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Chapter 4: Historicizing Foreclosed Desire in Kim Sowŏl's Poetry

Whereas the symbol postulates the possibility of an identity or identification, allegory designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin, and, renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference. In so doing, it prevents the self from an illusory identification with the non-self, which is now fully, though painfully, recognized as a non-self.

Paul de Man

We experience the piercing great joy in our solitude, in loneliness discover the softest sympathy; once again, only in sadness feel the most holy act of benevolence and we can only see it reflected in the mirror of darkness. Only by standing on the mountain range far from life and close to death can we see the beautiful, laundered clothes of life flapping on the spring hills.

Kim Sowŏl

As observed in Kim Ŏk's construction of cosmopolitanism, lyric poetry can thrive in an aesthetic space forgetful of history while simultaneously containing a logocentric ideology of modernization and progress. Im Hwa's prosaicization of poetry was concomitant with the rise of the novel form and thus attempted to correct such dehistoricizing tendency of literary modernism. His reclaiming of poetry toward praxis, however, did not connect the world of aesthetics with that of lived reality. By his admission, the failure was seen as stemming from a lack of freedom from the past (by way of attachment to tradition); it was also seen as a part of the larger process of history moving forward. Seen both in Kim Ŏk's promotion of Esperanto and Im Hwa's zeal to bring poetry in line with the aims of socialist fiction, this recognition of time as an arrow continuously moving forward merges with the desire for time fulfilled and points to an anticipated future – of a history to be completed in due course.

One discovers a different attitude toward time in the poetry of Kim Sowŏl (1902-1934). In the poetry of Kim Ŏk's most famous student, the past recalled through language participates in the creation of a literary space where the images that the same poems evoke bear disembodied resemblances to the objects of the speaker's affection. That is, there is in Sowŏl's poetry a salient disconnect, and a recognition of this disconnect, between desire and time – the future as time of fulfillment. The often female speaker in these poems enable the production of aura which reveals the desire, not only for that which is fleeting but, more importantly, for that which has fled.¹ In the case of the latter, the images charged with meaning bespeak time interrupted and discontinued.

This is to say that the speaker in Kim Sowŏl's poetry performs the language of desire but for desire that is foreclosed.² The speaker stands in a position of distance from the object of her desire, and it is this distance that creates the break in the flow of time. Distance in this sense signals impasse and inaccessibility and results from the tension between aura charged with images of the fleeting past and the modern allegorical denouncement of such nostalgia. This trait in the poetry of Korea's most known modern love poet becomes his signature expression of alienation: desire is relinquished while being expressed through the language of longing spoken by the female voice.

Gender, then, becomes a means of performing interiority in a manner perceived to be socially acceptable. In effect, Sowŏl's poems can be read as being tied to ritual and performance, what Victor Turner refers to as a procedural sense of ritual not as programmed behavior but artistic expression marked by meta-language.³ It is through this reflexive quality of ritual in Sowŏl's lyric poetry that the speaking subject remains separated from the object of her affection. The separation is marked by interruption of

temporality.⁴ The temporal impasse counters the perception of time as progress which the poet acknowledges to be at work around him, leaving him unable to identify with the changes that this entails.⁵ This discontinuity and lack of identification with the advantages associated with modernity becomes a measure of his alienation expressed in the rift between language and meaning.

I suggest that Sowŏl's use of language and its affective charge associated with the cult value of aura and appeal to solidarity can be historicized vis-à-vis the space of literature, what Blanchot refers to as the absence of time where memory supercedes the past.⁶ That is, Sowŏl's efforts to produce technically sound poems (which are readily committed to memory by his postcolonial audience) can be linked to the poet's socio-political position of disadvantage. It is his maladjustment to time, functioning ultimately as economic disadvantage, from which stemmed his treatment of language as tangible material to build a shelter from history. Through a close reading of some of Sowŏl's more famous poems and juxtaposing them to others that escape the category of folk poetry, the difference between what the poet says and what he means will be noted in light of repetition and sound performance.

Rhyme and Repetition

The appeal of Sowŏl's so-called folk poetry that has been indelibly linked to his oeuvre works to complement the humanism of Korea's past with a poetic form suggesting spontaneity, communalism and truth value conflating under the rubric of romanticism.⁷ Thus the argument in favor of Sowŏl lies in the familiar praise that the poet was true to his feelings.⁸ Sowŏl's continued fame as the preeminent lyric poet of Korea rests on such idea of transparent affect and the reader's identification with such

affectivity. But does the poet himself identify with feelings evoked by his use of language?

It is through the poet's varied use of repetition that a disjunction between affective language and its referent is revealed; the feeling of sorrow privileged by the speaker is often contested by the consciousness produced from and by the reflexive process at work. That is, the doubled process of poetic expression can be read as performance of sorrow. Such reading of the female voice in Sowŏl's poetry functions as a carrier of "repressed values."⁹ Following such logic, one can trace the poetic language in his works as emanating from a female voice that produces pathos, countering the paternalistic logos of colonial rule.

In his poems, Sowŏl posits often a female speaker who constantly longs for that which is absent or far away. What is to be noted in this familiar motif of yearning is the very fact that there appears to be no expectation of fulfillment in his poems of nature and love. *Nim* does not surface as a living repository of desire whose appearance reassures or promises a remove from the temporal predicament of deprivation. At best it becomes a convention of stock image and sound that simply points to sentiment as a 'timeless' collective value.¹⁰ That is, longing for nature and persons are reenacted without a resolution within the closed form of the lyric that Sowŏl creates. Desire is expressed without hope; consolation is managed through music. None makes this observation more clear than what can be called the most frequently anthologized and recited modern poem in the Korean language, "Azaleas":

When looking at me sickens you
and you take your leave,

Without a word I'll send you away.

On Yōngbyōn's Mount Yak:

azaleas.

I'll pluck an armful and spray them

over the road you'll walk on. Step

on the flowers strewn at your feet

marching softly as you go.

When looking at me sickens you

and you decide to leave:

not even death will make me weep for you.¹¹

The speaker's sheer will to withstand the pain of unrequited love drives the poem controlled by stanzaic regularity and parallelism. In a sharp contrast to the speaker in "Will You Go?" a lyric poem dating back to the Koryŏ period which this poem recalls, the speaker in "Azaleas" lets go her lover willingly and with utmost deference.¹² "Azaleas," then, becomes a performance of the older poem simultaneously recollected and corrected.

In the doubled behavior that takes place, the self emerges as one able to contain the sorrow of her predicament in her own terms: feeling is contained in form. Her desire is checked by the form of language imposed upon the dramatic content of the poem: in the deferential ending of the volitional "urida" (in modern Korean "kessŭmnida," [I

will . . .]) through which the speaker tells of how she will respond to the departing lover, the exaggerated, premodern speech level reenacts the gesture of submission during a time when the popular images of the ‘modern girl’ and ‘female student’ imposed new images of women upon the pre-twentieth century stock figures of chastity and endurance.¹³ The past, contained in language, echoed with a stability associated with the image of a woman both traditional and new, whose self-sufficiency simultaneously contains and hides her sorrow.

As repetition in the guise of perfect rhyme ending each stanza, “urida” accomplishes the task of expression by enacting and completing the desire to let go.¹⁴ While a self-regulating emotional economy is produced through such reproduction of sounds, the image produced is that of a social persona, a stereotype inscribed by the neo-Confucian virtue of self-restraint. In this performance of a reified feminine virtue, the split self emerges: the speaker’s disavowal of tears corresponds to a linguistic, performative self holding back while the emotive (non-)self points to continued longing.

If affective value produces cultural meaning, language via repetition produces and dissimulates the meaning which remains at best ambiguous: the tone of the final line implies that the speaker still longs for the departing lover. Here, a paradoxical relationship between language and emotion comes to surface: language, by completing an idea, accomplishes what feeling alone, in its oscillations, cannot, but is language itself produced by emotion? Or, as we are now in the critical habit of arguing for inverted origins, does language, particularly in the form of affective-expressive poetry, cause the emotion to be produced? The issue becomes more clear in the examination of voice as the source of expression and reenactment.

Psychic plenitude is thought to be provided by the marginalized female voice complementing “the masculine-identified dominant side of the social psyche.”¹⁵ Here, it becomes problematized by the resolute response of the woman. The response of restraint diametrically opposes the other ‘female’ response, i.e., hysteria, and can be read as smoothing over the unsettling qualitative differences present in the relationship being evoked.¹⁶ The affectively charged distance created by the formal and outmoded speech level functions to mask the tension, not only that which lies between the speaker’s apparent oscillation between letting go and holding on, but also that which exists in the vertical relationship between the subject and the addressee. Through the manipulation of sounds of speech producing the image of the woman who accepts her given social station with unflinching composure, these lines in turn produce an attitude meant to garner readers’ approval and succeeds in doing so, given the history of the reception of the poem. That is, the emotional restraint depicted draws on a publicly negotiable expression without pointing to what might otherwise be conceived as ‘inner feeling.’¹⁷

The repetition of the ending appears at the end of first, second, and fourth stanzas, providing solace through the distance created between the honored subject and the female speaker. The regularity of two three-breath segments making up each stanza creates the boundaries within which the past is recalled.¹⁸ In the process it fashions a remembered order out of the chaos of the present. As the speaker attempts to control the dramatic situation through the recall of the language of tradition, the distance created becomes a function and product of voluntary memory.

What Benjamin has noted about the relationship between experience and *mémoire volontaire* in the works of Proust and Baudelaire can be applied to much of Sowōl’s

poetry. As protection from stimuli and absorber of shock, it is voluntary memory which functions to shield the speaker experiencing loss from breaking down.¹⁹ I suggest that voluntary forgetfulness works in the same way. It is the absolute time of willful forgetfulness, as a form of strategic repression, standing outside history that reflects the historicity of the poet's life grazed by trauma.²⁰ As can be seen in "Far from Now," one of his earliest published poems (1920), repetition becomes symptomatic of a desire for forgetfulness:

Far from now when you should seek me

My words will be: "I have forgotten."

When, in your heart, you chide me:

"Fiercely did I yearn before forgetting."

When, still, you chide me:

"Not believing you, I have forgotten.

Not today or tomorrow

Far from now: "I have forgotten."²¹

The repeated ending of each couplet, 'I have forgotten' (*nijōnnora*), projects from the subjunctive mood dominating the poem and confining forgetfulness in a literary space cut off from lived time. Parallelism and symmetry also function as modes of repetition which attempt to master this space of play by turning the speaker's passive situation, i.e., being overwhelmed by the situation of loss and by the overwhelming memory, into one

actively engaged with overcoming it. Similar to what occurs in “Azaleas,” what is rendered in this poem of the absent beloved is an order imposed upon the predicament of loss without the possibility of a resolution; in short, the speaker “remembers” too well that she is not where she wishes to be, i.e., in another time and place where memory does not follow her.

The bridging of the distance between the remembering present and the unforeseeable future of forgetfulness, then, is achieved only visually by the reassuring phrase at the second half of the couplet and acoustically by its repetition.²² In this imagined exchange between the present and the possible but improbable future of the subjunctive mood, desire is assuaged tentatively outside time. This is to say that the present is not actualized, concurring with the view that there exists in Kim Sowōl’s poetry an “absence of time.”²³ Such is the case in “Mountain Flowers.”

Rhythm and Nature

In his most well known nature poem, “Mountain Flowers,” the economy of nature created remains self-sufficient, seasons regulated by an organized pattern of sounds, i.e., rhyme:

On the mountain, flowers bloom.

Flowers bloom.

No matter fall, spring, or summer,

Flowers bloom.

On the mountain,

On the mountain,

Flowers bloom—
Over there they bloom alone.

A small bird crying in the mountain
Loves the flowers
And lives
On the mountains.

On the mountain, flowers fall.
Flowers fall.
No matter fall, spring, or summer,
Flowers fall.²⁴

The regulated breath of three breath segments per line (as can also be observed in “Azaleas”), suggests an unevenness reminiscent of the lyrical form of older songs such as *hyangga* and Koryŏ songs.²⁵ As the lyric created by the trimeter coincides with the expression of a three-legged cycle of nature, one notes the fact that winter has been written out of the picture. The absence of the barren season encapsulates the poem in a semi-paradise in which nature flourishes and diminishes but is saved from decay. This lyrical space achieved by overwriting the natural cycle is also the space of ‘timelessness.’ The absence, in short, of death, cuts off time as a forward moving circle and imposes a premature completion of the natural cycle through the three seasons internally locking the poem in the triadic structure of bloom, maturation, and decline. As time becomes a closed space which leads nowhere outside the language of the poem, the four quatrains

regulate the truncated, uneven cycle with an evenness of tone. Thus rhythm as acoustic presence becomes a cipher to what has been physically taken out, and because it is the season of death which has been taken out, it leads to the death, or, the cutting off, of experience. What remains in the end is not an image of the flower animating the time and space of experience but its acoustic sign which points to the speaker exclaiming of the discovery of the flower. One does not see the flower but hear about it.

In the original, the verbs for bloom and fall, voiced in the exclamatory speech of discovery (-ne) “*p’ine*” and “*chine,*” rhyme to give equal valence to the phenomena echoing and inviting each other. The repetition of the preposition “on” (“e”) next to “mountains (“san”) in the second stanza, in joining the rhyme scheme, becomes indistinguishable from the speech of discovery: grammar joins emotion in a marriage of sounds. Supporting the blurring of distinctions which already lies at the level of rhetoric (“No matter fall, spring, or summer”), the poet’s dexterous play at smoothing over differences becomes pronounced: as the action of blooming and falling mirror each other by way of the doubling rhyme scheme accentuating the similarity of sounds, the listener is discouraged from seeing each season as being experientially distinct from the others. In other words, homogenization occurs.

This manner of conducting expression as dissimulation of difference corresponds to the poet’s general disinterest in description, the idea of depicting reality as is. Longing does not foresee its own cessation but is reenacted within the confines of Sowŏl’s perfect rhyme, i.e., repetitions within the parallel structure of the couplets, “bloom” (*p’ida*) and “fall” (*chida*). Such building of a poem based on an autonomous internal economy seals it off from the world of experience: what is created in its stead is not an alternate world of

mind's habitation but a third space of artifice at a remove from its own maker. In such manner the self recognizes nature as a non-self. Such is the self-reflexive allegorical relationship that the poet has to language.

Nature is made and recognized as the other, framed by repetition: the parallel first and last stanzas become borders, entrapping the landscape in a self-regulating economy of artifice simultaneously producing and preserving nature. Nature as recognized by the self conscious of his unmitigated disadvantage is separated, rather than reconciled to the subject-object dialectic that is described by the traditional romantic reading of the key word in the poem “*chōmanch'i*” (over there).²⁶ The discovery of nature, as being distant from the self, stems from the recognition and acceptance of the self's separation from it. Between desire and attainability exists the gulf which the speaker does not attempt to, and, in fact, has no desire to, cross. In the poet's own melancholy, nature has already become an image, the continuation of an object connected to memory. And, like memory, it is recognized against the backdrop of a rehearsed landscape of mountain flowers and bird, rather than perceived as experience.

Nature, Mind, and Money

In “The Spirit of Poetry,” Sowōl's only known commentary on poetry, nature becomes a doubling of the self through personification:

Once again, even when the brightness and noises of the city contend with the luster and strength of civilization and boast, *over there*, in the deep and dark mountains and woods, in the shadowy place a solitary insect cries incessantly for sorrow unknown. Is not that insect rather much like our sentiment? And the dried reed out on the open field, grown thin from the wind, isn't this even more

close friend of the fond song *sympathizing* with our transience and vicissitudes?

The waves running over the deep and wide ocean, even better revelation that we love our freedom? [italics are mine]²⁷

The pathetic fallacy embodied in the passage functions to reveal the subject-object dialectic depicted in the *paysage moralisé*, a practice of reading meaning into the landscape which ultimately prioritizes the person over the landscape: that is, the landscape is there to serve as a distant mirror to the subject. In the above scene, nature reminds the poet of who he already is: one who knows himself to be melancholy and transient, and of what he desires – freedom from sorrow and temporality. In conjuring up the notion of nature’s sympathy for the self, Sowōl represents the self’s relationship with nature as an intersubjective one. Nature then comes to stand for the phenomenon which showcases the subject’s relationship to himself.²⁸ The split occurs between the self of language (the speaking self) and the self behind language – between what is said and what is meant.

This view of nature seen vis-à-vis the subject split is not a solipsistic figure whose mind has become nature, but rather one who has turned nature into an other outside himself. In view of temporality, this is not the nature that characterizes what is conventionally described as Sowōl’s longing for eternal nature and his romantic critique of modernity.²⁹ Rather, it can be seen as a symptom of the poet’s maladjustment to a linear sense of time which he accepted to be, as it will turn out in the end, fatally running ahead of him.

This is to say that the self borrows temporal stability that it lacks from nature recalled via voluntary memory. What one notices immediately in this passage is that this

observation of nature is a habitual one: the poet is revisiting the sight that reminds him, by difference, of what he has left behind, the cities he left when he decided to return to his wife's hometown Kusŏng not far from his own. Against his recourse to nature, three cities come to mind in the light of the poet's fluctuating relationship to the modern spaces associated with civilization and advantage: Chŏngju, the city of his past as the location of the famed Osan school where he had been a successful student under the tutelage of Kim Ŏk; Tokyo where he had sojourned for five months in 1923 only to return in the chaos of the Kanto earthquake and its aftermath; last but not least is Seoul where Kim Ŏk more than once invited the poet to join him but to whom Sowŏl, in his characteristic melancholy, dejectedly responded:

Thank you for asking me to come up [to Seoul]. There are times when I lay awake in the middle of the night, unable to sleep; I think then of how much I would like to leave this place and return to a place like Seoul for a life with intimate friends. But . . . since I came to this place, I have not been able to believe in the "hope of Korea." ³⁰

From the vantage point of distance, the poet sees the capital as a place that offers him no hope. His disavowal of a return to Seoul concurs with his rejection of a future.

By the mid-twenties when his collection *Azaleas* was published, Chŏngju, Tokyo, and Seoul stood for him as spaces, respectively, of education coupled with nationalist activism, of thwarted ambitions brought on by disaster and violence, and of the urban everyday life of (sparse newspaper) work for the literati. These are also spaces that Sowŏl, after his return to Kusŏng, kept at bay. Thus, rather than an idyllic return to a timeless space of authenticity often attributed to the privileging of nature, his return to the

local, both in physically lived life and in the representational space of his poetry, becomes concomitant with relinquished desire.

That the possibility of reclaiming old friendships is overshadowed by immobility suggests a vanishing of affect by resolute will. Such is the workings of his poetics which refer to affect under control. In the absence of concrete images by which we can ascertain the life of the speaker in his poems, the poet relies on metonymic strategies to produce affect via acoustics. In “Snow” the snow is equated with “heart” (maüm) “of a girl.” “Heart of love” and stands for purity and delight. The blanket of white itself becomes a cipher: having no value other than the reference it points to, it attempts to increase the verisimilitude of its reference. Again, nature produces no image in that neither the snow just observed nor the flowers in “Mountains” take on a concrete reality: there is no “thingness” to reflect the speaker’s experiencing objects in the world. As such, these poems can be said to read in a manner that returns us to the idea that Sowöl is a poet of sounds rather than images, a deliberate turning away from the modernist tendency toward the concrete and sustained visuality.³¹ Images in Sowöl’s poems are flashes of memory or traces of desire, neither which insist on a life of their own. This is connected to the idea that Sowöl is a poet of time rather than space, more inclined to what de Man refers to as an allegorical, rather than symbolic, mode of signification.³² This renders him far more self-reflexive in his relationship to language than most critics, eager to present him as a man sincere to his feelings, have given him credit.

Even in his rare poems where nature shows no trace of desire and remains indifferent to the plight of the speaker, repetition occurs to seal it off from the possibility

of its own end. Nature images seem to refer to a psychological state of rest helped along by the lull of alliteration. “The Golden Grass” (1922) is such an example:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Chandi | Grass, |
| Chandi | Grass, |
| Kūm chandi | Golden grass. |
| Simsim sanch’ōne punnūn purūn | In the deep deep mountains fires flame. |
| Kasinim mudōmkkae kūm chandi | My gone love’s grave grows golden grass. |
| Pomi wanne, pombich’i wanne | Spring’s come, spring’s sun has come, |
| Pōdūnamu kkūt’ae silgajie | To the ends of the willow tree to its branches. |
| Pombich’i wanne, pomnare | Spring’s light has come, on a spring day, |
| Simsim sanch’ōnedo kūmjandie | Even in the deep deep mountains to the golden grass. ³³ |

The alliteration found in the consonantal ch/j, k/g; s; and p/b (rendered in translation through the repeating sounds g; d; and f) move the poem forward in a progressively calming mood. At the level of surface and of the aural, the poem suggests nothing that protests the congruity of nature and death: this spring follows the normative laws of nature without a hint of contrastive darkness or loss. One can say that the grave (the word *mudōm* appearing in one of the two lines in the poem carrying the dark vowels u and ō) becomes demystified under the sun.³⁴ The disinterested voice of the speaker is marked by the absence of tension or ambivalence.

But harmony created through sounds does not equate with absence of conflict in sense. Semantically, what cannot be ignored is that the site of concrete materiality in the poem is in fact the grave, the metonymy for death. That this is the location of spring

places the returning season of hope before the signifier of irrecoverable loss. Thus, the dark vowels of the grave echo in the “deep deep mountains,” the sino-Korean for deep (深 ; *sim*) phonetically echoing its homophone for heart (心; *sim*): the mind-heart becomes the “heart” of wilderness and death the grave-bosom of earth.

This is to suggest that Sowŏl’s poetry is to be found in the abstract space of the mind-heart (*maŭm*), a native term recurring in his oeuvre and corresponding to the sino-Korean *sim* (心). Referring to the seat of both thinking and feeling in the East Asian horizon of expectations, *maŭm* in Sowŏl’s poetry becomes a place where the intensity of feeling is generated and the limitations of the speaker’s own economy of feeling are imposed. It is this pervasive, dislocated, and abstract space of the mind-heart to which Sowŏl returns, the dwelling space for sentiment from which the poet enacts his performances of repetition.³⁵

While nature as the traditional site of rest becomes marked by distance and inaccessibility, the auratic is that which shimmers in this distance and impasse. This charge, I emphasize, is an affective one. The glimpse of possibility shown in “over there” in “Mountain Flowers” and in the recognition of sunlight on the branches of willow trees in “The Golden Grass” are only momentary. Relations with family, friends, and love depicted in Sowŏl’s poems in their absences in the present are recollected with longing but without a forward look toward reconciliation. Even when the tonal shift from dark to light, e.g., from “Azaleas” to “The Golden Grass,” can be observed, there can be found no indication of a desire in the latter mood for the love’s return. The alliterative as well as the homophonic acoustics of the latter poem serves to transport the listener,

“captured by a work of art,” through an atmospheric value cut off from fulfillment.³⁶

Sowŏl’s love poems convey this consciousness in the form of a priori acceptance of loss.

The cardinal virtues locating individuals in the categorized social space of the traditional scheme of human relations (e.g., filial piety and order) become recast in the mood of nostalgia for parents and siblings. Sowŏl’s desire to reconstruct a transgenerational family points to tradition as aesthetically charged; it contrasts with Im Hwa’s single-minded vision of a leveled society of orphaned workers. “Mother, Sister,” published in 1922, expresses the desire for a stable traditional family in a natural setting: “Let’s live by the river.” As a refrain the line captures what is not expressed: the fact that the speaker lives, most likely alone, in the city, far from the river. Set to music, this poem-song familiar to every school-aged child in Korea produces an enchantment, its incantatory style harking back to an idealized life of familial coherence and reliability.³⁷

As can be seen in the above poem longing for the maternal figure, of the mother and older sister, one notes the female-centered worldview of the poet. When not speaking through a woman, valorization of the relationship with and among female members of the family is thematically achieved. The figure of the mother, whose presence appears as a lingering vestige of a time prior (e.g., “Sitting together with mother / listen to old stories) does not appear as saliently as that of the older sister whose presence lingers more mournfully, and, in select poems, takes on a form of haunting.

In “The Cuckoo,” the older sister of the speaker undergoes a transformation upon death, turning into a bird to hover over her remaining eight younger siblings; her abuse at the hands of a stepmother has her returning as a restless spirit. A fairy tale without a

happy ending, conflict between women sets the scene where the idealized home life by the river is broken:

Long ago, far away in our land,
A step-mother's hatred killed our sister
Who lived by the river.

Call to our sister,
Oh, in sadness! Our sister
Tormented by jealous hate died and became the cuckoo.

Remembering even in death
The nine brothers she left behind,
While others are sleeping deep in the night
Moving from hill to hill she sadly cries (stanzas 3-5).³⁸

The poem takes on the ambience of a dark fairy tale pushed to the extreme: the Cinderella-like torment of an unwanted stepchild turns into the tragedy of death and the magic of metamorphosis. In the figure of the tormented sister lies the unfulfilled longing taking on mythopoetic powers: the unaddressed injustice experienced by a woman killed by a cruel home life transforms her into a creature of flight. But the bird shows only the sign of physical freedom: though she is freed from the confines of the body, her new ability to move "from hill to hill" does not free her from her burden of a past which continues to matter. Pathetic fallacy serves to make affect material: a bird physically encapsulates the restless spirit of a victimized woman.

This jump from pathetic fallacy to full metaphor vis-à-vis transmogrification attests to a leap back to an ancient mode of aesthetic imagination. The urge to reconcile with nature through imagining nature's empathy with man's plight becomes intensified with the kind of imagination found in the oral traditions dating back to the time of foundation myths: the line between the human and the animal world is lifted by the power of affective sorrow which crosses ontological barriers.³⁹ The poet's attraction to legends of female heartbreak and fall further harnesses the energy of foreclosed desire found, for the most part, in unrecorded history of women.⁴⁰ The folk testimonies of such disadvantaged lives is driven by affect in the form of *han*.

The Body of *Han*

His signature poems in *Azaleas* reveal how in Sowōl's most lyrical moments, language becomes pure expression of lament in which images of the "everyday" diminish beneath the acoustic shadow of perpetuity.⁴¹ These are sounds which produce sorrow to be consumed and channel affect into the form of *han*, the ritualized, aesthetic marker for 'desire foreclosed.' Invented in the twentieth century, it becomes an aesthetic to express the sense of both individual and historical loss.⁴² In its functional value, *han* becomes a poetic strategy based on limiting the nexus of feeling to the tension between desire and resignation, in which the self becomes hidden in its very act of revelation.

Both in the critical sense to explain the tension and oscillation and between two poles of emotion and as an aesthetic referring to a sense of pleasure marked by sorrow, *han* defies fixed denotation; "spite" and "unsatisfied desire" serve merely as limited points of reference in English.⁴³ Its very untranslatability renders the term culturally

specific, attributing to its fluid and, at times, unrestrained application. *Han* is often singled out as the term which describes the mood and content of Sowōl's poems.⁴⁴

As the aesthetic of sorrow, *han* dictates that the self remain separated from nature as its object of longing. In his poem "The Sea," the line ending of each couplet is the question word "where" (*ōdi*): the speaker cannot see the object longed for; such rhetoric of sight blocked becomes an extension of the distance which *han* necessitates for its logic of recognition and resignation to unravel.⁴⁵ The distance between the speaker and the object of his longing is sometimes translated as the inability to see. This final version of the poem lies in contrast to an earlier, second version which appeared in the journal *Kaebiyōk* (1922) in which the couplets end with the predicate "far" in the deferential form (*mōmnida*).⁴⁶ In the final version which appears in *Azaleas*, the view of the sea is cut off; there exists no point of reference for the possibility of desire's completion.

It is important to remember that the term *han* includes both the convention of the plight of the disadvantaged, i.e., of victimized women, and the redressing of this grief through the ritual of release; thus, the term is frequently accompanied by the expression "to release/unravel the *han*." Extending from desire without a recourse for fulfillment to the desire for freedom, the possibilities contained in the term suggests both resignation and resolution via performance, e.g., the dance *salp'uri* from the shamanist tradition.

As *han* as ritual becomes materialized in such dance, it attains the physical weight of the body moving through the choreography of rhythmic holding and releasing. In his poem "A Lump of Sorrow," the ritual of releasing *han* as a material "thing" occurs in the form of ancestor worship ceremony: "The incense raised from where I kneel / the small

lump of sorrow in my heart.”⁴⁷ The ‘lump’ held in is released through the light and fragrance of ritual remembering the dead.

Sowōl’s engagement with the body is most often found in the form of the female voice. When voice is used as the acoustic trace of the body, the feminine functions as advantage, a form of mask to express feelings not traditionally allowed men.⁴⁸ When the body itself is articulated, the feminine takes on material value connoting physical desire, in concert with the changing socioeconomic times when the body of the woman became commodified.⁴⁹

To be sure, the body, as the field of expression mediating between the self and the world, traditionally holds transgender significance: as the nexus of power and virtue, the body is the site which registers moral legitimacy.⁵⁰ The body, in its native term “*mom*,” is used by Sowōl as the physical repository of sorrow. As the physical site of the abstract “mind-heart,” it is also from which *han*, as the feeling which gives moral legitimacy and subjectivity to the speaker, springs: “Ah, winter was deep, in my body, / my chest crumbled and fell, this sorrow falling down to sit!” (“Crescent Moon”).⁵¹ Instead of snow, the sign of winter, it is sorrow which falls with its heaviness of being. Here, it is also important to note that “chest” (*kasŭm*) is one of several synonyms for the “mind-heart” (*maŭm*) and echoes the word via rhyme; the chest is also the physical address of the mind-heart (the very site of their bodies that mourners may pound on to express grief).

When the poet uses the body to suggest female form, it is modified and superceded by the desire it produces, becoming the conduit of physical arousal. In “Scent of Women,” the speaker unabashedly announces his sensual desire: “I like that body with its strong scent.”⁵² The word “scent” becomes the repeated line ending throughout

the stanzas, accentuating the fact that that which the speaker longs for is not the actual body but what the body gives off, its trace. Thus, trace becomes significant in proportion to the lack of its fulfilled presence. Like voice, scent as trace of the body results in the residue becoming the actual object of desire and that which becomes the auratic. In the second stanza the “sounds of flesh” (*sariī ausōng*) in sound and sense echo the preceding line’s “fading soul” (*kūmurōjin yōng*): flesh and spirit are linked through the physical echoing of sound, implicating each other through a similarity in dissimilarity that is rhyme. As such both voice and scent point to a body that is not here.

This suggests that in Sowōl’s poems experience is mediated through the primal sense of hearing, as well as compensatory sense of smell. These senses supplant that of vision, the sense dominating the modern, cinematic age: “The deserted scent cast by that face / moving lips, the cup giving and taking” (“Powdered Face”).⁵³ In the poem about three people drinking through the night, it is suggested that the third person, a woman, awakens the desire of the speaker. As noticed in the previous poem, it is “scent,” the olfactory trace of the countenance which becomes significant. What can be caught by sight is fragmented and fading: the face appears fuzzy and immaterial, covered by powder noted for its smell. Here lies aura captured in the scent emanating from powder as mask and trace of the skin. The body is suggested through the scent, rather than seen through form; the focus of the speaker’s (and, consequently, the reader’s) vision rests for a moment on the lips representing the whole face, and this synecdochal shift fragments the self for an expressed part to point to the whole. There is no attempt to capture it in full.

Why does the poet consistently resort to this deliberate turn away from capturing the physical form, or “thingness”? This choice seems to serve the purpose of creating a tantalizing distance that remains unclosed. In “The Wife’s Body,” the physical body itself represents the speaker’s disadvantage: “You who are wise wife, someone else’s body” (3).⁵⁴ The ambiguity in the line, whether the ‘wife’ is speaker’s or ‘someone else’s,’ underlines the separation of the body from the speaker. The important aspect of the physical and the material body is that it cannot be possessed: it remains far removed from the speaker’s reach. When it appears, the body makes no contact; it is disenfranchised and disconnected from the mind-heart which engages the world through thought-feeling. The body as commodity, then, becomes the place of the loss of aura: while the mind-heart becomes the rich site of advantage, the body corresponds to dispossession.

As the body becomes a metonymy for the self without a home, the self leaves the confines of language as lyrical expression of sounds and emotions (found in Sowŏl’s signature poems like “Mountain Flowers” and “Azaleas”) and heads for the open and wide field of material reality. In this setting, the body becomes the site of kinetic movement. The fleeting glimpse of beauty is turned to the message of purpose and destination in “Field Walking”:

Then this body of mine
Resting again on the way
my chest out of breath
Let it be filled with joy and overflow.
My steps once again move farther ahead. . .⁵⁵

In the end what is left is the body in the biophysical sense of “chest” (kasūm). The upbeat rhythm of “Field Walking” maintains the form of three breath segments, as with Sowōl’s other folk-styled poems. Yet the move from lyrical melancholy to prosaic exuberance draws closer to the free verse poems in which the poet deliberately moves out of the often-noted stylized form of folk poetry, as in “If We Had Land to Walk”:

I dreamed, my friends and I
Finishing work together
The dream of returning to the village at sunset
Happily, in the middle of a dream.
But this body that has lost its home,
If only we had land to walk on, rivers to cross!
Would we wander like this, in the morning and evening
Gathering new sighs.
Is it east, south, north,
My body wanders, look,
Shining hope, the faraway starlight.
Waves, come up to my chest and limbs.
But what of this grace! Each day in front
Of me the narrow road extends. I will go ahead
One step at a time. On the hill slope spread
Before me all through dawn, one by one, alone. . . weeding.⁵⁶

One of the few poems in *Azaleas* in which we find the speaker engaged with his landscape, the “I” takes on a constituted wholeness without the part to whole conflict

marking other poems driven by a sense of loss. The body wanders homelessly but not hopelessly, reflecting a sociopolitical reality that does not disenfranchise the speaker. To be glimpsed here is the possibility of the body's restored meaning, of its reconciliation with the mind-heart, alluding back to a time prior belonging to an agrarian way of life.

What appears in this picture is the very component of an everyday life uncovered from the strictures of melody. Written in a "free verse" style, the poem asserts a speaker with the body free of polysemy: here, it reads as the physically moving and content working self carrying the message of labor. The closed longing for love and nature resolved through resignation in other poems is fulfilled through a collective, though individuated, activity in this poem. The land being weeded by fellow workers offers the picture of man's harmonious relationship with nature, the former engaged in the gainful employment of the latter's maintenance through its harnessing. The presence of the workers and travelers offers the speaker a fellow feeling in a landscape more fertile than desolate, yet this feeling is measured from the position of solitude, each individual as separate, "one by one, alone. . ."

Language and Sound

The body without a home, though, is a restless one. The above is also a dream poem in which the living wander, corresponding to another kind of wandering: the spirit of the dead wandering in search of appeasement, according to the shamanist view of life and death. As Benjamin has noted, aura cannot be freed completely from its ritual origin and function.⁵⁷ The ritual of calling on the spirit of the dead is invoked in "Calling the Spirit," a poem coterminous with "Azaleas" when discussing Sowöl. In the ritual of

spirit-calling through which the participant wishes that the dead spirit not wander but make a safe journey to the otherworld, language becomes absolute expression:

Name that has been shattered!

Name broken in mid-air!

Name without an owner!

Name that I will die calling out!

I never got to say

The words remaining in my heart—

You that I loved!

You that I loved!

The crimson sun hung on the Western hill.

The deer herd also cries sadly.

On top of the mountain sitting far away

I call out your name.

Until I'm seized by the passion of grief.

Until I'm seized by the passion of grief.

The sound of my cry goes aslant

But how wide the distance between sky and earth.

Even if I become a rock standing here,

Name that I'll die crying out!

You that I loved!

You that I loved!⁵⁸

The power of language to name echoes here what has been called the Adamic view of language in Western hermeneutic tradition.⁵⁹ Yet, this power does not affirm a connection between the name and the one named. The sorrow of the speaker who has lost a loved is expressed through the ritual of "Calling the Spirit" in which the bereaved climbs to the roof of the house and, repeatedly calling out the name of the deceased.⁶⁰

As ritual is evoked, the poem rides on the power of rhetoric. Despite the recognizable trimetric rhythm and the symmetry of grammatical structure and repeated diction, the poem is not intent on transmission of meaning as much as in suggesting that the physicality of language is all that is left, as shadow of what it used to mean; the *cri-du-coeur* in the process of uttering the now empty signifier "name" echoes in the gap between the sound and its referent. The lyrical power of the line "Name without an owner" is also rhetorical in the sense that it persuades the listener that language has lost its semantic purpose.⁶¹ In the act of performing language as an end in itself, aura has been constructed, an enchantment created, as sounds hold out for a moment and flee without reaching their reference.

In the power of affect discharged by the energy of grief, lyrical language becomes an inexhaustible stay against the reality of death, in which description faithful to reality loses to pure expression of emotion. Thus the aura, the emotive charge, produced within the context of the observance of this shamanic ritual, entrusts the physical gesture and

performance of the ritual of crying out to the body. In the final stanza, the body of the one struck by grief turns into a rock. The image harkens back to the notion of *han* as a physical essence and solidifies the metaphor even further by the recall of the folktale in which a woman waited so long for her husband to return from the sea that she turned into stone.⁶² The body is now turned into an icon supporting the neo-Confucian ideology concerning women, *ilp'yŏn tansim* (one heart), and is set to physical, material relief. In other words, *han* becomes equated with the body of a woman fixed and petrified by the power of her own speech. As the presumed effect of the power of language embedded in the speaker's "heart," this body-turned-stone becomes symptomatic of the depersonalization of women which occurs simultaneously with the poet's adoption of the female voice at its highest lyrical powers. Thus, the aura created by such affective-expressive use of language, dependent on ritual and its attendant desire for legitimacy and acceptance, is also made problematic.

The affective use of language in its full force attempts to conjure up the supernatural. With the wide "distance between sky and earth," this language has no communicative function in the world of man. In Benjamin's terms, it is the language of a sacred text in which the absolute truth content does not concern itself with its reception or its comprehensibility. This expected failure of communication tests the logic of ritual performance: how can the reader and the audience not matter? It does, and, in fact, it is again the performative, rhetorical function of the lyric, devoid of didacticism, which succeeds in transmitting the pathos released by the poem.

In the context of the community which observes the ritual act of speech and of the controlled movements of the body, aura is maintained in the 'distance between sky and

earth,' between the dead and the living. In Sowöl's poetry, the distance that stands between the past and the present shimmers through the acoustic slivers of language. In "Grave," the familiar metonymy for death becomes the locus of utterance, unlike the silence observed in "Golden Grass":

The sound of someone calling me,
On the reddish hill, here and there
Even stones are moving under the moonlight.
Song left with only sounds, entangle in sorrow,
The place where the records of old ancestors are buried!
I search for them thoroughly, there,
Song without form flows
Over the shadow-covering hill, here and there.
The sound of someone calling me,
Calling me, calling me,
Grabbing and pulling out my soul, calling me.⁶³

The keenness of the "call" from the grave specifies who the listener is standing above ground. Poetry in essence for Sowöl is "song left with only sounds," a shell made of acoustic shards fitting together; as in "Calling the Spirit" the value of this sound lies in the act of naming. Interpellation becomes a powerful act of interrupting the mundane habit of being, shattering the listener's field of consciousness. The "flâneur"⁶⁴ who has been wandering up and down a hill under moonlight in search of new sensations has discovered a treasure trove of tradition. Charged by sounds from the past which turn the speaker of the poem into a listener, the "I" begins a whole-hearted search for forgotten

texts of tradition which still call out to him. Perhaps “the records of old ancestors” can only be retrieved in fragments, like the shards of sounds of folk songs pieced together by the skilled hands of the modern poet producing a stylized collection of poems that is *Azaleas*.

Task of the Poet-Translator

Can the written language of “records” (the words “ancestors” and “records” are the only words in the original written in sino-Korean) be brought back to life from their grave in an era when the act of writing has very much to do with the vernacular? And just who are these ancestors? Literary forbearers of the classical past? Kim Sowŏl’s several poems translated from classical Chinese may provide an answer that these are not poets of the *hyangga* or the *sijo* for Sowŏl, but poets writing in the classical Chinese tradition.

Sowŏl published translations of more than a dozen poems by T’ang dynasty poets into the Korean vernacular between 1925 and 1934.⁶⁵ The span captures the period between the publication of “Azaleas” and the last poem known to have written before his death “Samsu Kapsan.” His translations from the highly regulated poetry of the T’ang period reveal the exercise in musicality that was very much at work in the shaping of his poetics observed throughout his oeuvre. His preference for the seven and five character poems translate for the most part into septasyllabic lines in Korean, breaking into three and four breath segments. The predictable transference of sound values from a tonal ideographic language to a morphophonic and monotone one testifies to a conservative attempt at achieving “fidelity” to the original. When the poet deviates from this norm, he opens up the poetic form, echoing sounds which carry high emotional value. He turns the

act of translation into something more than transferring a corresponding number of syllables. “Spring,” Sowŏl’s rendering of Du Fu’s “春望” (Waiting for Spring) (which I here render into English) departs from his normal strategy; it begins:

This country is broken
The mountains and streams
Do they remain?
They say that spring has come
But only to grass and trees.⁶⁶

In Sowŏl’s vernacular version, the word country/nation as well as the compound mountains and streams are repeated: “이나라 나라는 부서졌는데/ 이山川 옛태山川은남어잇드냐.” This salient addition can be seen in the ideograph for state and those for mountain and rivers appearing once in the original. The stock question about what gets lost in translation can be changed here to “What has been gained in this Korean translation?” What is to be measured as gain is an intensification of affect already present in the original. The repetition not only lengthens the line which the poet takes pain to measure out into three breath segments, his signature mark, but contemporizes the crisis depicted in the eighth century Chinese poem.

The repetition of “country/nation” and the compound “mountains and streams” offers a rumination of the patriot who believes in nation, a heart which must question the veracity of the world outside in the light of the failure of his country to remain sovereign: if a nation can be broken, how can nature be reliable? Even if it is reliable, how can it offer comfort? Nature cannot offer consolation for one lamenting over lost nation; this heart does not desire spring grass and trees. Sowŏl is the poet in his position of

disadvantage mourning the change of men's hearts and the loss of civility in a town where the mountains and streams had not apparently changed.⁶⁷

The echo of nation and nature in the above poem is both a lament and critique of the political reality in which the poet dwells without money and without power. The translation of the poem in the vernacular, published in Chosŏn mundan in 1926, is inevitably contextualized onto the colonial landscape. It also corresponds to his contemporary Yi Sanghwa's poem written in the same year, "Does Spring Come Also to Stolen Fields?"⁶⁸ The "broken land" ravaged by war in Du Fu's poem becomes a star in a constellation that becomes charged with Sowŏl's "Spring" and Yi Sanghwa's "fields" "stolen" by colonial powers.

Sounds of Nation

The historical response to Kim Sowŏl's works translates into the praise of their ability to draw out the sounds and feelings that are felt to be particularly Korean.⁶⁹ As romanticism became an index to subjective freedom, it also became an indigenized concept which validated what was already present in the folk tradition; the renewed appreciation for folk songs became aligned with the idea of linguistic purity. 1924 was the pivotal year in which not only the first collection of Korean folk songs was compiled and published, but also the year which saw the publication of Yi Kwangsu's "Minyo sogo" (On folk poetry):

In our folk songs we discover rhythm that especially fits our people, and, at the same time, we can see the shape in which our feelings flow (when this is expressed in sounds it is rhythm) and in which our thoughts move. It is an absolute necessity that those of us trying to construct a new kind of literature

search for this in folk songs. . .⁷⁰

The essentialist appeal to an ethnonation promoting the idea of linguistic purity is echoed in Chu Yohan's "To Those Who Wish to Write Verse"; the seminal essay maintains that the task of the poet seeking to write "songs" is to express the national feeling (chǒngsǒ) and to cultivate the beauty of the mother tongue through the inspiration of folk songs.⁷¹

Publishing his collection *Azaleas* in 1925, just a year after the discourse above was taking place, Sowŏl seems to have met such prescription by capturing the music of sounds deemed particularly to engender fellow feeling. It suffices to say that the cult value associated with Sowŏl's poetry has to do with this recovery of feeling that had long been relegated to the realm of the uneducated "common folk." That is, departing from *sijo*'s tendency toward emotional restraint,⁷² Kim Sowŏl is to have presented a "realistic" portrayal of what it meant to be human.⁷³

While classical Chinese and sinified forms of poetry became demonized as remnants of a dead, irrelevant past, the past continued to speak. Confucian humanism continued to be inflected in Sowŏl's poetry during an era when romanticism as both new and old and as the celebration of fall into a familiar structure of feeling via folk songs was to be justified through an ethical imperative of nation-building. The building of national literature relied on a retrieval of the past, not simply reclaiming what had been a marginalized oral tradition, but rewriting selective written tradition to produce affect fundamentally based on repeating sounds. The echoes of a classical tradition can be heard in Sowŏl's oeuvre which grapple with literature as transport and as document, in which the aura of the past recaptured was articulated through the acoustic qualities of language. The "dead" poetry in classical Chinese spoke in the "living" language of the

vernacular Korean. Such act of translation also privileged the acoustic over the visual by which poetry in classical Chinese had been mainly received by Koreans.

After *Azaleas*

What one observes in the subject-object split in Sowŏl's rendition of nature mirrors the redoubled split one finds in his self-conscious, and ultimately ironic, view of money:

Lament for Money

These coins to whom shall I give? This, mind-heart,
this change can't even cut a ribbon for a girl's hair.

Can't buy a silver ring—aha!

Let's buy ten Makko cigarettes and light them, this heart.⁷⁴

The conventional tone of complaint in the above poem, i.e., that the sum of money that the speaker possesses is paltry, mocks his own minimal purchasing power which simply translates to less than a dozen cigarettes of the cheap Japanese brand.⁷⁵ That this jingle of change in his pocket equals the totality of feelings in his heart signifies the limitations of affect as human agency to counter the economic reality of twentieth century Korea. His possessions reduced to a few coins, the speaker remains at the verge of both economic and emotional bankruptcy.

As Marc Shell has noted, coinage destroys the aura of individual objects and encourages a sense of universal equality of things.⁷⁶ Coins, as tokens of what they represent, i.e., the monetary value of objects, take on a double meaning of biological generation of likeness as well as a monetary generation of interest.⁷⁷ While the latter's authenticity depends on the absence of monetary, i.e., utilitarian, interest, the paltry sum

in the speaker's pocket is lamented, because the "change" cannot adequately represent the content of the mind-heart: that is, it is not enough to buy the objective value of affect, e.g., "a ribbon" or "a silver ring." Coins can simply be exchanged for a few cigarettes.

If coins are, then, copies of what they represent, poetry as imitation of life and 'offspring' of feeling becomes questioned in a poem concerned with both money's competition with and its representational value of the mind-heart. If poetry reflects and expresses feeling residing in the mind-heart, and the feeling has lost its traditional value as glue that binds together interpersonal relationships, poetry itself, then, becomes a play and performance of affect emptied of authenticity.

In "Lament for Money," the poet appears to make a complete disavowal of the body as a shell containing diminishing material life: "There is nothing worth anything in the body / my mind's capital is true heart."⁷⁸ The native term used, *mitch'ōn*, becomes 'capital' in the affective double sense: it finances the advantageous commerce of feeling and functions as the central station for its traffic; it is both currency of feeling and the site where its movement is conducted. In its rhetorical force, it attempts to counter the ubiquitous presence and the purchasing power of money which can fill the gap between desire and possession.

What does such proto-critique of capitalism, implied in a poem like "Lament for Money," accomplish in its rhetoric of disavowal and advantage? While money threatens to overpower both, the connection between heart and body develops through a synechdotal relationship. Overcoming the binary opposition which might otherwise take place, the mind-heart both substitutes for the wholeness of the body and becomes symbol for its health. In turn, the body is associated with both money and its lack. As the body

thus becomes both the impossibly distant object of desire and the site of deprivation, money becomes embodied in Sowŏl's poetry as that which ultimately refers to the body and to the mind-heart, thus homogenizing all things, both material and emotional.

Through sounds the poet was able to build a temporary shelter from the storms of history. This is to say that Sowŏl was aware of his position located in the unstable world of modernity and that for the most part poetry was for him a craft-making enterprise by which he could construct a fabric of stability and assurance during a time where there was none. The labor with which he made and remade his poems, as attested by their various versions, indicate that these poems were not spontaneous outpourings of emotions recollected in tranquility.⁷⁹ Rather, they are material products arduously crafted and revised. The past, as contained in language, was acoustically rendered, mourned and turned into objects of sorrowful beauty.

The acoustic corporeality of these poems, rendered through stylized folk poetry, was a product of the Korea's era of mechanical reproduction. Written at the cusp of time when folk songs were beginning to be revived in print, soon to be followed by its renditions on the radio, poetry constructed by Kim Sowŏl often recasts the value of feeling as a double-edged answer to the discrediting of Confucian rationality.⁸⁰ His poems express the loss of Confucian values with the air of subjective freedom while reaffirming them through an acoustic, ideological turn toward tradition. While his love and nature poems mourn and resolve that mourning through a distance charged by self-expression, what is unearthed from the process is an attachment to a moral compass associated with the nonmaterialistic vanished world of ordered lives.

The eternal present to which Harootunian following Simmel locates time's relationship to money is also the product of a poet who cuts time to make it his. This strategy for management, as has been noted, occurs by way of Sowöl's deft uses of repetition. In this reified, ongoing present, repetition, especially in the form of refrains in poetry, also regulates response by programming it.⁸¹ The reader/listener in a given social context is invited into the closed circle that the poet/singer has created and enters an enchantment by which time as movement and change is forgotten.⁸² The past and the future are both erased in the poem, that which could not be achieved by the poet in life.

In a rare extant letter written to his former teacher Kim Ök upon receiving his collection *Manguch'o* [Day lilies] in September 21st, 1934 Sowöl writes:

Does the title mean one has forgotten one's worries or does it mean one should forget them? Or does it mean one is trying to forget? I think that it should be called *Manguch'o* because there is no room for it in one's heart and that is why he tries to forget. It has been ten years since I have been here in Kusöng. Ten years seem like a brief span of time. During these years in the country mountains and rivers have not changed but civility (*insa*) seems to have vanished. I have not read or written much but only let go some money hard to hold again. Now that I have no money I am not sure of what to do.⁸³

In the above passage, the poet's condition of financial decline becomes commensurate with the passing of time: as he concedes that both time and money are spent, he equates one with the other, neither of which he is able to save or recapture. In the poet's mind, there is no longer the possibility here of repetition, no way of managing or recovering the loss. Nature's temporal stability appears aloof against what has been changed and

exhausted through time: money and the exchange of feelings between people (*insa*), the former against which the poet had earlier tried to pose the latter as antidote. The poet perceives that neither can be (re)produced. As mind-heart becomes like money in its virtual depletion, the tension between the two collapses to ground zero. Such unending present defined by deprivation and loss becomes unbearable.

Sowöl's financial destitution also corresponds to the finitude of his literary production. From 1925 to his death in 1934, during the same period of his translation practices, Sowöl tried his hand at newspaper distribution and even money-lending while residing in Kusŏng, the latter position involving a collection of interest which hardly suited the poet.⁸⁴ After 1925, unemployed and uninspired to write beyond a few poems, one of which is his "Lament for Money," Sowöl found himself out of work in the double sense of both *oeuvre* and *travail*.

It is the year of his suicide by opium-laced wine in 1934 when Sowöl reflects upon the title of his former teacher's translation of a collection of poetry in classical Chinese, *Mang'uch'o* (literally, "the plant that makes you forget your worries"). *Mang'uch'o* is also another name for cigarettes, the modern instrument of comfort that could be purchased with a few coins. If poems, like cigarettes, function as instruments of forgetfulness for Sowöl, they do so by also being like coins: material and exchangeable as affect. In this sentimental poetry of measured meter and rational acceptance of loss, the beloved (*nim*) as the hope for change and difference is nowhere to be found. Ironically, it is this poetry cut off from time and time's ability to return through duration which has become a commodity of continuously generated emotive value in South Korea.⁸⁵

Whether one reads his works as emitting aura or as inventing one depends on the reader's relationship to the appeal of an ethnonational identity salient in the history of the reception of Sowŏl's poetry.⁸⁶ This issue of authenticity becomes a compelling one as it succumbs to the overriding problem of poetry's relationship to the economic by way of its relationship to the double-image of offspring and interest that money generates.⁸⁷ Is poetry in early twentieth century Korea a natural offspring of truth, i.e., of emotions, or an unnatural one of calculated interest/affect? What is it now, almost a century later? Sowŏl's posthumous fame and generation of interest historically as the most popular poet in South Korea coincides with the lyric timelessness that the poet generates through its acoustic performances.⁸⁸

If performance, to refer to Paul Zumthor's definition, is a play between transmission and reception, the twentieth-first century reception of "Azaleas" as a hit song by the pop entertainer Maya attests to the break between the conditions of its production in the mid-1920s and its consumption in our mediatized era.⁸⁹ It also bespeaks the power of the regulated voice in Sowŏl's signature poems unparalleled in appeal by any other to be translated and transformed through a medium relevant to our time. It is through the continuing popularity of Sowŏl's poetry that the changing dynamic between listener and the technology of reception can be observed. Today, while digitized performance becomes interiorized by the listener, Sowŏl's poetry continues to promote collective consciousness by which solitary aural consumption points to the aura of solidarity.⁹⁰

Note

¹ The notion of aura appears in Walter Benjamin's 1931 essay "A Short History of Photography," in Alan Trachtenberg ed., *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 207. Benjamin is referring to the historical shift from portrait paintings to portrait photographs taking place in Europe of the 1840s. He continues the discussion of this fleeting moment of capturing subjects with a new technique which had not yet conquered the darkness from which the subjects struggled to appear and in which the people's gaze did not betray isolation. Moving his discussion of aura from the human face to landscape, Benjamin asks: "What is an aura? A strange web of time and space: the unique appearance of a distance, however close at hand. On a summer noon, resting, to follow the line of a mountain range on the horizon or a twig which throws its shadow on the observer, until the moment or hour begins to be a part of its appearance—that is to breathe the aura of those mountains, that twig" (209). Thus, the term is generally used to refer to an image charged with meaning in the moment of its fleeting.

² Kim Uchang, "Form and Sentiment: The Poetic Minor Mode in Early Modern Korean Poetry," in Earl Miner and Amiya Dev ed., *The Renewal of Song* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2000), 39. Assigning this provocative term to Sowŏl's poetics, Kim relates it to the attitude of resignation resulting from the "double assault of modernity and colonialism."

³ Victor Turner, *Anthropology of Performance* (NY: PAJ Publications, 1986), 76. Here and throughout the book, Turner is interested in uncovering the notion of "play" behind the social dynamic and meaning of ritual (including folk-epics and ballads) and attempts to bring together anthropology, theatre, and linguistics; Chomsky's notion of performance in language as a lapse from "the ideal purity of systematic grammatical competence" brings out the notion of meta-language and reflexivity. This definition of performance as a self-reflexive act is also complemented by Paul Zumthor's as a "play between transmission and reception." See Zumthor, *Oral Poetry* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 22.

⁴ Paul de Man, "Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight* (London: Methuen, 1983), 207. It is de Man's argument that the tension found in the subject-object dialectic in works of European romanticism is closer to a temporal impasse registered by an allegorical, rather than a symbolic, relationship between language and meaning. Thus, rather than a primitive subjectivism and a spatial fusion suggested by diction privileging the symbol, it is a kind of radical subjectivity which gives up the mind-nature fusion and to reaffirm a temporal difference and gap between the two.

⁵ See O Seyŏng ed., *Kim Sowŏl* (Munhak segyesa, 1996), 256. In a letter to his teacher Kim Ōk to whom the poet writes in 1934, Sowŏl laments his maladjustment to time:

It has been ten years since my move back to Kusŏng.
A decade doesn't seem like such a brief period of time.
Though the mountains and streams have not changed much,
manners/civility (insa) have all but disappeared. The century
seems to have run ahead of me, leaving me behind.

⁶ Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1982), 30. This corresponds to Lefebvre's notion of "representational space," the space lived through images and symbols and experienced in an emotional manner: the two examples that he gives are the body and the house, two spaces of the self's occupation (whose absences) which figure importantly in Sowŏl's works. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, tr. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 79.

⁷ As defined explicitly in O Seyŏng's book *Han'guk nangman chuŭi si yŏn'gu* (Study on the poetry of Korean romanticism) as the revival of folk poetry in the 1920s, the term romanticism is referred retroactively to the poetry published during Sowŏl's active period of writing. It follows the typical pattern of naming through hindsight: see David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 85. Perkins states that romanticism as a periodization term in British literary history retroactively appeared at the end of the nineteenth century. For the history of the term's import in colonial Korea via Japan, see chapter two of my dissertation, "Purity of Purpose: Korean Poetry of the 1920s." Ph.D. dissertation. UCLA, 2000.

⁸ For a discussion on how this perceived sincerity expressed in Sowŏl's poetry distinguishes him from that of other poets of his time, see Yi Migyŏng's "Han'guk kŭndae simunhagesŏe nangmanjuŭi munhak tamnŏne mitch'ŏk yŏn'gu" (Aesthetic study of the romantic literature discourse in modern Korean literature) in *Han'guk munhwa* 31 (June, 2003).

⁹ Doris Earnshaw has noted that the speaking woman in lyric poetry is typically imaged as the feeling element, primitive desire, or as a speaker for the opposition to established order. See her *The Female Voice in Medieval Romantic Love* (New York: Peter Lang), 13.

¹⁰ Many of his poems in *Azaleas* are set pieces that echo the anonymity of collective songs in uniform rhythm and gestures.

¹¹ Translations are my own, and I have given the page numbers of the original poems as they appear in Kim Yongjik ed., *Kim Sowöl Chŏnjip* [Collected works] (Seoul National University Press, 2001). “Azaleas” appears on p. 149.

¹² Chŏn Kyut’ae, *Koryŏ kayo* [Koryŏ songs] (Chŏngŭmsa, 1978), 150-52. In the poem ascribed to an anonymous woman, the speaker pleads for the departing lover to return.

¹³ Such images become part of the shock and ‘spectacle’ of modernity, eliciting new behavior and excitement, along with possible dangers. See H.D. Harootunian, *History’s Disquiet* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 120-121. Harootunian points to how the appearance of “new women” representing a sexual awakening began “a new modernity in 1927.” See also Theodore Jun Yoo’s “The ‘New Woman’ and the Politics of Love, Marriage and Divorce in Colonial Korea” in his *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2008), 58-94. Yoo sees a distinguishing feature of the “new woman” in early twentieth century Korea as defiant personal appearance, e.g., bobbed hair, that did not conform to gender performance (74). The image of the “modern girl” (moden gŏl) appears most vividly satirized in Ch’ae Mansik’s *T’aep’yŏng ch’ŏnha* in the figure of the opportunistic chameleon, Ch’unsim. See Chun Kyŏngja tr., *Peace Under Heaven* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1993).

¹⁴ In one of Freud’s most vivid accounts in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), the boy who repeats a disappearance act of his toy after his mother “disappears” from his view is said to be engaged in the act of mastering the situation of unease: that is, repetition, in the psychoanalytic sense, is read as a self-willed completion or accomplishment. See James Strachey tr. and ed., *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (NY and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1961), 14-15.

¹⁵ Earnshaw, 13.

¹⁶ One also calls to mind here that an early Freudian description of a hysteric is “one who suffers from reminiscences.” Freud, 12.

¹⁷ Production of emotion as a process of inversion is a subject that has been taken up by those in the field of interpretative anthropology: see Appadurai Arjun’s “Topographies of the Self” in Catherine A. Lutz and Lila Abu-Luhod eds., *Language and the Politics of Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 106-7.

¹⁸ In Korean, the term for the English “foot” (ũmbo) also refers to the notion of a segmental meter, Kim Hŭnggyu, *Han’guk munhak ūi ihae* (Minũmsa, 1986), 156-57; Robert Fouser tr., *Understanding Korean Literature* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 38-45. Departing from the line structure of the four segment-based *sijo*, the poetic form which flourished during the Chosŏn dynasty, domination of the poetic line by the trimeter “characterized by an unequal relationship among the three segments in a line” was primarily found in lyric folk poetry (44).

¹⁹ See Benjamin’s “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” in *Illuminations*, 155-94.

²⁰ When the poet was two-years old (1904), Sowöl’s father became mentally disabled after he was beaten by Japanese pole-bearers working on the railway connecting Chŏngju and Kwaksan. See O Seyŏng ed., *Kim Sowöl* (Munhak segyesa, 1996), 278-79.

²¹ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 3.

²² Repetition as a frequently occurring device in folk songs is construed as being used “for the sake of redoubled prayer in hope of surer fulfillment”: Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 67. In the case of Kim Sowöl’s poetry, however, the repetition as a poetics consistently echoes the reality of loss rather than expressing hope for recovery.

²³ O Seyŏng, *Han’guk nangmanjuŭi si yŏn’gu* [Study on poetry of Korean romanticism] (Ilchisa, 1980), 307.

²⁴ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 180.

²⁵ This trimetric rhythm marking much of Sowöl’s poetry is considered to be “expressed deviance,” otherwise referred to as the “minor mode” in music often linked with the expression of sadness. See Kim Uchang, 29.

²⁶ The many commentaries on this word echo Kim Tongni's essay "The Distance from Green Mountains—On the Poet Kim Sowöl" *Yadam* (April, 1945). The poem is read to be turning on the adverb "chömanch'i" (over there) which locates the speaker away from the landscape created and inspires a conventional romantic interpretation that the poet desires to unite with nature.

²⁷ See "Sihon" (Spirit of poetry) in Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 495.

²⁸ de Man, 198. This is de Man's observation of how certain critics have treated the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge as stemming from a subjective idealism inviting the usual criticism of solipsism and self-mystification that others have since denied in favor of a view of romanticism as an urbanite attempt to return to nature — nature conceived as an unreachable past. His repositioning of the romantic problem by focusing on the rather allegorical nature of romantic works, especially in his reading of Rousseau and later Baudelaire, the relationship between sign and meaning, and, therefore, time itself, is found to be discontinuous. My node of connection here is that the nature of time is discontinuous in Sowöl's poetry and that this is marked by the fact that affective meaning puts the language which produces it into question: that is, there is a gap between what the speaker says and what s/he means. Although Sowöl's view of nature often appears to reproduce the subject-object fusion of mind and nature associated with the traditional reading western romanticism, his practice of language is disjunctive rather than reconciling.

²⁹ Yi Mikyöng, 126.

³⁰ See O Seyöng, *Kim Sowöl*, 261-62

³¹ It can be said that the so-called "imagism" advocated by the poets of Western modernism, e.g., Ezra Pound, was due largely to a fascination with East Asian poetry, particularly that of the classical Chinese tradition setting "pictures" and, thus, images to relief. See Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

³² de Man, 198.

³³ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 198.

³⁴ I am referring here to the "vowel harmony rule" which accompany the creation of the rules of orthography of *han'gül*, i.e., bright vowels such as a, o not to blend with dark vowels such as ö and u. Related to this rule of thumb is a universal notion "sound symbolism" which suggests that different vowels register semantic differences in languages. For example, certain sensations such as movement, size, and texture, are associated with the acoustic qualities of specific sound segments, e.g., "i" sound present in certain words in Danish, Italian and Japanese refer to small size and quickness: See Brent Berlin's "Evidence for Pervasive Synesthetic Sound Symbolism in Ethnozoological Nomenclature" in Hinton Et.al. ed., *Sound Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 81. For the Korean context, Young-mee Cho's "Sound Symbolism" (forthcoming) has been helpful. An example of this sound-semantic correspondence can be found in words with the bright o vowel referring to small size and the a vowel referring to large. What I am interested in is the sound-emotion correlation, e.g., dark ö and u sounds with possible connection to the minor key expressing lament and found both in p'ansori and flamenco.

³⁵ See Kim Uchang, 33: "Affect as something to be sought and dwelt upon, is a particular kind of an introverted reaction to the collapse of the rationalism of the Confucian order."

³⁶ See Rainer Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: the philosophy of Walter Benjamin* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), 166. The reference here is to the impact made on the viewer by Duchamp whose audience is considered to be both "threatened" and "captured" by art equated with scandal. Sowöl's poetry does not "threaten" in the way that avant garde art, e.g., Yi Sang's poems, do, rather its music looking backward recaptures a cult value of the beautiful past in the moment of its fleeting.

³⁷ The audible incantatory style is said to be linked to "a culture that holds a belief in the unity of all life". See Earnshaw, 135. It is achieved here and elsewhere in Sowöl's oeuvre by the device of repeating lines.

³⁸ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 149.

³⁹ See Peter H. Lee ed., *Myths of Korea* (Somerset: Jimoondang International, 2000); of primary significance is the Tan'gun foundation myth in which the bear who withstands the test of endurance is transformed into a woman to become the wife of the son of the god of Heaven (3-4).

⁴⁰ O Seyöng, *Kim Sowöl*, 283. According to O Seyöng, it was Sowöl's aunt keeping him company as a child with local tales of forelorn women who inspired the young poet's imagination. This particular poem is to have been inspired by her telling of the tragic story of a young girl who lived by Chindu River.

⁴¹ The term becomes a significant unit of measuring the temporary present in order to extract from it the possibilities of experience promised by a past: See H.D.Harootunian, *History's Disquiet* (New York: Columbia University Press), 70. Harootunian remarks:

If everydayness was a minimal unity organizing the present, it also opened up to multiple ways of unifying experience, aligning the everyday with art or politics, and thus pledging to seal the divisions of contradictions menacing the present

I am suggesting here that Kim Sowöl, by often avoiding poetic choices which would concretize the present in its tensions and its conflicts, runs the risk of dehistoricizing experience.

⁴² See Ko Misuk, *Han 'guk üi kundaesong üil ch'ajasö* [In search of Korean modernity] (Ch'aeksesang, 2001), 66. Ko links the rise of *han* as an aesthetic value in the early twentieth century to other nationalistic tropes such as that of hero and beloved to represent the collective sorrow of loss.

⁴³ *Minjung's Essence Korean-English Dictionary* (Minjung sörim, 1993), 2118. Also to be noted in the entry is the parenthetical "(unique to a Korean)".

⁴⁴ See O Seyöng's discussion of "Azaleas" in his *Han 'guk nangmanjuüi si yön 'gu*, 342.

⁴⁵ My reading of Sowöl's poetry, which finds affinities with that of Kim Uchang, differs from a common psychoanalytical reading of his works as being desire waiting to be filled. See O's discussion of the poem in which *han* is explained in Freudian terms as exhibiting "wish fulfillment" while being a site of sublimation and rationalization: O Seyöng, *Nangmanjuüi si yön 'gu*, 334.

⁴⁶ The first version, published in Tonga Daily in 1921, uses the plain speech line ending (mölda): see Yun Chuün, *Kim Sowöl si wönbön yön 'gu* [Study on Sowöl's original poems] (Hangmunsa, 1984), 68. The different versions of the poem indicating different speech levels reveals something of the nature of his experiment in positioning the speaker before his audience: in the first version, on neutral/equal footing; in the second, from a distance; and in the final form, eliminating speech level altogether to throw the rhetorical question "where" back to the self to indicate even a greater distance between the speaker and the sea symbolizing freedom.

⁴⁷ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 88.

⁴⁸ Earnshaw, 136-37. Earnshaw's argument regarding this function of the female voice refers to its complementary role: in the triadic relationship between the ethos of the audience, logos of the 'male,' controlling speech, and the pathos of the female speech, the female voice in Medieval romance courtly lyric is deemed to represent the heterodox speech of the community standing outside the center of power.

⁴⁹ Ch'ae Mansik's story "Ready-Made Life" can be read as a critique of the early twentieth century Korean society where traditional humanistic values have been replaced by the commodification of human life, particularly in the way that 'fallen' women are reduced to the price that their customers are willing to pay. See Kim Chong-un and Bruce Fulton tr., *A Ready-Made Life*, 55-80.

⁵⁰ See Lee Seung-Hwan's "The Social Meaning of Body in Confucian Tradition: Between Moral and Political Power," *Korea Journal* 44, no.2 (Summer 2004), 5-29.

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⁵² Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 71.

⁵³ Ibid., 73.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 128.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁷ Benjamin even notes that fascism takes art into the service of the ritual of war, e.g., beauty and pleasure at the sight of machines causing destruction. See his "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, 224-42.

⁵⁸ Op.cit., 130.

⁵⁹ This is Benjamin's early view of language, particularly emphasized in his early works such as "The Task of the Translator" where the reader's understanding of the text translated, that is, comprehensibility or communication, is not of primary significance.

⁶⁰ Chang Töggwön et.al., *Han 'guk p'ungsokchi* [Korean customs] (Ülchi munhwasa, 1974), 232. *Ch'ohon* is part of the mourning ritual in which one belonging to the house of the deceased, usually a servant, climbs to the roof of the house, holding an article of clothing of the dead; facing north, the servant calls out the name of the dead three times. A vivid depiction of this ritual can be seen in Pak Kwangsu's 1994 movie "To That Starry Island" where the bereaved mother climbs to the straw roof of her house with her deceased daughter's *hanbok* jacket to bid farewell to her spirit.

⁶¹ See Fish, "Rhetoric" in Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin ed., *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 211. The power of persuasion, through which Fish contends all sociology of knowledge operates, sets as the standard the assent of a relevant community, in this case the ethno-nation which Kim Sowŏl indirectly addresses in the poem.

⁶² *Mangbusŏk* (husband-waiting-rock) is the name of the rock formation which faces the sea at a well-marked tourist spot in the port city of Pusan.

⁶³ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 127.

⁶⁴ The sino-Korean term I'm referring to is 浪人 (nangin), a traditional, pastoral term referring to someone who roams the hills and streams. One of Sowŏl's earliest poems was published in 1920 in the journal *Creation* under the title "The Spring of the Wanderer" (Nangin ūi pom); the poem appears in Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 252.

⁶⁵ Besides Du Fu whose poem is being examined here, Sowŏl's *han'gŭl* rendition of fifteen other poems by T'ang poets Bai Ju-yi, Meng Hao-ran, Li Bai, Du Mu, Liu Cai-chun, Cui Hao, Liu Chang-ching, Wang Zhi Huan, and Wang Wei also appear in Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 342-60.

⁶⁶ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 359.

⁶⁷ O Seyŏng, *Kim Sowŏl*, 292.

⁶⁸ See discussion of Yi Sanghwa's poem in my dissertation, 75-80.

⁶⁹ Chu Yohan, "Munye sip'yŏng," *Chosŏn mundan* (October 1924). Chu refers to Sowŏl's "folk feeling" (minyŏjŏk kibun) difficult to find in another poet's work.

⁷⁰ Yi Kwangsu 16:87.

⁷¹ Chu Yohan, 47-50.

⁷² Kim Chuno, "Sowŏl sŏjŏng kwa wŏnch'ojŏk in'gan" (The lyric of Kim Sowŏl and the first human) in Chŏng Hanmo ed., *Kim Sowŏl yŏn'gu* [Studies on Sowŏl] (Saemunsa, 1981), 34-47. Kim refers to the poet as an Adam, the "first human" of early twentieth century Korea, extolling the poet's ability to "create" poetry through an unprecedented use of language which draws out "Korean sounds." What is to be noted is the Korean critic's linking of the concept of Adam, the first speaker of language in the Western hermeneutic tradition, to the idea of origin and originality entrusted upon Sowŏl's poetic achievements, thereby helping to promote a cult image of the poet.

⁷³ This view is put forth by those simply referring to *sijo* as the product of the class of scholar-officials at the end of the Koryŏ dynasty; a closer examination of its possible origins and influences leads to a more complex view of confluences, with the lyricism of folk songs making an impact on the creation of *sijo*. See Cho Tongil, *Han'guk minyo ūi chŏnt'ong kwa siga yulkyŏk* [The tradition of Korean folk songs and the versification of poetry] (Chisik sanŏpsa, 1996), 203-4.

⁷⁴ Kim Yongjik ed., *Complete Works*, 239.

⁷⁵ Makko, as it appears in Ch'ae Mansik's story "Ready-Made Life," costs less than the competing Korean brand. See *A Ready-Made Life*, 62. A kiosk vender offers P, the unemployed protagonist in the story this "cheaper" brand, but P, in his nationalistic pride, opts for the more expensive Korean brand Haet'ae.

⁷⁶ This tendency of coinage to homogenize objects is also linked to its talismanic appeal: its apparent ability to 'transform' itself into any desirable or desired object.' See Mar Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 41.

⁷⁷ Shell calls the former "offspring," and notes the homogeneity as the link between child and parent contrasted with the idea of "interest," as the idea of duplication, as a qualitatively different one. Thus coinage eliminates the idea of the original and focuses on what is generated. See his *The Economy of Literature*, 86-95. This also corresponds to Benjamin's idea that photography eliminates the ontological status of originality. See Benjamin, "The Era of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 226.

⁷⁸ Kim Yongjik ed., *Collected Works*, 189-92. The poem was published in 1934, in the August issue of *Samch'ŏlli*.

⁷⁹ Many poems were first published in journals such as *Creation* and *Kaebŏk*, then, later revised and republished in the collection *Azaleas*. See Yu Chongho's essay on the poet's practice of revisions, Sowŏl's general tendency in rewriting his poems was to make them "simpler" each time: "Siin ūi ŏnŏ kusa: Kim Sowŏl kwa kaejak" (Sowŏl and revisions) *Saeguggŏ saenghwal* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2002), 99-105.

⁸⁰ Im Tonggwŏn, *Minyo yŏn'gu* [Study on folk songs] (Sŏnmyŏng munhwasa, 1974), 5. 1924 was the year in which the first collection of folk songs were published. For the history of radio broadcasting and its relationship to linguistic nationalism, see Michael Robinson's "Broadcasting, Cultural Hegemony, and

Colonial Modernity in Korea, 1924-1945,” Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson ed., *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 52-69.

⁸¹ Zumthor, 183.

⁸² Zumthor explains this as the function of voice: the production of two oralities, one based on the immediate experience of the individual and the other on a knowledge at least partially mediated by traditions. Zumthor, 23.

⁸³ Published in *Samch’ōlli*, October 1938.

⁸⁴ Money exchange and the act of translation are seen as having in common the tendency to reduce “everything to a common denominator.” See Shell, *Money, Language and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 107

⁸⁵ See Elizabeth Grosz’s “Thinking the New: of futures yet unthought” in Elizabeth Grosz ed., *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 28. Grosz interprets Bergson’s idea of duration as “bifurcation, dissociation by difference—through sudden and unexpected change or eruption.”

⁸⁶ For an insight into Sowōl’s continued popularity in Korea, see David McCann’s introduction to his *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁸⁷ Shell, *The Economy of Literature*, 101.

⁸⁸ A recent example is the 2008 publication of anthology of Korean poetry by Korean poets. See Association of Korean Poets ed., *Siin tūri choahanūn han’guk aesong myōngsi* [Famous Korean poems that poets like] (Munhak segyesa, 2008). Its essentialist appeal can be noted in how “Azaleas” is prominently featured in see Chang-soo Ko tr., *Best Loved Poems of Korea: Selected for Foreigners* (Hollym, 2000).

⁸⁹ Zumthor refers to “mediatized” orality as continuity of social cohesion while increasing the distance between production and consumption. While reaching an unlimited number of listeners, this form of audio-visual orality diminishes the collective dimension of reception as performance and becomes interiorized for the solitary viewer-listener. Zumthor, 189-190.

⁹⁰ This is Zumthor’s observation of the power of African American music to bring together a community. Zumthor, 188.