig 18). The Demilitarized Zone is distinctly marked on the map. The National division by the world powers of the Cold War era made the repatriation of Koreans impossible. Colonialism resulted in many exiles like Cha’s family, and their repatriation becomes impossible during the Cold War era. Therefore, it can be said that the national division extends the trauma of colonialism. Cha describes this irony in a letter to her mother: “There is no destination other than towards yet another refuge from yet another war” (80). In this connection, the Demilitarized Zone indicates the tragedy caused by colonialism and postcolonial Cold War ideology.

Dictée has two strands of geographical trajectories. One is her mother's trajectory and the other is Cha's own. Cha's family emigrated to the United States in 1963. Cha's family's exile, repatriation, and immigration draw a transpacific trajectory. Her mother was exiled to Manchuria, repatriated to Korea, and immigrated to the United States. Cha crossed the Pacific when she was twelve and later re-crossed the Pacific to visit Korea for the first time since she emigrated to the United States. These two trajectories meet in Cha's persistent tracing of her family odyssey, making a big circle encircling Korea, China, the Pacific, and the United States. From Cha's tracing, two strands emerge as overlapped and concentric: "Tenth, a circle within a circle, a series of concentric circles" (175). In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari say that "we are made of lines. We are not only referring to lines of writing. Lines of writing conjugate with other lines, life lines, lines of luck and misfortune, lines productive of the variation of the line of writing itself, lines that are between the lines of writing" (194). In light of Deleuze and Guattari's idea of lines, "concentric circles" clearly allegorize Cha and her mother's transpacific life lines.



Figure 19. Cha and her mother's concentric movement

This traumatic trajectory of Cha and Cha's mother epitomizes an Asian experience from the colonial period to the Cold War era. In some sense, *Dictée* and Cha's family trajectory address American involvement in Asia and the Pacific area. Especially, the chapter "Melpomene Tragedy" foregrounds Korea's division and the agony of numerous Koreans due to American involvement in Asia.

Dictée illustrates transpacific international relations across the Pacific. According to *Dictée*, American involvement in Asia traces back to 1905. In the chapter "Clio History," Cha introduces a letter entitled "Petition from the Koreans of Hawaii to President Theodore Roosevelt."⁸⁷ This letter was "authorized by 8,000 Koreans now residing in the territory of Hawaii at a special mass meeting held in the city of Honolulu." This petition letter alludes the long history of American involvement in Korea. This letter pleads for American assistance in Korean independence efforts and insists that "[a] treaty of alliance" was entered into "to preserve the independence of Korea from Japan and to protect Eastern Asia from Russia's aggression" (34). Also, it claims that Japanese aggression became "exactly the same as that of Russia prior to the war":

The United States has many interests in our county. The industrial, commercial, and religious enterprises under American management have attained such proportions that we believe that the Government and people of the United States ought to know the true conditions of Korea and the

⁸⁷ This letter was signed by Syngman Rhee and P.K. Yoon on July 12, 1905. Syngman Rhee became the first president of Korea in 1948. P. K. Yoon's full name is Byung Koo Yoon. He was a leader of the Korean immigrants in the U.S.

result of the Japanese becoming paramount in our country . . . The clause in the treaty between the United States and Korea gives us a claim upon the United States for assistance, and this is the time when we need it most. (36)

This letter concerns the precautionary deal regarding Korea. This deal was used by the United States as a means of fending off Russia's political aspiration to advance onto the Korea Peninsula. The letter is also partly a belated expression on behalf of the Koreans that Japan could turn out to be a threatening force to them. It also reveals that the U.S. had no interest in protecting Korean sovereignty. Rather, the U.S. "has many [economic] interests in our country" (36). In the minds of Rhee and Yoon, this was proof that the United States' intentions were not pure in regard to the future of Korea. As Yu-yen Liu puts it, "fifty years later, the U.S.' strategic interests in East Asia further embroiled American military forces in Korea, eventually leading to the division of the Korean peninsula" (511).

The petition exemplifies transpacific relations between Korea, the United States, and Japan. The Roosevelt administration did not respond to the Korean immigrants' plea to intervene on their behalf for the cause of Korean independence. Instead, the United States signed the Taft-Katsura Agreement in 1905, and officially acquiesced to Japan's dominance in Korea (Kutler 4: 457). Roosevelt viewed Japanese imperial advance to East Asian country as a way of countering the Soviet Union. These two super powers' involvement in the Korean peninsula ultimately resulted in the division of the country in

the Cold War era. United States involvement in Asia clearly accounts for the victimization of Korea in international politics.

Transpacific international relations at the individual level are described through Cha's mother's naturalization process and Cha's re-crossing of the Pacific. Cha depicts the naturalization process of her mother in the following passage:

One day you raise the right hand and you are American. *They* give you an American Pass port. The United States of America. Somewhere someone had taken my identity and replaced it with *their* photograph. The other one. *Their* signature their seals. *Their* own image. (56; my emphasis)

Through this naturalization process, Cha's mother undergoes a transformation of identity. However, this transformation is not thorough. It is rather partial. This argument is proved by the repetition of the word "their" in the passage. Cha keeps saying "their" in the quotation above. There is still a line of demarcation between "I" and "they." This scene evinces a rough process in which one becomes another. The expatriated subject is distorted and imperfectly transformed by this naturalization process. The process is an alienation process. In this passage, Cha depicts her mother's experience of alienation:

You return and you are not one of them, they treat you with indifference. All the time you understand what they are saying. But the papers give you away. Every ten feet. They ask you identity. They comment upon your inability or ability to speak. Whether you are telling the truth or not about

your nationality. They say you look other than you say. As if you didn't know who you were. You say who you are but you begin to doubt. They search you. They, the anonymous variety of uniforms, each division, strata, classification, any set of miscellaneous properly *uni formed*. (56-7; my emphasis)

Cha's mother "return[s]." She crossed the Pacific and arrived in the United States. Although she has American citizenship, she is treated as an outsider. "They" are homogenous. Their homogeneity is emphasized by the phrase "uni formed." Cha divides the word, "uniformed," into two parts, "uni" and "formed." "Uni" emphasizes "their" homogeneity and one-ness. "Formed" alludes to the fact that their one-ness is culturally constructed and that they are a pack or group. They make her an outsider. Mainstream Americans exclude the transpacific subject. Although Cha's mother has American citizenship, she is alienated as a transpacific subject.

In the chapter "Melpomene Tragedy," Cha re-crosses the Pacific and visits Korea when it was undergoing the historical turmoil called the "Seoul Spring." She is eager to retrieve her membership in the Korean community among the crowd of demonstrators:

I am in *the same* crowd, *the same* coup, *the same* revolt, . . . I am *inside* the demonstration. I am *locked inside* the crowd and carried in its movement. (81; my emphasis)

She repeats the word “same” throughout the passage displaying her eagerness to identify herself with Koreans by the word “same.” She even emphasizes that she is “locked inside.” Her desire for solidarity between herself and Koreans is connoted in the expression of “locked inside.” However, she painfully recognizes that “[she] speak[s] another tongue now, a second tongue[,] a foreign tongue” (80). It is a lament for the impossibility of identifying herself with Koreans for the cause of solidarity. Her transpacific subjectivity is in a state of endless transition. This scene clearly exposes the liminal condition of the transpacific subject that is split between Korea and the United States and straddles both Korean and American identities. Thus, the transpacific subject is posited in the liminal space between both shores of the Pacific. In the chapter “Terpsichore Choral Dance,” this liminal space is described as “In Media[s] Res” (157), a Latin phrase referring to “in the middle of things.”

CHAPTER 5

TOWARD TRANSPACIFIC POETICS

This thesis investigates the ways in which Asia and the Pacific are imagined and represented by Sijong Kim, Inhwon Pak, and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. They share the transpacific experiences of exile, migration, and travel in various historical contexts. The subjectivity of each of these three writers was constructed on the borders of several nation-states. The geographical scopes of their works go far beyond a specific nation-state, encompassing a broad area along the Pacific Rim. As the literary output of their transpacific subjectivity, the works of the three writers can duly be termed as transpacific literature.

The most important characteristic of their works is that they can be defined as “minor literature.” The distinct features of “minor literature” as defined by Deleuze and Guattari are minor usage of language, emphasis on becoming, and experimental deterritorialization of power relations of words. Another commonality of the literary works by Kim, Pak, and Cha is their preoccupation with counter-history and counter-memory. Each of them grappled with his or her historical experiences and introduced them into their works. Focusing on such historical aspects, this dissertation problematizes lingering imperialism in the conventional imagining of Asia-Pacific in American academe. Contemporary American Studies tend to decontextualize the traumatic history of Asia and the Pacific while valorizing a capital flow between Asia and the U.S., as well as the Asia-Pacific economic dynamism under the influence of neoliberalism. As a

counter-memory and counter-history, these three writers' works uncover multilayered scars inscribed in the modern history of Asian-Pacific region.

The main body of this dissertation is devoted to tracing a critical genealogy of imagining Asia and the Pacific by analyzing the representative works by Kim, Pak, and Cha. For Kim, literature is a mode of action to situate himself in history as a Zainichi, which does not belong to North Korea, South Korea, or Japan. Colonialism, post-colonialism, and Cold War ideology contributed to shaping Kim's sense of subjectivity, and his life as a Zainichi recapitulates the troubled relationship between Korea and Japan. Specifically, Kim defines his writing as "Denial of Tanka lyricism," expressing his rejection of the conventional genres and idiomatic usage of Japanese. As a result, his poetry is historico-political, not lyrical, as well as lengthy, not short. In addition, his poems are written in a peculiar style of Japanese. In this sense, his poetry can be characterized as "minor literature."

Poems of Ikaino (1978) contains memoirs of Ikaino, a shanty area for Zainichi. The collection of poems addresses its dweller's everyday life filled with various antithetical tensions, such as discrimination and resistance, assimilation and stubborn cultural nationalism, struggling for survival and chronic poverty, an unwelcoming diasporic home, and nostalgia for a homeland. Kim's anthology is an archive of cultural memories of the Zainichi throughout the prewar and postwar eras. Hence, the book carries anthropological and ethno-historical value. Kim does not present Ikaino as a location of an 'abject' and 'bare' life. Rather, he describes the shanty town as being part of the Zainichi's vibrant and carnivalesque ethnicity. In many poems, the Japanese language used by Ikaino dwellers is deterritorialized by their Korean language and their

Cheju dialect, in particular. Their Japanese, according to Kim, is “Japanese that is not like Japanese.” Kim’s hyperbolic treatment of Zainichi’s great appetite for food resonates with the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque and its sub-categorical notion of the grotesque body. The carnivalesque orientation of his works is reinforced by his use of folkloric material such as Korean goblins and shamanic rituals. These elements constitute the ethnicity of Zainichi in Ikaino.

As is pointed out in chapter two, the image of the Pacific in Kim’s *Niigata* epitomizes the grotesque. The Cheju Sea, on one end of the Pacific, is metaphorized as “a gargantuan live fish tank,” and the tank is filled with “fish being fed on human flesh.” This atrocious metaphor and the horrent sea image graphically describe a myriad of violence and a tragic event which had happened in and around the Pacific during the Cold War period. Kim says that every single drop of the sea has an “untold story” of the person who “did not get to speak.” This unspeakable subject can be regarded as the synecdoche of the victims of various ideologies and violence. The Pacific turns into the textual space of the myriad of untold stories of the persecuted.

The untold stories of the sea are materialized and resurfaced from historical oblivion by the image of the ship. The image of the Pacific cannot be a temporally homogenous space because each ship has its own chronotope. Consequently disparate chronotopes are densely interwoven and resonate with each other in Kim’s poems. By weaving together various chronotopes, Kim highlights the historical dimension of the images of the Pacific. In other words, Kim constructs a literary montage with the various images of ships to evoke a consistent historical image of the Pacific.

In Kim's poems, the Pacific is described as the backdrop of American involvement in Asia. Kim views American capitalist culture as another form of imperialism. In Kim's poems, the advancement of American culture over the Pacific is metaphorized as a "warship."

Similarly to Kim, Inhwan Pak was deeply concerned with anti-imperialism and Asian solidarity in the 1940s. He crossed the Pacific and traveled to the United States in the 1950s. His imaginary transnational topography includes Korea, Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and the United States.

In Post-Liberation Korea, the word "nation" was a powerful transcendental signifier. Southeast Asia emerged as the focus of a new intellectual interest in this cultural-political climate. As with other Korean intellectuals and artists, Pak showed a profound interest in Southeast Asia and Asian solidarity. His representation of Southeast Asia and urge for Asian solidarity are intriguing because they attack Japan's colonial discourse of Pan-Asianism. Pak does not prioritize "Asian superiority" or "Asian values." He does not even valorize exclusive Asian regionalism. The signifier "Asia" in Pak's poem is no longer antithetical to "the West" as is the case in the Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism.

The most important incident in understanding Pak's perspective on Asia and Asian solidarity is his travel to the United States in 1955. After the liberation, Pak challenged Japanese imperial Pan-Asianism and deconstructed it by the representation of Southeast Asia and the urge for Asian solidarity to build independent nation-states. However, his geopolitical understanding of Asia was changed by his travel experiences in America. He recognized that the world system was established and that Asia was already

included in the system. The recognition of this world system lead him to locality and nostalgia.

While Pak eventually perceives his identity in terms of a larger world system, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha cannot be pinned down in one locality or binary system of the center versus the periphery. *Dictée* is a symbolic record of her constant nomadic movement.

Cha reveals a language power relation and dismantles it with various poetic strategies. She challenges the dominant language with halting, stuttering, and fragmented word and speech. The use of multiple languages throughout the text also contributes to the deterritorialization of the dominant language. Cha's language in *Dictée* is fragmented into several languages such as French, English, Korean, and Chinese by her nomadic migration experience. In doing so, Cha creates "speaking broken, saying broken, talk broken" (161) and problematizes the idea of "mother tongue."

Closely related to Cha's concern with language is her idea of history. She sees history as a "wound" and suggests the "restoration of memory" and the "recitation of missing narratives[s]" as the ultimate solution for repetitive traumatic history. She believes that historical chronicles contain a myriad of untold narratives. *Dictée* itself then can be understood as a recitation of such a missing narrative. In this sense, *Dictée* is dictation of counter-history and counter-memory.

Cha's rewriting of counter-history focuses on the Asia-Pacific area. The history of the Asia-Pacific is interwoven with the exile, repatriation, and immigration experiences of the Cha family. In a word, the history of the Asia-Pacific area is inscribed in the Cha family history.

What are the salient elements of transpacific poetics as they manifest themselves across the works of these three transpacific writers? The most prominent feature of transpacific poetics is “minor writing.” Minor writing includes deterritorialization of major languages, multilingualism, denial of conventional genres, negation of mother tongue, constructing literary montage by various images, text, and quotation without quotation marks. In doing so, transpacific poetics continually problematizes assumed or imposed hierarchies embedded in language.

Asia-Pacific is imagined in the works of the three writers in similar ways: the region is viewed as a space of exile, migration, repatriation, and resistance against imperialism. Transpacific poetics pays great attention to the historical scars which are inscribed in the Asia-Pacific area.

In transpacific poetics, the Pacific is a textual space of untold stories, numerous deaths, American involvement in Asia, European imperialism in Asia, and transpacific international relations. As a result, transpacific poetics represent a myriad of forgotten or underrepresented stories and constructs “counter-memory” and “counter-history.”

A transpacific subject is located in liminal space. The subject is alienated from both ends of the Pacific. This sense of alienation yields melancholy and fragmented self-understanding. Also, this liminality is frequently expressed in the contrapuntal structure of transnationalism and the rediscovering of the locality. However, as Victor Turner puts it, liminality is the “seedbeds of cultural creativity” (28). The sense of the liminal as an interstitial or in-between space opens up the possibility of cultural creativity. A transpacific subject presents their literary works as a liminal space of contestation and change.

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