

Promoting New Scholarship on Inter-Korean Communication

The Armistice Line, which was drawn at the waistline of the Korean peninsula after the Korean War, led not only to a geographical secession between the North and the South, but also to bodies that are different from one another. Although the people of the two Koreas share the same ethnicity, South Koreans and North Koreans developed very different identities - from linguistic usage and values to all parts of their living cultures. Therefore, some argue that in order for the two Koreas to amicably communicate and integrate, the heterogeneity between the two needs to be converted to homogeneity. Such argument is based on a proto-nationalist perspective – that the people of the two Koreas were initially one. However, the problem is that such discussion on homogeneity is nothing other than a logic of uniformity.

This logic of uniformity is the reasoning that differences need to be nullified, that one must be reduced to the other, and that, therefore, the two should become one and the same. Such reasoning has a high possibility of resulting in a rhetoric of violence based on comparative advantage in power. As for the South and the North, because the two had experienced a war after division, each side has, for a long time, been hostile toward the other, considering the other as impurity that harms purity of the Korean people. Under such circumstances, the argument that homogeneity has to be recovered results in the kind of perspective that considers the other side as a party that must be demolished or absorbed into this side, rather than as one the unity with whom can lead to something that is completely new.

As long as such view prevails, North and South Korea remain distant from communication as well as from peaceful unification. Of course, unification can be realized by one side being absorbed into the other since, after all, unification is about political and economic integration of two states. However, the problems is that as long as one side continues to refuse to recognize differences and to

unilaterally assert that the other side must become the same as this side, then even after unification, North Koreans and South Koreans will not be able to smoothly merge into one social community. In fact, circumstances after unification may become even more deplorable than ever experienced. Therefore, at this stage when we are preparing for unification, it is essential that we come up with a new horizon of thought that will allow the two Koreas to meet, amicably communicate and eventually unify.

Against this backdrop, the featured topic of Volume 2 Issue 2 of *S/N Korean Humanities* was set as ‘North-South Communication and Integration.’ The three featured articles aim to analyze the differences and similarities between the two sides, based on folktales and classical novels that constitute classical narratives in particular, and go beyond to discussing possibilities of sentimental communication and integration between the two Koreas. Why, then, are folktales or classical novels used as texts in discussing communication and integration? The first reason is because folktales and classical novels are cultural assets Korean people share, and even after the country was divided, Koreans on both sides continue to enjoy the same texts. In South Korea, these texts are re-created as children’s stories and are mostly used in children’s books whereas in North Korea, they are re-written and passed on as texts for mass education of the people. It is true that each side re-create, re-write and thereby transform the texts according to their needs. However, it is precisely this transformation that is important. It manifests the differences between North Korea and South Korea, allowing the ideological and sentimental divergences to be interpreted. Related to the first, the second reason is that folktales and classical novels are useful texts that allow people in the North and the South to understand each other’s differences and discuss ways to sentimentally integrate.

The first featured article is “A Research on North Korea’s Modern Way of Accepting the Tale *Chinegaksi* (*Centipede Maiden*)” by Kim Jong-Gun and Feng Ying-Dun. It looks into North Korea’s modern way of accepting oral tales told since the pre-division era, centering on the tale *Ch’ongryongŭi Poŭnn*, modified based on the Juche ideology. This tale is identical with *Chinegaksi*, which is a representative folktale of the Korean peninsula, except for the ending. The

difference in the ending is whether the fortune given to the male protagonist is individual or collective in its nature. This difference seems to be due to modification with the influence of collective morality and Juche ideology of North Korea. To assess the literary value of the modified narrative, the article looks into the identity and value of this tale based on pre-division era records. And by comparing how modern literary works in South and North Korea from a similar period and status accept the archetype of this tale, this article analyzes its narrative value. In conclusion, the North Korean tale *Ch'ongryongüi Poynn* is regarded as an important material to understanding the social culture of North Korea and an old story with the message of social integration in the future society of the unified Korean peninsula. This tale is a story about two different beings trusting each other and working toward a better future. In other words, it is a story about the value of "symbiosis" being realized in the dimension of the "group." It is indeed an important literary work that shows what kind of life "we" as a group should pursue in this modern society filled with suspicion and fear of strangers.

The second of this edition's featured articles is "The possibility of Literary Communication through Comparison of South and North Korean Tales - With Focus on *My Own Fortune* of South Korea and *Father and the Three Daughters* of North Korea" by Nam Kyung-Woo. This paper deals with *My Own Fortune* of South Korea and *Father and the Three Daughters* of North Korea. *My Own Fortune* is a popular folktale widely observed and documented throughout the Korean peninsula before the division and continues to be told from generations to generations in South Korea. A resembling tale can be found in *The Collection of Chosun Folktales* under the title *Father and the Three Daughters*. *My Own Fortune* and *Father and the Three Daughters* both begin with a very similar narrative but later, diverge. Whereas *Father and the Three Daughters* focuses on the family as a community and the value of 'filial piety,' *My Own Fortune* is a story of an independent woman standing alone. Such contrast comes from the transformations that the stories had taken according to the aims of the differing social systems of each Korea. As a conclusion, the paper discusses, through this kind of comparative analysis, the possibilities of 'literary communication' between the two Koreas, based on mutual understanding and recognition of each other's

differences.

The third featured article, “Study on the Development of Healing Programs for North Korean Refugees Using Classical Narratives,” discusses the possibilities of a program to improve the perspective of North Korean refugees, using a literary therapy methodology focusing on the fact that the experiences of defection and migration endured by North Korean refugees are similar to the hardships and the success of heroes in classical literature. Among Korean classics, there are folktales such as *My Own Fortune*, novels such as *The Story of Hong Kiltong*, and myths on founding of nations such as the *Myth of Chumong*, which all deal with oppression and limitations of the past location, escape, migration and success, and such plots exist in all genres. In the process of the heroes reaching success, the oppression and limitations of their past locations act as inevitable deprivations that allow them to further mature, from which the protagonists gain astonishing abilities and develop into heroes. In light of such syntax of heroic narratives, the paper argues that the past experiences of North Korean refugees can very well become the basis for future success, and formulates a literary therapy program based on reading and re-creation of classical narratives. In other words, the healing programs for North Korean refugees that this article designs use a literary therapy methodology that is based on humanities and induce the subjects to go beyond remembering their past only as series of hardships and to perceive it as a foundation for success.

In this edition, aside from the above featured articles, there are two additional articles. The first is “Russia’s Vision of Re-Unified Korea’s Place in the Northeast Asian Security System.” The article examines Russia’s policy concerning Korea’s reunification and Moscow’s likely responses to possible unification process and ensuing results, from the perspective that they are major and necessary elements of peace-building in Northeast Asia. Since the middle of the 19th century, Russia has had a keen interest on the situation on the Korean peninsula. History repeatedly proved that any aggravation of the situation on the peninsula made Russia take additional steps to ensure her security. So both for security reasons and for smooth development of her far-eastern region, Russia is vitally interested in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. The emergence of the re-unified

Korea, however, is likely to create a new situation in the region and make Russia re-evaluate her policy on Northeast Asia. It is generally accepted that Russia will benefit, first of all, from the liquidation of a long-time hot spot (divided Korea) right next to her far-eastern region and also from founding of the re-unified Korea by maintaining a relation of friendship. Thus, it is possible to deduce that, even on the economic level and not just on the security level, new doors for economic development of the Russia's far-eastern regions will be opened with opportunities to further access the global economy that encompasses the entire Asia-Pacific region. So, according to this paper, for both security and economic reasons, Moscow is inevitably interested in reconciliation between North and South Korea, and eventually, in the emergence of a peaceful and neutral Korean peninsula.

The second article is “‘Two Cultures’ and the Possibility of integrated Korean Studies: Via ‘Critical Naturalism’ of Marx and Durkheim” by Kim Myung-Hee. This paper is an attempt to search for a meta-theoretical foundation to an integrated Korean studies, and starts from the fact that without its own target and methodology, it will be difficult for Korean studies to be established as an independent academic discipline. In particular, the antagonism of the ‘Two Cultures,’ referring to the juxtaposition between humanities and the sciences, has been reproduced into a ‘humanities-based Korean studies’ and a ‘social science-based Korean studies’ and is acting as a factor preventing a more holistic perspective of Korean society. According to Kim, such division originated from the modern academic disciplinary structure systemized at the end of the 19th century but was then deepened by the path dependency of the division system and the external dependency of the Korean academia. Under this context, this paper seeks to graft critical naturalism of Marx and Durkheim, who envisioned unified sciences at the end of the 19th century, before separation into modern academic disciplines took place, to the attempts to alleviate the ‘Two Cultures’ and thereby project an integrated Korean studies. Critical naturalism of the two thinkers proposes a third way that resolves the dichotomies between society and people, science and philosophy, nomothetic and idiographic methods, and facts and values, thus positioning itself as a paradigmatic basis for unified knowledge that overcomes the antagonism between hyper-naturalist positivism and anti-naturalist

humanities. In conclusion, critical naturalism of the two provides us the possibility of depth-explanatory human sciences that integrates the historicity and the scientificity of a divided society as well as abundant philosophy of science resources to promote a more complete Korean studies that encompasses the humanities and social sciences assets of South Koreans, North Koreans and overseas Koreans.

This edition of *S/N Korean Humanities* also includes two book reviews. One was written by Park Min-Chul under the title of “The Three Ecologies for True Ecology,” on the book *The Three Ecologies* by Félix Guattari (translated by Yoon Soo-Jong, Seoul: Tongmunsŏn Publishing, 2003). Park Min-Chul asserts that Guattari’s ecosophy is significant as it showed the world a new ecological paradigm by proposing new relationship network among humans-society-nature, which is different from existing ecological discussions. Park also points out that even though Guattari’s three ecologies clearly show practical needs of each ecological environment, he failed to explain fully how those needs articulate and interact. Even though his ecosophy contributed to expanding the domain of ecology, such expansion brought about ambiguity in the meaning of ecology. Furthermore, Guattari’s ecosophical goals boil down to “production of subjectivity,” meaning that his ecology is much more focused on human subjectivity and social relationships than the natural environment. Nonetheless, according to Park, Guattari’s arguments have ecological significance, in light of the fact that the core of today’s ecological discussions lies in constructing heterogeneous activities, which are the needs of the Earth’s ecological environment of ‘humans-society-nature.’ More specifically, as Guattari has pointed out, pragmatic effort has to be made in order to try to link mental ecology, which produces subjectivity, social ecology, which forms a continuously changing social system, and environmental ecology, which goes beyond the confrontational relationship of nature and humans to recreate nature.

The book review by Lee Byung-Soo is on *Inquiring of Park Yu-ha, the Counsel of the Empire* (Son Jong-Up et al., Mal, 2016). *Inquiring of Park Yu-ha, the Counsel of the Empire* is a compilation of criticisms on Park Yu-Ha’s *Comfort Women of the Empire* that had been expressed through various media after the

June 2015 litigation filed by the ‘comfort women’ victims. According to Lee, the core aspects of the criticisms of the book target Park Yu-Ha’s arguments that ‘comfort women’ were women in Japan’s colony who performed ‘patriotic’ acts for the Japanese Empire, that they formed ‘comrade-like relationships’ with Japanese soldiers, and that they were not forced into the battlefield but were, in fact, either conned by recruiters or had voluntarily become comfort women to earn money. He then questions Park’s arguments in two aspects. First, Lee calls the attitude of Park, who berated the legitimate compensation demands of the comfort women as being mere anti-Japanese nationalism that interfered with Korea-Japan reconciliation, as “violence in the name of reconciliation.” Secondly, he argues that the biggest blind spot in Park’s argument is her lack of critical mind in regard to colonialism. Park has claimed that because forceful recruitment, which was performed based on colonial laws, was legal (colonial law positivism), it should not be a matter of demanding compensation.

It is inevitable that, on the Korean peninsula, where the division between the North and the South has led to repetitive confrontation and conflict, overcoming division and unification be considered important historical tasks if we are to realize the values of humanities, which are to lead peaceful and humane lives. *S/N Korean Humanities* seeks to put those tasks to practice, academically. In the sense that *S/N Korean Humanities* deals with perspectives that are clearly different from previous discussions, and if it continues to deal with diverse and novel themes from a humanities perspective and consolidate its position as a journal, I am positive that it will gain more attention and participation of scholars. Last but not least, I would like to convey my gratitude to all authors who contributed to this edition.

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