

Article

East Asian Unconscious of Translation and World Literature*

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Introduction

This article mainly explores the existing method of the translation of world literature into Korean and its historical characteristics; e.g., concerning translation into Korean, to ask who (subject), when, where (historicity), what (genealogy), why, and how (attitude & method). Whose voice did the translation tell the Korean people and what imagination did world literature arouse in the Korean people? How did translation and world literature reveal the spirit of the age in Korea, or why did they produce different literary effects and praxes?

This study will deal with two themes together, namely, translation and world literature. In addition, it will suggest that it is necessary to let the keywords “East Asia” intervene between the two. It aims to escape from the hackneyed Western—Japan—Korea scheme by doing so. This means the following two things: first, the study will test whether Western-centric thinking can be overcome; second, it will lead to an appreciation of the historical value of literature in translation in Korea as part of East Asia.

Three Questions about Literature in Translation

First, the questions “what is literature in translation in modern Korea?” and “can translation have a unique realm in literary history?” cannot be solved by comparative literature or translation studies. Comparative literature and translation studies that aim to evaluate how much the original works have been distorted in translation and which text is a better translation are not interested in the following questions: who translated a certain work and why?; how has the thing we call world literature today been established?; what is the idea of modern literature in Korea?¹

The largest blind spot in comparative literature or translation studies is,

above all, that it cannot escape the order of rank in the following: original/translation, source/copy, and creation/imitation. The structure, the original Western (European) work vs. the Oriental (Asian) translation, strengthens binary oppositions such as completeness/incompleteness, sacredness/worldliness, normality/abnormality, and sovereignty/coloniality as a result.

Second, without being conscious of the fact that Koreans are users of a minority language with experience of colonial rule and national division on the periphery of East Asia, it is impossible to examine the possibility of world literature. In contrast to the statistics found on *Ethnologue*, the number of users of Korean practically amounts to just 50 million persons.² Moreover, as soon as the modern Korean language was established and began to be used as a literary language, Koreans experienced colonial subjugation of over 35 years and then a linguistic division that has continued for about 70 years, due to the Korean War. This is the reality of the modern Korean language. Then, what do translating world literature into Korean and reading it in Korean mean?

The notion of world literature, which Goethe mentioned for the first time in 1827, was a product of the imagination of 19th century Europeans. In addition, it is an idea of a modern era, in that it aims at a spirit of free and universal literature and is a civic imagination of the equal and democratic distribution of cultural heritage. Goethe’s (2010, 252-57) comment is a kind of cosmopolitan declaration. However, to East Asians, as “non-Europeans,” world literature cannot come into existence without translation, and translation without a subject of translation is a fantasy as well. The belief in a universal canon common to humanity that can be established through world literature is a one-sided truth. Without constant translation, no universality can be obtained, and without a translator, no text of world literature can exist historically.³

Third, studies of translation and literature in translation are

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1. For an attempt to overcome the limitations of comparative literature or translation studies, see Cho 2011; Cho 2015. He takes special note of subjective opportunities in vernacular translation which mediate the relation with the other and appraises the literary possibility of translation from a new viewpoint.

2. Korean is spoken by 77.3 million people in seven countries, making it the 12th most widely spoken language in the world. However, a substantial population of the speakers of the Korean language are the 50 million in South Korea. For this information please see Table 3 on the website: <https://www.ethnologue.com/statistics/size>.

3. An important argument was recently published by Jaeyong Kim. He aims to extend the prospect of world literature through the notion of “global universality” from the Asian viewpoint. However, he underestimates various opportunities in vernacular translation and leaves the case of East Asia out of consideration. See the introduction particularly in Kim 2012. For more articles on this topic, see Kim et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2014.

methodologically useful; they make Koreans doubt the monophony of literature imagined in their native language and the modern literature they have historically practiced.⁴ Translation is a process of deceptive editing, accompanied by misreading and unexpected misunderstandings. Through translation, the imagination of the original work is mistranslated on purpose, or a mistake, not intended by anyone, may be produced. Sometimes, an imitation without an original copy or a translation that is more excellent than the original work is born. Therefore, world literature is not singular and can never be equal. What makes the difference is, of course, the translation.

What does it mean that translation creates separate world literatures? Are world literatures of the Western and Eastern worlds not the same, and can world literature exist differently in Korea, China, and Japan? Further, has what we call modern Korean literature been developed in a singular way and linearly? We should never forget the fact that this series, the Korean language and world literature, world literature and translation, and translation and East Asian modernity, is concrete and historical.

Translation and East Asian Modernity

If we consider the historical time and space of “East Asia,” thinking of translation and world literature, the discussion becomes more complex: e.g., “What world literature did modern East Asia share and how did it share it or why did it not share it?” This study will investigate four interesting examples.

Why were Henrik Ibsen’s plays translated almost simultaneously at an early period in Korea, China, and Japan, and most enthusiastically, too? How different were the translated titles of those of Alphonse Daudet’s short stories that were commonly included in textbooks of these three countries and how contrary were the methods in which they were read? How divergent were the evaluations of Pearl S. Buck and Yutang Lin, and why were they forced to change around 1945?

However, before commencing an earnest discussion on this matter, it must be said that there is another layer that the term, East Asian literature in

translation, is hiding. Apart from Western literature, there is another literature that was translated into native languages in East Asia. In East Asia, how was East Asian modern literature translated? For example, was Chinese literature or Japanese literature translated into Korean? In Korea, are the modern literatures of China or Japan part of world literature? To lead with the conclusion, they never are. This phenomenon is a historical problem (Park 2013, 262-66).

First, before 1945, Japanese literature was shockingly not translated into Korean. Not a single modern Japanese literature anthology was compiled, and no Japanese literature was included in world literature anthologies. Korean writers grew up poring over modern writers of the former colonial ruler, such as Soseki Natsume, Ogai Mori, Toson Shimazaki, and Katai Tayama, but no one translated their works into Korean. Moreover, Koreans were unaware of pre-modern Japanese classics or literary traditions.

As is well known, modern Korean literature consistently absorbed Western literature through second-hand translation (double translation) from Japanese. European literature of the 19th century is Western literature and thereby world literature, which is also modern literature. The existence of Western literature was double-translated through Japanese, after it was studied in Japan and selected by the Japanese. Even Chinese literature was acquired through Japan, and translation and studies were set off by double translation from Japanese. However, surprisingly enough, Japanese literature itself, was thoroughly excluded from translation, even though the Japanese language was the foundation for the double translation.

This strange attitude was caused by a linguistic issue, the replacement of the mother tongue (Korean) by national language (Kokugo, Japanese), but this means that a certain mechanism, which may be called the colonial unconscious, was much greater and more powerful.⁵ Was this phenomenon caused by a special historical experience in Korea or was it a common phenomenon of colonial modernity? For example, how were the translations of English literature in India, French literature in Vietnam or Algeria, and Spanish or American literature in the Philippines undertaken? The important thing is not the vertical and hierarchical translation from the empire to the colonies, but the difference and disparity existing among translations in the colonies.

4. For a look at the concrete methodology of studying literature in translation and the historical reevaluation of the early modern Korean novel, see Park 2011.

5. The notions of “East Asian unconscious” and “colonial unconscious” are taken from *The Political Unconscious* (1981) by Fredric Jameson. See Jameson 2015.

Likewise, Chinese literature remained almost untranslated into Korean. The works of Lu Xun, one of the group of modern Chinese writers after 1911 and a few short stories from the May Fourth Movement period were translated, but no collection of poems or full-length novels were translated before 1945 (Park 2013, 268-71). Chinese literature had a direct impact on changes in the political environment, such as the Japanese Occupation of Korea (1910), the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937), Liberation (1945), and the Foundation of the People's Republic of China (1949), but in terms of quantity, it was translated little more than Japanese literature. In addition, Eok Kim, the translator of Chinese poetry whose work reached the largest scale, and Geonsik Yang, the only translator specializing in Chinese literature, were actively translating. These two translators continued to translate the largest number of works during the colonial period, no matter whether what they were translating was Eastern or Western literature. They were exceptional literary subjects who appeared as translators and continued as translators.

However, Chinese literary works before modern times were constantly translated and enjoyed. There was no period when Bai Li and Fu Du's Chinese poems, *Sanguozhi Yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Shui Hu Zhuan* (*Water Margin* or *Outlaws of the Marsh*) were not translated or read. Nevertheless, it is certain that Chinese poetry and historical novels were not embraced as world literature.

In short, contemporary Chinese or Japanese literature was almost not translated in Korea before 1945. Even translations via China or Japan were thoroughly obsessed with the Western literary imagination, and the notion of world literature was recognized, distinctly centering around 19th century Europe. This problem also appeared in China and Japan, and it remains so to the present day. This is the reality we call "East Asian modernity."

The literature of Korea, China, and Japan received Western literature and was highly influenced by it, but there are almost no writers or works that share modern literature through translation of East Asian works. Discussing East Asian modernity without asking why this occurs in this way and how it could not but be like that is an armchair argument. In addition, this is a present and practical problem. Can the three East Asian countries have a literary canon with which they can empathize and agree? Can East Asians have a conversation with each other based on a common literary sensibility? A much more difficult task than an East Asian history textbook may be an East Asian literature textbook.

Plural World Literature, Unequal Imagination

At least in East Asia, world literature is a historical concept established and practiced only through translation into a native language. The connotation and denotation of the concept we call world literature today has been gradually changed since its first imaging through translation into Korean in the early 20th century.⁶ Let us specifically capture the "East Asian instances" that drove translation and gave birth to world literature.

Successful Translation of Ibsen and Nora's Failed Running Away from Home

Henrik Ibsen's representative problem play *A Doll's House* (1879) had a destiny of translation from birth. *A Doll's House* was written in Riksmål (Bokmål) Norwegian and had to be translated into European languages and translated again culturally through performances. Moreover, due to the controversy surrounding its portrayal of a woman's running away from home, it had to endure the elimination or embellishment of its denouement, which is the core of the entire play (Keel 2009, 100-01).

An even more amazing thing is the fact that, without the halo of a Nobel Prize in Literature, *A Doll's House*, which rather suffered from the popular sensation surrounding it, joined the canon of world literature quite immediately, and it served as an advance guard of praxes for individuals and gender of modern literature in early 20th century East Asia. *A Doll's House* is the work that was translated first and had an influence for the longest period during the formative period of the modern literatures of Korea, China, and Japan. In addition, the difference in time of translation between the countries is relatively short; further it began in all three as faithful complete translation from the beginning. However, the focus and effect of its translation were different in each country of East Asia.

Ibsen's plays were first translated in Japan. In 1893, *A Doll's House* and

6. The term, "world literature" was translated for the first time by Namseon Choi. He was the first professional editor in Korea and he used it as the name of a section of serials in the magazine *Cheongchun* (*Youth*) in October 1914. Its signification harmonized with Goethe's thought.

An Enemy of the People were translated into Japanese at the same time, and in 1901, they were published in book form for the first time. In the 10 years after Ibsen passed away (1906-1916), almost all of his plays were translated, and *A Doll's House* was translated several times including by Hogetsu Shimamura (1910), Ogai Mori (1913), and Kichizo Nakamura (1914). While the Japanese translations attached importance to women's issues, they had the intense motivation to establish the norms of modern drama and portray them in a theatrical reform movement through the translation of the dramas of realism (Nakamura 1997). Thus, it is difficult to judge whether *A Doll's House* exhibited an overwhelming influence.

In China, *A Doll's House* was first translated under the title *Nora* by Shi Hu. He designed Vol. 4 No. 6 (June, 1918) of the journal *Xin Qingnian* (*New Youth*) as a special issue dedicated to Henrik Ibsen, including the review "Ibsenism." *Nora* was jointly translated by Jialun Luo (Acts 1 and 2) and Hu (Act 3) as a complete translation. *An Enemy of the People* and *Little Eyolf* began to be serialised in the same issue of the magazine, and Zhenying Yuan's "Ibsen Zhuan" (Biography of Ibsen) was included as well. Through *Xin Qingnian*, Ibsen and *Nora* emerged as symbols of anti-feudalism and anti-traditional values, which became a catalyst for the May Fourth Movement. This is a monumental moment because Ibsen's original work is completely unrelated to anti-feudalism and opposition to traditional values.

In Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, the main character *Nora* leaves her bourgeois family home in order to find her Self. In contrast, in China, *Nora's* running away was understood as a struggle against patriarchal feudalism and a revolution for free love and love marriages. In fact, Hu showed a revolutionary usage, well in the first modern play "Zhongshendashi" (Marriage), published in March 1919. In other words, the original work was translated faithfully; however, its imagination was intentionally mistranslated. *Nora*, translated into Chinese, became a weapon in an ideological struggle through the deliberate mixture of the realities of Europe and China (Zhang 1995, 186-91; Im 2014, 146-63).

What was the situation in Korea like? In Korea, four important translations appeared before 1945, all of which were published between 1921 and 1923, and all of which focused on women's issues. After translating and publishing *A Doll's House* (1921) jointly with the New Women's Group, it was serialised in the newspaper. The first translator, Geonsik Yang, published the

book *Nora* (1922) alone. His translation is an important accomplishment in this early period, since it faithfully translated the complete original work, and it is certainly the most excellent achievement of the colonial period. Yang, an expert in Chinese literature, understood Hu's translation and the May Fourth Movement well. However, he depended on the double translation from Japanese; thus he was not conscious of the entirety of the practical effect on China (Park 2015b, 18).

Yang was ignorant of the revolutionary significance of *Nora's* running away in China, and rather, took a very conservative and reactionary stance on the growth of the modern women. He actually, made a caricature of Ibsen's original work and his own translation at the same time, mocking modern women through the one-act play *Awakening of Love: New Nora* (1923). Yang understood the historical task of the liberation of women's self-awareness and personality in the triple conventional structures of gender (male/female), generational (old/new), and cultural (East/West) conflict (Park 2015b, 25-31).

Geonsik Yang's translation demonstrates the following three aspects. First, although Yang achieved a faithful and complete translation, he stopped at a mechanical translation, far from the critical mind of the original work or the historicity of Korea. Second, all translations in Korea, China, and Japan published at the same time were faithful to the original work, but they clearly had different foci in translation and effects on literary history. Third, this phenomenon is related to impatience, which is not accompanied by the power of historical praxis; it is not related to the problem of double translation from the Japanese, which reveals that the modern imagination of East Asia was not in solidarity.

Alphonse Daudet's Trick, Forged Imagination

Daudet's "The Last Lesson" (1873) did not receive high praise in Europe, including France. However, up until quite recently, it was a very rare case that was commonly included and widely read in government-designated textbooks of the three East Asian countries. "The Last Lesson" in world literature is shared throughout East Asia. It was misread and canonized, which is very interesting. Ironically, historicity was not shared, rather the sense shared through translation is much more intense in "The Last Lesson."

First, it should be stated that Daudet's original work was an expression of serious imperialistic prejudice and ethnocentric ideology.⁷ This short story, with the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) as a background, shows a very narrow-minded kind of nationalism and an interpretation of events to the author's own advantage, as well as an exaggerated victim mentality without any filter. The Alsace-Lorraine or Elsaß-Lothringen region has the largest iron ore and coal deposits in Europe and is a geopolitically strategic point, so Prussian and French invasions and colonial rules alternated there for hundreds of years.⁸ However, "The Last Lesson" concealed the history of suppression and exploitation of the natives, who were neither French nor German. In addition, it thoroughly exterminated the existence of the mother tongue, which was neither French nor German.⁹

In other words, Daudet's original work itself is the fruit of artful manipulation and concealment. How did this problematic work begin to be translated in East Asia and how was it able to exercise such a great influence for so long?

In Japan, "The Last Lesson" was translated several times; the translations that are of the most importance are Kocho Baba's ([1905] 1907) and Suetō Goto's (1914) translations. It is well known that both translations were made during the times of war, namely, the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the First World War (1914-1918). Baba translated "The Last Lesson" in October 1905, immediately after Japan won the Russo-Japanese War, and when publishing it in an anthology in book form in July 1907, he changed the title to "Postwar." In addition, translating Daudet's collection of short stories,

Contes du lundi (*The Monday Tales*) in October 1914, when Japan declared war against Germany, Goto entitled it *Tales of the Franco-Prussian War*. In Japan, "The Last Lesson" is a narrative of war and patriotism (Park 2015a, 99-101).

On the other hand, translating "The Last Lesson" into Chinese for the first time, Shi Hu entitled it "Gedi" (Ceded Territory) (1912). In the foreword, he recalled the huge reparations paid to Western powers because of the Boxer Rebellion (1900) and the issue of the cession of Santung. In addition, in 1914 when the First World War broke out, he translated Daudet's "The Siege of Berlin." "The Last Lesson," as perceived by Hu and the Chinese people, is a narrative of invasion and defeat (Kim 2010, 192-95; 203-05).

Of the translations of "The Last Lesson" in East Asia, the most amazing and exciting is that of Korea. Namseon Choi double-translated Baba's Japanese translation, only changing the title to "Manse" (Hurrah) (1923). Choi was imprisoned for writing the Declaration for Independence for the March First Movement and was released in 1921. His translation revived the historical memory of four years ago through its title, and in his foreword he plainly revealed a disturbing series of country and folk, native language and liberation. For Koreans in the colonial period, "The Last Lesson" was a narrative that symbolized the will of independence and the immortality of ethnic identity; it is the root of a linguistic nationalism confirming an indivisible relationship between the mother tongue and national spirit (Park 2015a, 100-03).

Oblivion and Inversion, Flipped Self-Portrait

Subsequently, we will review examples in which modern China and Chinese people were projected through translation. As was mentioned earlier, during the colonial period, there were no cases of translation of modern full-length Chinese novels into Korean. From the 1930s to the 1950s, while going through rapid fluctuations in the political situation, such as the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Pacific War, the Korean War and Division, strangely the reality of modern China and the orientation of the Chinese people were delivered in Korean only through Pearl Buck and Yutang Lin. Translations of those works stimulated the contemporary imagination on East Asia for the first time and were deeply involved in narrative prospects surrounding Korean

7. The problem of Daudet and his works was indicated in the 1990s; however, little academic criticism or reappraisal of this controversial issue has been sought. For the first argument in Korea, see Kim 2002 (Posted April 26, 2002; Modified August 27, 2003). Professor Naoki Watanabe of Musashi University gave me advice on "New Teacher" (*L'Événement*, December 2, 1872), the sequel to "The Last Lesson" (*La Dernière Classe*) by Daudet himself. For a more detailed discussion in Japan, see Fukawa 1992; Nakamoto 1998, 60-63; Nakamoto 2008.

8. For a spatial distribution of dialects spoken in Alsace-Lorraine or Elsaß-Lothringen, in the 19th century, see the diagram in Wikipedia: "Alsace-Lorraine" (in English); "Reichsland Elsaß-Lothringen" (in German). For the historical characteristics of Saar as the background of "The Last Lesson," see Wikipedia: "Saar" (League of Nations) (in English); "Saargebiet" (in German); "Territoire du Bassin de la Sarre" (in French). Each accessed May, 2015.

9. Ernest Renan elucidated the organizing principles of nationhood through insight about this region. But he overestimated the peace of his country and Europe. See Renan 2002, 20-21; 40-41; 80-84; Park 2015a, 96-99.

family history novels.¹⁰

Buck was a female writer, the daughter of a Western (American) missionary who grew up in the East (China). Lin was a male intellectual, who was Asian (Chinese), writing works in English in the West (America). Both described the raging waves of Chinese history and the lives of Chinese people from the outside of their ethnic or linguistic boundaries. However, there are large differences between modern China and Chinese people reflected in Buck's *The Good Earth* (1931) and Lin's *Moment in Peking* (1939). The differences are contrasting images of the East or East Asia from the Korean perspective and the contradictory symbols of Koreans themselves.

The original works were published in the U.S. at the beginning and end of the 1930s respectively, but they attracted global attention, mainly due to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. The reputation of *The Good Earth* was further enhanced with the release of a film based on the book and the awarding of a Nobel Prize in Literature in 1938. However, in contrast to the popular reception, the republic of literary critics maintained a position of coolness and harsh criticism; Chinese and Korean writers also did not hide their discomfort. On the other hand, with the favorable reception of the collections of essays *My Country and My People* (1935) and *The Importance of Living* (1937) published after his immigration to the U.S., Lin emerged as a representative East Asian intellectual, receiving honor as a bridge between Eastern and Western civilizations.

How to Forget The Good Earth

Buck's *The Good Earth* depicts the rise and fall over three generations of a poor farmer family of the lowest class. At the time of its publication, it was criticized by critics in both the East and the West for its exaggerated portrayal of the underdevelopment of China and the terrible scenes of peasants and distorted women's sexual norms. However, the critical mind shown by this work in terms of history, class, and gender was not seriously noted. The Korean-American writer Younghill Kang, who published *The Grass Roof* (1931) at the same time

as Buck's work, denigrated her, saying that she has just described uncivilized China from a Westerner's point of view, far from the reality of China. In China, before 1949, her works were translated over 10 times (Yang 2014, 22-23), including Zhongchi Hu's translation (1933), but the socialist Kanghu Jiang took the initiative in criticizing her (Guo 1999, 12-15; Choi 2001, 155-60).

The Hollywood film *The Good Earth*, produced in 1937, greatly contributed to Buck's being awarded a Nobel Prize. This film focuses on Lung Wang, a poor farmer who grew up as a big landowner, instead of Olan, a strong woman who was born in a servant family and skipped over changing attitudes toward land. This film, which ended in a scene of a dramatic victory and reconciliation against mother nature sentimentally and romantically, embellished the original work, almost giving up on the description of the entanglement of the spirit of the age penetrating generation, class, and gender.

In Korea, *The Good Earth* was first introduced through Hun Sim's double translation from Japanese. He began the double-translation from Itaru Nii's Japanese translation before Buck's being awarded the Nobel Prize and stopped at an early stage due to his untimely death. Sim is the author of *Jingnyeoseong* (*Vega*, 1934-1935), published earlier than *Sangnoksu* (*Evergreen Tree*, 1935-1936). This work is a rare masterpiece in the history of modern Korean literature in that it thoroughly depicted the history of the desperate collapse of feudal aristocratic clans and the historical existence of traditional women in modern times on a dignified scale (Choi 2002, 145-46).

The serious complete translations of *The Good Earth* by Jayoung Noh and Seongchil Kim were done in the 1940s. While both translated it almost at the same time, their works showed very different attitudes. Noh focused on the plot-driven introduction through abridgement and based his work on the imagination of the film, making his work of popular and commercial nature. His book *The Golden Sun* (1940) compiled Buck's *The Good Earth*, *The Mother*, and Ève Curie's biography *Madame Curie* into one volume (Park 2016, 11-12).¹¹ In the meantime, Kim untypically succeeded in a sincere

10. The main topic of this section is discussed into detail in Park 2016.

11. This was because Buck and Curie were not only female winners of the Nobel Prize, but also their novel and biography were adapted for film by the director and producer Sidney Franklin, who worked for the production company MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).

literal and complete translation from English.¹² He and Hwa Im were the only people who published reviews seriously, dealing with Buck during the colonial period. He emphasized a model of Asian womanhood through the personality of the main character Olan and paid attention to the voices of women, who are always silent in Buck's novels.

Almost all of Buck's novels were translated in the 1950s, and a set of her complete works to date were published.¹³ However, this was not simply due to an increase in people's interest in her works, but a great change took place in Korean views of her. In the 1950s, Buck was viewed as a feminist activist whose work led to the extension of women's rights and promoted the abolition of racial discrimination, as well as having a reputation as a humanitarian intellectual who exhibited a great influence on the issues of mixed-race children and war orphans (Ryu 2015, 224-36). She was no longer a writer who described farming areas and peasants with an interest in East Asians but was mythicized as a symbol of universal humanism and maternal affection. The issues of China and East Asia awakened by *The Good Earth* became faint during the Cold War period, and the values and critical mind of the people also could not be revived.

Inversion of Moment in Peking and The Importance of Living

While Buck realistically and firmly implanted Chinese rural landscape and peasants in the mind of Westerners, Lin emphasized the understanding of cultural change of the modern age in China and the universal mentality of the Chinese people as contemporary modern people living through a turbulent history. *Moment in Peking*, published with Buck's support and sponsorship (Peter 2004, 295; Lin 2005, 243-44), concentrated on the description of human anguish, conflict, hardship, and grief of family history experienced by the higher Shenshi class (the gentry class) of Beijing, according to the ups and

downs of the times. This work can be called a modern edition of *The Dream of Red Chamber* and a novel version of *Mulan*, and unlike Buck's novels, it won a wide range of empathy and support from intellectuals.

Lin was in the limelight of both the East and West, even during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Second World War. In China, his works were immediately translated in 1940, but they were translated in Taiwan only after 1949.¹⁴ In the meantime, Japan's response to Lin was instantaneous, and in 1940, three Japanese translations of *Moment in Peking* were published at the same time (Park 2016, 20). At the time, the Second Sino-Japanese War expanded into the Second World War, and Lin continuously criticized Japan.

Korea was more favorable to Lin than to Buck, but international affairs took a turn for the worse, so *Moment in Peking* could not be translated. In June 1940, Taewon Park double-translated and introduced only part of the opening of the original work from the Japanese; and he never planned to translate the entire work. His translation was one section of the pro-Japanese project of the magazine *Samchully* (*The Whole of Korea*), but the plan did not take a coherent anti-Chinese attitude.

Interestingly, the attitude according to which Korean writers evaluated Lin was different from that according to which Buck was evaluated. It was well known that Lin's novels were published in English in the U.S. However, no one was aware that he was put in a state equivalent to deportation or asylum, and no one considered his views on China from the outside to be uncomfortable. This is odd when we consider that the core controversy around Buck was the depiction of China or the East by a Westerner.

What is more problematic is how he was evaluated in the process of the development of modern Chinese literary history. Lin appeared like a comet after Lu Xun's death; they were often discussed in an ideological genealogy in which they were contrasted. For instance, even Seolya Han, who made a relatively stingy evaluation of Lin within the context of the achievement of the New Literature Movement in China, looked at his status from the perspective of the history of modern Chinese literature (Park 2016, 19). In fact, this was only four years after Lu Xun's death, and *Moment in Peking* was Lin's first full-length novel. Thus, the opposing structure of Lu Xun vs. Lin, or Lin after Lu

12. A direct translation from an English text was a very rare occurrence. Kim, a historian in the liberation period, was killed in October 1951; however, his translation had been published until the 1960s.

13. In December 1962, *Pearl Buck Masterpiece Collection* (15 volumes) was published into Korean. In later life she wrote two novels, *The Living Reed* (1963) and *The New Year* (1968), which dealt with Korea as a subject matter.

14. It was through *Jing Hua Yan Yun*, a CCTV series (44 episodes, 2005-2006) when Lin splendidly resurrected in China.

Xun, was settled early in Korea.

In fact, Lin's status exceeded that of Lu Xun in Korea in the 1950s-1960s. In the situation in which both Korea and China were divided, Lin was called an intellectual and a writer of great literature, representing the East or Asia as a whole, including China. He clearly took an anti-communist attitude, as an intellectual of the U.S. and Taiwan. However, an abridged copy of his novel *Moment in Peking* and its sequel *A Leaf in the Storm* were published in 1956, which were double-translated from Japanese (Park 2016, 22-23). Two works were translated once or twice, as they were included in Lin's selected works in the 1960s, but he never enjoyed popularity as an author or novelist in Korea.¹⁵ In particular, the translation of *A Leaf in the Storm* was a double translation of Yoshimi Takeuchi's Japanese translation, which took the Second Sino-Japanese War period as a background, so it could not be translated or read any longer.

The Importance of Living earned him a great reputation. The unusual craze that arose in Korea for this collection of essays that stressed humor and wisdom has continued up to the present time. It has been edited in various ways to the present from its first complete translation into Korean in October 1954, and countless versions have been published henceforth. The success of the essays may possibly be due to their foundation in a post-historical view of life and a sense of everyday life. This was also because his popularity and reputation, paradoxically, did not have Chinese or East Asian color (Kwon 2014, 107-11; 116-19).

Consequently, the fact that *Moment in Peking* dealt with the growth of a female subject and family history was not remembered. What Korean artists in the 1940s, including Han, were interested in was a new type of human being and a new model of family history, germinating from the decline of the old world. But at the time, of course, the possibility of the family history novel via China in the 1950s-1960s, was not observed. Ironically, though, Lin's chief work was not novels but only essays, and his status was reduced to a global thinker and renowned essayist.

In short, Buck and Lin showed contrasting ways to imagine China and the Chinese people. In addition, the translations clearly showed changes in the perception of Koreans who saw East Asia as the self and the other in the

ideological background around 1945. In particular, a sharp rise in concern with them, taking an unexpected direction shortly after the Korean War, is a slice of the process of literary history through which the historicity of East Asia is imagined within the restrictions of the Cold War system. The extreme ups and downs they experienced through translation are historical phenomena that have something in common with the complete loss of the sense of modern Chinese history or the realistic origin of the People's Republic of China from the perspective of the Korean people.

Conclusion

In this study, discussing translation and world literature, I reviewed the possibility of thinking of translation and world literature, when allowing the keyword "East Asia" to intervene. In other words, I raised the necessity of exiting Western-centric thinking and appreciating the historicity of literature in Korean translation from the East Asian perspective. The spirit of the age surrounding the translation and the critical mind of the imagination in the first half of the 20th century in East Asia surely provide a new perspective that is not captured by the methodology of comparative literature or translation studies.

In East Asia, translations have been accompanied by deliberate misreading and unintended misunderstandings, and the world literature imagined in Korea, China, and Japan is never a singular form and cannot be politically equal. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Daudet's "The Last Lesson" show the process according to which modern European literature was mistranslated and reproduced in the historical context of East Asia. The difference in attitudes surrounding Buck's *The Good Earth* and Lin's *Moment in Peking* is the fruit of translation in which the self-representation of China or East Asia as the other operated ideologically. Translation is a cultural praxis and effect that concretized "East Asian World Literature" and let it move historically.

Therefore, we can find different world literatures between the original work and translation or between translation and translation. Translation is the driving force that produces different world literature and at the same time, the power that distributes and passes it down. It is still not clear whether it is the original fate of translation or an intrinsic phenomenon practiced in the historical space and time of East Asia. Yet, to imagine literature among

15. The only complete translation of *The Moment in Peking* was published in two volumes by Jinseok Park in May 1971.

Étrangers beyond the dichotomy between the self and the other, it is worth thinking of world literature from a new perspective.

Translation does not render the original text as it is, and world literature does not refer to 19th century modern European literature only. It may sound natural, but it is not easy for Koreans as East Asians to imagine this kind of translation and world literature. Translation is the mirror that reflects one's original landscape and not the other. In East Asia, particularly in a weak nation on the periphery, which experienced colonial rule and division immediately following it, what is called world literature is a painful praxis in which one should coldly gaze at the other reflected in the mirror.

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Abstract

World literature is a historical concept that can only be established and practiced through translation into the native language. Translations in East Asia are accompanied with intentional misreading or unintentional misunderstandings. World literature as imagined in Korea, China, and Japan is neither singular nor politically equal. Problematizing the spirit of the age and imagination of translations in East Asia in the first half of the 20th century provides new perspectives that the methodologies of comparative literature or translation studies cannot capture. Translations of *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and "The Last Lesson" by Alphonse Daudet are a great example for demonstrating how contemporary European literature is incorrectly interpreted and reproduced in East Asia's historical context. On the other hand, the difference of viewpoints between *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck and *Moment in Peking* by Yutang Lin is produced through translations by the ideological transformation of China as the other and East Asian self-representation. Translation is a cultural praxis and effect that actualizes "East Asian World Literature" and brings it to historical movements.

Keywords: East Asia, literature in translation, translation, world literature

