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A Study on Sino-Korean Poetry of the Early Twentieth Century

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2023

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Abstract:

The enlightenment era (1880s-1910) was an epoch of significant transformation as Chosŏn collided with a new world. As Korea began engaging globally, foreign publications and literary styles had great sway on the new-intellectual class of the time, giving birth to a new era of literary production.

In print media, the new-intellectuals discussed reasons behind Chosŏn's decline and in particular, they blamed a now aging Sinitic elite and their long overreliance on Chinese traditions. Literary Sinitic or *hanmun* was attacked as 'worn out' literature, unfit to truly express Korean thoughts, feelings and ideas for a new era. Instead, *han'gŭl* came to be celebrated – symbolic of 'modernity,' progress and a uniquely Korean national identity. Into the twentieth century, vernacular Korean would supposedly win the battle against *hanmun*, ushering forth a new literature in Korean, by Koreans, for all Koreans.

Although literary Sinitic fell out of use around the turn of the twentieth century, the narrative that it quickly disappeared and was relegated to the annals of history is more complicated than literary history often summarizes. Examining newspapers and magazines from the early twentieth century, we see that Sino-Korean poetry or *hansi* not only continued on, but intriguingly, remained a popular genre.

Exploring a wide variety of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century, this work traces the developments of this 'old' genre, looking at how poets also used *hansi* as a tool for enlightenment. The genre rose to the challenge of a new age, exploring a variety of contemporary Korean issues through 'Chinese' language. With works exploring life as a student abroad, laments on imperial currents and celebrations of Korean landscapes in the era of survival of the fittest, *hansi* would continue as a genre of twentieth-century relevance. This research thus seeks to explore a variety of questions related to nationalism and canon formation, the problems that surround the modern/classical dichotomy and the definitions of 'modern' Korean literature.

1. Introduction:

The nineteenth century was an epoch of great change for the Korean peninsula. From the 1866 French Campaign (병인양요 丙寅洋擾) to the signing of the Korea-Japan Treaty (한일합방 韓日合邦) of 1910, Korea went through a series of tumultuous events through contact with numerous foreign powers that would greatly change its trajectory. Coinciding with the shifting equilibrium of global power and the coming winds of imperialism, the Koreans of Chosŏn had watched on as Qing dynasty China's dominance in East Asia dissipated following their defeat in the Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860). Seen as “a shift away from one hegemonic system with its geographical locus in China toward another,” historians such as Andre Schmid point out Korea's growing interest in the West and Japan's early interactions with Western thought and technology throughout the Meiji era (1868-1912).¹ The geopolitical tides of this changing era engendered new discussion among the progressives of Chosŏn who could trace their roots back as far as the eighteenth-century *Sirhak* “practical learning” movement.

This was particularly the case from the 1880s onwards. This transitional period is described using a variety of names in the Korean language, such as the *kaehwagi* (개화기 開化期), *kaemonggi* (계몽기 啓蒙期), *chŏnhwan'gi* (전환기 轉換期) and *aeguk kyemonggi* (애국계몽기 愛國啓蒙期). The word *kaehwa* (開化) first appeared as a neologism by way of Japan. The Japanese *kaika* (開化) meaning ‘opening and change’ was first used by Fukuzawa Yukichi in the 1870s together with *bunmei* (文明). *Bunmei* “with overtones of letters or literary arts (bun) and illumination (mei)” came to denote ‘civilization’ from English and French and “by the early 1900s, the frequency of the word had made it seem an ordinary part of the

¹ *Korea Between Empires 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 57.

Japanese language.”² This would give way to *bunmei kaika* or ‘civilisation and enlightenment,’ its own appositional term from the early Meiji period, which would also become popular later in Korea through Yu Kil-chun’s writings from the 1890s.³

Most often referred to as the enlightenment era (1880s-1910) in English language scholarship,⁴ it was an epoch of challenging upheavals but also exciting changes brought about by the collapse of Chosŏn’s adherence to *hwairon* (화이론 華夷論) or *chunghwa sasang* (중화사상 中華思想) thinking, which stressed the importance of *hua* (華) or China as the centre (of efflorescence) and source of a superior (and orthodox) Sinitic culture, while the *yi* (夷) or tribes, (sometimes translated as Barbarians) were neighbours in a subordinate and tributary position culturally, politically and economically.⁵ Further exacerbated by the First

² The term “referred foremost to the advanced level of social, technological, and individual development characteristic of European peoples” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. CF. John C. Maraldo, “The Japanese Encounter with and Appropriation of Western Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Philosophy*, ed. Bret W. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 341.

³ In their work on the appropriation of enlightenment in Japan and Korea, Lee Yeaann highlights that there are differences in how ‘enlightenment’ came to be understood from its original meaning in Europe. While Lee points out that in the West, it was a time that shaped an *individual* identity that “sustained the moral and political individual subject as a core value” and sought out “the goal of legitimizing an individual as a political and moral subject by resisting the authority of the church and the despotism of the state,” in Japan and Korea, enlightenment focuses far more on the development of a *societal* consciousness. This can be further ascertained by the later term *aeguk kaemonggi* (愛國啓蒙期), often translated into English as ‘the patriotic enlightenment era.’ In this, we see the Japanese *keimō* (啓蒙) or ‘instruction’ also used. However, as Lee points out, this term is still Confucian in origin and “did not exactly correspond to enlightenment and in fact carried a strong connotation of ‘education.’” Here, we see the idea of being *enlightened* fused with a developing societal consciousness *through* learning and education while also developing a *love* for one’s nation, countrymen and culture. Thus, ‘enlightenment’ constitutes different things in different parts of the world, of which must be recognised. We must also recognise the quilting of language, history and philosophies across time and place and how this process gives way to a variety of terms neither fully Eastern nor Western. CF. Lee Yeaann, “The appropriation of ‘enlightenment’ in Modern Korea and Japan: Competing ideas of the Enlightenment and the Loss of the Individual Subject,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51:9 (2019): 913 and 921.

⁴ Since one of the main focuses of this thesis is the potential limitations that come from the periodization of Korean literary history, in general I see the enlightenment as intangible, without a definitive start. Some trace its beginnings to as early as the 1850s, while others reference the 1860s, 1870s and 1890s. The 1880s, however, was significant to the development of a changing societal consciousness through the arrival of printing technology and the dissemination of information. I commit to the 1880s merely as a contextual reference point most relevant to this thesis topic. Despite the complications surrounding periodization and the exacerbation of historical discontinuity, this thesis still sees the ‘enlightenment era’ (a common reference in English language scholarship on Korea) as a useful term for a transitional period that can be more helpful than not in breaking down the far more problematic dichotomy of *premodern* versus *modern* history.

⁵ While sometimes referred to as *Sinocentrism* or *Sinocentric Thought* in English language scholarship, this thesis avoids such terminology due to their potential negative connotations. While a tributary relationship may be said to have characterised Korea’s relationship to China in the past, the term is reductive in how it downplays the potential for cultural ‘toing and froing’ that is natural between cultures and across time and borders in the past.

Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), “China’s military loss to Japan was symbolic of what they referred to as the ‘old knowledge’ (*kuhak* 舊學) succumbing to ‘new knowledge’ (*sinhak* 新學)”⁶ and the last years of the nineteenth century ushered forth opportunities for progressive intellectuals of Chosŏn to cast off the shackles of ‘old’ knowledge and begin to take control, repairing what they saw as the damage caused by their long tributary relationship with China.⁷

Thus, during this transitional period, long-established traditions and the rigid social order of Neo-Confucian Chosŏn collided with a new world. Korea transitioned from a period of faded dynastic governance that kept China at the centre of the world (*wijŏng ch’ŏksa* 衛正斥邪 “defend the orthodoxy and expel the heterodoxy”) to a period that pushed for self-strengthening and the adoption of new western technology while maintaining existing practices (*tongdo sŏgi* 東道西器 “Eastern way, Western technology”). Finally, as the enlightenment came to an end at the uncertain time of the *Taehan Empire*, it would be a new era of warfare, colonial expansion and imperial ambition that catapulted Chosŏn into a different orbit through Korea’s annexation by Japan.⁸

Meanwhile, Confucianism’s presence in Korea came to be criticised. Figures like Yun Ch’i-ho (1864–1945) described Confucianism as both powerless and useless and had turned Korea into a hell; it “contain[ed] the seeds of corruption in its doctrine of inferiority of women”

For more on criticism of this term in particular, Cf. Ross King, “Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the Sinographic Cosmopolis and Beyond: Traditional East Asian Literary Cultures in Global Perspective,” in *Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the World of Wen 文 Reading Sheldon Pollock from the Sinographic Cosmopolis* (Netherlands: Brill, 2023): 1-48.

⁶ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 57.

⁷ It is also important to highlight that such a relationship to China, and Korea’s adherence to ‘traditional’ culture, was used as leverage in the colonization process by Japan, seeing their presence as a means of helping Korea.

⁸ As Tikhonov highlights, “the weakening of the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy seems to have eventually created a certain demand for a new all-explaining, all-encompassing creed; a demand that Social Darwinism came to satisfy for several decades of early modern Korean history.” This would pave the way for a new focus – “the new elite’s global status was rendered visible by its adherence to contemporary Euro-American intellectual fashion – Social Darwinism.” Cf. Vladimir Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea: the Beginnings (1880s-1910s) "Survival" as an Ideology of Korean Modernity* (Netherlands: Brill, 2010): 12-13 and 16.

and perpetuated “an everlasting go-backism.”⁹ But by the 1890s through the implementation of the Kabo Reforms (갑오개혁 甲午改革), Chosŏn was following a new trajectory, one that would theoretically provide positive changes.¹⁰ This time would also be characterized by the rise of Korea’s own *munmyŏng kaehwa* (문명개화 文明開化) or “enlightenment and civilization” discourse. From 1904 to 1910 in particular, the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement (애국계몽운동 愛國啓蒙運動) gave way to a unified drive towards a new horizon.¹¹ Such terms as *munmyŏng kaehwa* “emerged as the vocabulary of the era” as Korea changed beyond recognition through the mobilization of new-intellectuals and their closer ties with a wider world.¹² Thus, reformers began to look to the horizon for new educational possibility. With educational dispatches beginning from the 1880s, for the first time Koreans began to study abroad. At the behest of King Kojong, from the 1900s numbers continued to

⁹ *Yun Ch’iho Ilgi – Vol. 3* (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee, 1974): 227-8. I originally came to this work through a similar quote seen in *Ibid.*, 50. There, it appears as the same reference but with a publication date of 1973-1989 and appearing in vol. 2. In the 1974 publication available at SOAS, this quote actually appears in vol. 3 on the same pages that Tikhonov quotes.

¹⁰ “Those who pushed through such reforms had experience abroad studying and sought modern reform in line of what they had experienced in Japan, the USA and Europe. As Eckert et al. highlight, many of “the Deliberative Council were either yangban sons by secondary wives (sŏja) or belonged to the chungin class” and as a result, they positioned themselves as opposites to the “traditional Chosŏn’s yangban-dominated sociopolitical order.” With a “strong commitment to nationalism, egalitarianism, and modern capitalism, values fully reflected in the reform measures they adopted [...] the sweeping Kabo reform enactments affected many vital aspects of the administration, economy, and social fabric of Korea, constituting a milestone in Korea’s modernization process. Inevitably, however, the reforms were unpopular among various conservative elements of Korean society, especially because they were carried out under the sponsorship of the Japan aggressors.” Cf. Lee, Eckert et al, *Korea, Old and New*, 225 and 228.

¹¹ As Sin highlights, while the enlightenment era is a far more broader period of transitional history, this specific *movement* refers to “a sweeping concept covering all activities which political and social organizations promoted between 1904 and 1910 for the edification of the Korean people and to infuse in them the will and strength needed to recover sovereignty [...] the movement connotes attempts made to promote new education, conscious press, national industry, redemption of the national debt, new culture and literature, academic research about the nation, indigenous religions, establishment of the base of independence army abroad.” Sin Yong-ha, *Modern Korean History and Nationalism* (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing Company, 2000): 195.

¹² Schmid goes further: “the power and seductiveness of *munmyŏng kaehwa* lay in its ability to link seamlessly the individual, nation, and globe into historical and spatial unity. As a modern discourse par excellence [...] a conceptual framework in which various groups could come to terms with their recent integration into the global capitalist system. [...] The appropriation and dissemination of *munmyŏng kaehwa* resulted in a historical shift in the spatiotemporal definition of the peninsula. Now the nation was seen by nature as just another member of a community of nations that stretched around the world, sharing a historical trajectory.” Cf. Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 32-3.

grow. The majority went to Japan with some as far as the USA, specifically for the purpose to bring the nation up to speed with the so-called “enlightened and civilized” nation-states.

Regarding literature and readership, new printing technology from the 1880s and growing educational opportunities would begin to improve literacy rates.¹³ A new culture of newspapers and magazines flourished thanks to entrepreneurs, many still young. As Sin Yong-ha’s work highlights, the movement would give way to a new organisation of the masses through the rise of various associations and groups: “*Chaganghoe* (Korea Self-Strengthening Society), *Sinminhoe* (New People’s Association), *Taehan Hyŏphoe* (Korea Association), *Taehan Hŭnghakhoe* (an organization of Korean studying abroad), and several other regional educational associations such as *Hambuk Hŭnghakhoe*, *Sŏu hakhoe*, *Kiho Hŭnghakhoe*, *Kwandong hakhoe*, *Kyonam kyoyukhoe*, *Honam hakhoe*, *Hŭngsadan*” among others.¹⁴ These associations were at the forefront of this publishing boom. Their efforts fashioned a stage for a new public sphere and a media space for public opinion to flourish. Printing technology and interests in new-learning would also stimulate the circulation of literary works from afar. Such changes birthed creativity that would give way to a whole host of new literary styles, techniques and interests. It would be this changing backdrop that would foster a new array of literary actors, as writing, reading and sharing literature would no longer be solely for the privileged literati elites of Chosŏn.¹⁵

As Barbara Mittler states in her work on Chinese newspapers from the eighteenth century onwards, the press was seen by progressive thinkers in East Asia “as a tool, a

¹³ Albeit slowly for most of the population. It is important to highlight that literacy was and continued to remain low until the 1950s.

¹⁴ Sin, *Modern Korean History and Nationalism*, 199.

¹⁵ “The Korean press played a large part in raising the level of political consciousness of the Korean people prior to Japan’s annexation of Korea. The first Japanese resident-general, Itō Hirobumi, once said that a single word in a Korean newspaper had greater power to move the Korean people than a hundred words from him.” Lee, Eckert et al, *Korea, Old and New*, 247.

transmission belt for public opinion, a marketplace of ideas.”¹⁶ Korea’s own ‘marketplace of ideas’ boomed from 1900 – 1910 and gave way to different genres written in a variety of registers. Works were penned not only in vernacular Korean and literary Sinitic which came to be known as *hanmun* (漢文), but also varying amalgamations of both, namely, the likes of *kukhanmun* (國漢文) and *hanmun hyōnt’och’e* (漢文懸吐體) styles.¹⁷ The consequence of this literary-cultural shift was that the enlightenment (and particularly the later years of this transitional time) stands out as an epoch of varied literary production. A wide variety of poetic genres coexisted at this time. In fact, this period was the most diverse in the history of Korean

¹⁶ Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai’s News Media, 1872-1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004): 16. Similar things can be said in regard to Japan, as seen in James Huffman’s aptly named work on “creating a public” in the Meiji era. Cf. Huffman, *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i press, 1997).

¹⁷ The field has shifted from a time where reductive terms of “Chinese” and “Chinese style” have given way to a variety of more befitting terms to describe Sinitic texts, traditions and ideas. Still, the debate remains regarding the suitability of terms such as *Sino-Japanese/Korean/Vietnamese*, particularly in reference to literature. In recent years, the term *literary Sinitic* has appeared with frequency. Wixted has pointed to the problems of *literary Sinitic*, in particular due to the idea of literariness, which stresses a belletristic register for a body of work that does not just contain literary works. Wixted’s argument has been contested, Cf. the preface in Christina Laffin and Ross King’s edited translation of Mareshi Saito, *Kanbunmyaku: The Literary Sinitic Context and the Birth of Modern Japanese Language and Literature* (Germany: Brill, 2021). Scholars like Denecke as well as Wixted support the use of the *Sino-* prefix. To quote Wixted, “the terms ‘Sino-Japanese’ or ‘Sino-Korean’ have the advantage of identifying both *the transregional language* and *the place of origin*.” Cf. John Timothy Wixted, “‘Literary Sinitic’ and ‘Latin’ as Transregional Languages: With Implications for Terminology Regarding ‘Kanbun’,” *Sino-Platonic Papers* 276 (2018): 10 and Wiebke Denecke, “Janus Came and Never Left: Writing Literary History in the Face of the Other,” in *Studying Transcultural Literary History*, ed. Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2006): 280. Kornicki, however, concludes that *Sino-* prefixed terms are best used “principally to denote texts that depart from Sinitic norms and therefore were not portable to other societies in Asia.” Cf. Peter Kornicki, “A note on Sino-Japanese: a question of terminology,” *Sino-Japanese Studies* 17 (2010): 43. In a later work, Kornicki adds that for those writing across the Sinographic cosmopolis, “the use of Sinitic had no implications for their identity or their citizenship until the twentieth century” and thus it is important to stress the fact that it became part of society, wherever it may be. Cf. Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts in East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 301. Echoing Kornicki, Fraleigh puts forth his preference for the term ‘Sinitic poetry’ to refer to poems written in literary Sinitic in Japan, as he stresses that, for Japanese writers from the Meiji and beyond, nationality was not factored in their discussions of the genre as they were engaged in a shared, universal, literary language. Cf. Matthew Fraleigh, “Taking Stock of a Tradition: Early Efforts to Write the History of Sinitic Poetry Expression in Japan,” in *Rethinking the Sinosphere: Poetics, Aesthetics, and Identity Formation*, eds. Qian Nanxiu, Richard J. Smith and Zhang Bowei (United States: Cambria Press, 2020): 240-1. Similar conclusions can be made regarding Korean writers of *hansi* into the twentieth century. For more on this discussion also Cf. Victor H Mair, “Buddhism and the rise of the Written Vernacular in East Asia: the Making of National Languages,” in *The Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 53 no. 3 (1994), 707–51, Ross King, “Ditching ‘Diglossia’: Ecologies of the Spoken and Inscribed in Pre-modern Korea” in *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* vol. 15 no. 1 (2015), 1-19 and Wiebke Denecke, “Shared Heritage in the East Asian Sinographic Sphere” in Wiebke Denecke et. al, *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature 1000 BC - 900 CE*. 510-532. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

poetry.¹⁸ Long established poetic traditions such as *sijo* (시조 時調) and *kasa* (가사 歌詞) would maintain their cultural presence. But they would now find themselves competing with new Korean songs such *ch'angga* (창가 唱歌) as well as strikingly new works never before seen in Korea, such as *chayusi* (자유시 自由詩) “free verse” and *sinsi* (신시 新詩) “new poetry” influenced by foreign cultural trends alongside advertisements, daily news and illustrations in print media.¹⁹

As Vladimir Tikhonov posits, for the majority, their lives would still be “dominated by the Confucian-based habitus of late Chosŏn” but it would be “the discursive space of the modernisation-oriented intelligentsia in the later years of the first decade of the new century” where Confucian concepts would be appropriated for a new era of Social Darwinist survival:

“Social Darwinist tenets were mixed with Confucian moral maxims [...] producing in the end a rather coherent and inspiring ideology of all-encompassing national devotion. In this world of ‘social Darwinism with Confucian characteristics,’ the age-old Confucian concern with ‘ethical self-cultivation’ was re-molded into a theory which put the ‘character’ of the ‘nationals’ – ‘elements constituting the state’ – at the centre of a nation’s ability to compete and survive.”²⁰

The birth of a Korean ethno-national consciousness (민족정신 民族精神) at this time became a significant catalyst of the decline of literary Sinitic (literary Chinese) as the dominant

¹⁸ Poetry of the enlightenment era is comprised of not only the traditional genres of *Kasa*, *Sijo*, *Hansi*, *Ŏnmun P’ungwŏl* and *Minyo*, but also newer genres such as *Ch’ansongga*, *Ch’angga*, *Sinsi* and *Free Verse*. These nine genres all existing at the same time made for the most diverse period of Korea’s poetic history. Cf. Han’guk Siin Hyŏphoe, *Han’guk Hyŏndae Sisa* (Seoul: Miŭmsa, 2007): 65.

¹⁹ In this we can draw once again on Mittler, who sees China’s earliest newspapers as *polygeneric*, but also *polyphonic* in the Bakhtinian sense: comprising a wide variety of texts such as editorials, adverts, news and poetry sometimes with contradictory viewpoints and messages. The Chinese newspaper was not “univocal” but featured the voices of many different actors. It was “a phenomenon multifiform in style and in speech and voice, an accumulation of several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often situated on different linguistic levels and subjected to different stylistic controls.” Albeit less polygeneric, we can draw similar conclusions regarding Korea’s first newspapers and the quilting of styles and forms. Cf. Mittler, *A Newspaper for China*, 7.

²⁰ Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 110. The mixing of Social Darwinism and Confucian maxims highlight the transitional nature of history in a way that allows us to raise questions about the potential problems pre/modern divide that has greatly shaped Korean studies discourse.

language of written communication and symbol of the elite ruling class of dynastic Korea. In a matter of a few decades, the long, vibrant history of Sinitic composition soon faced an extinction in favour of vernacular language. Dubbed *hanmun p'yejiron* (한문폐지론 漢文廢止論) or “theories on the abolition of hanmun,” a swift and highly visible body of publications across the pages of the 1890s and early twentieth century print media came to dominate and characterize this new space of circulatory print culture.

Shaped by experiences abroad and engagement with Western learning, literary Sinitic would be branded by the new-intellectual class or *sinjisigin* (신지식인 新知識人) as a vestige of a feudal time of unfortunate suzerainty during the past age that attributed too much prestige to Chinese culture, tradition and thought. In this climate, despite having come into creation in the fifteenth century, the vernacular script *han'gŭl* was to be emblematic of a new era. It was to become emblematic of national culture and character or *minjoksŏng* (민족성 民族性) and the linguistic and literary vehicle of enlightenment. It would be an epoch where Korea would be the centre of their world rather than sit on the periphery of a Sinitic one.

Some of Korea's earliest scholars of literary history and their publications propagated and maintained this narrative. Kim T'ae-jun's highly influential 1931 publication on Sino-Korean literature, *Chosŏn Hanmunhaksa* (朝鮮漢文學史) (A History of Chosŏn Hanmun Literature) famously labelled Korean literary works penned in literary Sinitic as both ‘worn out’ and ‘literature of the past’ at odds with a new epoch.²¹ Others described the rejection of han'gŭl and the veneration of Chinese literary practices as ‘literary effeminacy’²² while Korea's most famed modern novelist Yi Kwang-su passionately lambasted Chosŏn's reverence for literary Sinitic as ‘Sinophilic “flunkey-ism,” impractical aloofness, “literary weakness,”

²¹ Kim, T'aejun. *Chosŏn Hanmunhaksa* (Seoul: Chosŏn Ŏmunhakhoe, 1931): 191.

²² Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 105.

“empty ritualism,” egotism and laxness – all due to the “unhealthy influence” of Chosŏn dynasty Neo-Confucian politics.’²³ Such attitudes long continued and, this thesis argues, shaped intellectual discourse until the post-war era and potentially beyond.

While it is the case that literary Sinitic’s dominance came to an end around the turn of the twentieth century, the belief that it may have disappeared rapidly in the face of internationalism is a common fallacy. The decline of literary Sinitic in Korea is a far more nuanced and an often-overlooked moment in literary history. While it is true that there is a clear relationship between said decline and marked rises in vernacular literacy, prominent scholars in the field such as Chu Sŭng-t’aek question Kim T’ae-jun’s critiques in 1931. As Chu argues, when one explores the archive and examines the wealth of extant sources from the latter years of the enlightenment, ‘literature written in hanmun was far from being *worn out* or *literature of the past*’ even in the early twentieth century.²⁴

Beyond, as scholar Yi Kyu-ho further points out, within the realms of poetry, *hansi* (한시 漢詩) or “Sino-Korean poetry” was still popular in Korea.²⁵ As his work stresses, in

²³ Ibid., 212, drawing on quotes from *Yi Kwangsu Chŏnjip* (Seoul: Usinsa, 1979): 126-131.

²⁴ Chu Sŭng-t’aek, *Hanmunhakgwa Kŭndae Munhak* (Seoul: Taehaksa, 2009): 80-81. Italics my own.

²⁵ The reader will be aware that I have chosen the term *Sino-Korean poetry* to refer to what is often referred to as *hansi* in Korean in the thesis title. I see very persuasive arguments for the use of the term *literary Sinitic*. The reason for this thesis’ preference for *Sino-Korean* is a simple one: the term *literary Sinitic poetry* does not centralise the ‘Korean’ in its nomenclature, which is paramount to a project that seeks to bring to light twentieth century Korean thoughts, feelings and ideas expressed *through* Sinitic language during an era of transition. Thus, for this thesis, the reader needs to be aware of five terms that will appear frequently: literary Sinitic, Sino-Korean literature, Sino-Korean poetry, *hanmun* and *hansi*. *Literary Sinitic* (and at some points literary Chinese) is used throughout to refer to the language itself in the most general sense, i.e. in reference to the literary language of what Ross King calls the Sinographic Cosmopolis and Wiebke Denecke calls the Sinographic Sphere (Cf. King’s overview of Denecke’s writing in his introduction to the recent publication, *Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the World of Wen* 文: *Reading Sheldon Pollock from the Sinographic Cosmopolis* (Netherlands: Brill, 2023): 1-48, where they both contribute. King and Denecke’s choices for the use of slightly different terms ultimately stem from differences in their reflections on “cosmopolitanism” and writers’ consciousness of engaging with said cosmopolitanism). *Sino-Korean literature* and *Sino-Korean poetry* are used to refer to a body of literature (and body of poetry, respectfully) written in the literary Sinitic by Koreans. Finally, when quoting directly from Korean scholars, I will make ample use of localized terms such as *hanmun*, *hansi* and *hanmunhak*. This is for illustrative and comparative purposes, while maintaining fidelity to the source language. Care has been taken to avoid any discrepancies in the usages explained above, although inconsistencies are inevitable. It is also important to note that the terms *hanmun* and *hansi* themselves are Meiji era neologisms from Japan (Jp. *kanbun* and *kanshi*). Ironically, said terms were born from new intellectual trends and the birth of a nationalist Japanese consciousness that sought to challenge a Sinitic past. As Tuck stresses, up until the mid-Meiji era, *kanshi* “was generally known simply as *shi* (詩)” and thus had no contextual element within the term itself that distinguished the genre as being

some regards, it can even be said to have *matured* as a genre around 1900-1910.²⁶ Due to its enduring presence in the history of Korean civilization, *hanmunhak* (한문학 漢文學) or Sino-Korean literature is a well-researched area of Korean literary studies. Yet what is most interesting, however, is what this project sees as the liminality of Sino-Korean poetry *of the twentieth century* within this subfield. While undertaking preliminary research of primary source archival materials such as newspapers, magazines, publications of literary coteries and the writings of Korean students abroad from roughly the years of 1900 to 1910, what is evident is the *prominence* of the genre. Sino-Korean poetry of this time also appears in a variety of forms and styles, from tetrasyllabic (사언시 四言詩) four-character, pentasyllabic (오언시 五言詩) five-character and heptasyllabic (칠언시 七言詩) seven-character verse, to other works reflecting other forms such as rhyme-prose rhapsodies *fu* or *bu* (부 賦) and poems titled as *qu* (곡 曲) style and also works featuring *xi* (혜 兮) caesural constructions seen in Chu meter poetry.²⁷ While literary history books have long emphasized this era as a time when vernacular genres flourished, the enduring presence and engaged content of Sino-Korean

specifically related to a Sinitic historical and literary context. Yet it would be from the 1890s that “the ethnocentric and linguistically exclusive paradigm of national literature painted both *kanshi* and *kanbun* as being written in a foreign language. Both *kanshi* and *kanbun* therefore occupied an uncertain position in terms of expressing national identity, something that was a key requirement of putative national poetry.” Robert Tuck, *Idly Scribbling Rhymers: Poetry, Print, and Community in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (United States: Columbia University Press, 2018): xxviii.

²⁶ Yi Kyu-ho, *Kaehwagi Pyŏnch'e Hansi Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986): 5. These contradictory discussions that characterize Sinitic poetry from the nineteenth century onwards are by no means unique to Korea. Scholars such as Robert Tuck and Matthew Fraleigh highlight that while the late nineteenth century was an era often characterized by the decline of Sinitic literary practices and the rise of *kokushi* (國詩) and *kokugaku* (國學), it was also a time when *kanshi* would show a significant rise in popularity in a way often overlooked. Sino-Japanese poetry would meet with a thriving new print media industry and a changing educational landscape. This gave way to the flow of new creative outputs by a variety of actors experimenting with writing poetry in literary Chinese through the help of new Sinitic poetry writing manuals and the continuation of Sinitic poetry writing societies into the twentieth century. Cf. Tuck, *Idly Scribbling Rhymers: Poetry, Print, and Community in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (United States: Columbia University Press, 2018) and Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums: Narushima Ryūhoku and Sinitic Literary Traditions in Modern Japan* (Netherlands: Brill, 2020).

²⁷ It is important to note that many poets play around with such forms. Yi Kyu-ho's work *Kaehwagi Pyŏnch'e Hansi Yŏn'gu* previously mentioned looks specifically at form and style.

poetry of this same time remains a missing piece in the puzzle of the field of *hyōndae munhak* (현대문학 現代文學) or modern Korean literature.

While Sino-Korean poetry has long been connected to Korea's past and a 'relic' of Sinitic culture, an exploration of twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry provides the field with new content that reshapes our understanding of this genre as one which could, and indeed did, meet with the twentieth century and *adapted* to the needs of the early twentieth century reader class. As Robert Tuck's work on Sino-Japanese poetry posits, "*kanshi*'s role was not always as a negative exemplar of non-national poetry" in the nineteenth to twentieth centuries.²⁸ Despite not fitting within the boundaries of 'national language,' Sino-Japanese poetic production was an important tool in the development towards a fully-fledged nation-state and would come to be penned by a variety of individuals with a variety of viewpoints: being used by those who sought a place in government, being used as an 'anti-authoritarian' tool to criticize and also used among the lower classes as literacy rates improved.²⁹ In this, we can raise further questions regarding the genre in a *transnational* context and how we must test the boundaries of East Asian (and indeed world) literary history.

In this thesis, through translations and readings of print media Sino-Korean poetry, we come to see how Koreans also did not necessarily turn away from Sino-Korean literary

²⁸ Quoting literary critic and major contributor to the history of *haiku* Masaoka Siki (1867 – 1902), he highlights how Siki "declared *kanshi* to be *more advanced* than other traditional poetic genres in Japan, despite its being 'foreign gibberish'" while others writers "acknowledged *kanshi*'s important role in Japanese literary history even [while arguing] for its abandonment" during Japan's own period of civilization and enlightenment. Tuck, *Idly Scribbling Rhymers*, xxviii-xxix. Italics my own.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, xxix and 8. Fraleigh also explores this final example. He highlights that with an increase in access to education and an ever-expanding print industry throughout Japan, "acquisition of literacy and compositional proficiency in literary Sinitic was brought within the reach of a broader population. These trends continued into the Meiji. When poetic societies devoted to Sinitic verse sprung up in both rural and urban areas, the social backgrounds of Japanese poets working in Sinitic forms further diversified, a broader range of female poets came to participate, and new venues were established to showcase poetic production. The first decade of the Meiji period were in fact the historical zenith of Sinitic literary production in Japan: its final spectacular flourish before its even more precipitous decline. *The new Meiji media landscape was crucial in enabling this explosion*, for it stimulated aspiring poets by providing them ready access to models they could emulate while also fostering novel forms of poetic expression and interaction. Matthew Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums: Narushima Ryūhoku and Sinitic Literary Traditions in Modern Japan* (Netherlands: Brill, 2020): 3. Italics my own.

practices so readily. While there may have been vocal critics of Korea's reliance on literary Sinitic prose, many still continued to write significant amounts of Sinitic poetry and used the genre to critique, celebrate, lament and explore *contemporaneity*. Into the twentieth century, submission of poetry to newspapers, magazines and other publications was evidently a popular creative outlet for many.

It is important to highlight that the vast majority of these submissions were anonymous – written under aliases, pseudonyms and other nicknames. Pak Ŭl-su's work divides submitters of Sino-Korean poetry to print media into three categories: potentially or feasibly real names (實名表記), anonymous names (匿名表記) and finally pseudonyms or pen names (雅號表記) – with those choosing not to use real names (or names that resemble feasibly real names) being the majority.³⁰ As a consequence of the difficulty in ascertaining the identities of the majority of submitters, this thesis does not explore these publications from a biographical angle. Namely, this work will not focus on the specific questions of *who* each and every one of these poets were and what they did or did not go on to do due to the difficulty in finding secondary material providing more information on their identity in many cases.

In lieu of the biographical, what we do know about this 'group' of poets is that many were of the new-intellectual class, actively engaging with new modes of media and technology in a way that was not so readily accepted by their predecessors. Additionally, print culture and the new literary culture that it fostered was also closely linked to the youth and student class. Although this does not necessarily mean that the old-intellectuals or *kujisigin* (구지식인 舊知識人) had completely overlooked new print media culture, many of these publication outlets themselves were set up by students who studied abroad, with some magazines being specifically made for students. In this regard, rather than focusing on biographical information,

³⁰ Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chōhangsigaron* (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 2001): 262-3.

I instead use a wider critical lens to view the poets – as members of a new-intellectual movement or collective group, often young and often engaged with ‘Western’ learning through opportunities studying abroad or through relationships that fostered similar intellectual pursuits.

In later chapters, a wide variety of Sino-Korean poetry from twentieth-century print media will be examined. The early stages of this project involved archival work in South Korea that focused on hands-on examination of primary sources of newspapers, magazines and other publications of the enlightenment era. Poetic works were located and recorded for later exploration and translation. This early foundational exploration of primary source materials gave way to more in-depth scholarship on academic literature on Sino-Korean poetry, leading to the discovery of Yi Hŭi-mok’s groundbreaking scholarship. While this project’s initial foundation was hands-on exploration of original source materials, Yi Hŭi-mok’s first sourcebook of Sino-Korean poetry of this era (to be discussed in the literature review) greatly simplified the process of locating sources. As a result, Yi’s book also became one of the primary texts that formed the basis of this research while complimentary consultation of original print material for clarification throughout continued.³¹

In terms of contributions to the field, this thesis seeks to expand on literary scholarship in three areas: first and foremost, this work will examine the continued presence of Sino-Korean poetry or *hansi* (한시 漢詩) as a genre of choice and popularity in print media. Come the twentieth century, early theorists and literary critics came to argue whether Korean literature could only be truly ‘Korean’ if it was written using the Korean language, using

³¹ For example, there are frequent footnotes in Yi’s sourcebook where he points to issues regarding potential misprints of Sinographs. There are also times where, for whatever reason (it is unknown) where han’gŭl is written in lieu of a graph (potentially due to technological issues in the printing process). There are also times when I have not so readily understood a given character choice in the text and have had to turn to the original source material for further clarification. In short, the primary sources of this thesis are both the originals and Yi’s collected anthology. Due to what I see as the importance of original source material consultation, all poetry quoted has been footnoted with the original source location. For references to textual and printing issues such as missing graphs and han’gŭl replacements undertaken by Yi, then the page of his sourcebook is also provided for clarification.

Korean literary styles and the sounds of Korean (東國語, 東國文, 東國音), evoking the Korean experience and the Korean people's feelings, ideas and culture.³²

Looking at examples from this time, this work seeks to demonstrate that, in exploring the thematic and ideological content of Sino-Korean poetic works, we see the genre break from the imposed limitations put on Sinitic language at this time. Into the twentieth century, *hansi* also came to channel the voice of the new-intellectual and the patriotic enlightenment era progressive. The genre brought to life the thoughts and feelings of young students travelling the world. It was also a means with which Korean thinkers could grapple with the trials of the twentieth century and the new experiences that it provided. In discussing Sino-Korean poetry in front of the backdrop of twentieth-century historical, cultural and political developments, this work asks questions as to how the genre's overlooked popularity may redefine our understanding of Korea's 'modern' literary landscape in the twentieth century.

Second, this work seeks a new perspective on the shifting cultural, literary and intellectual landscape of Korea as the Chosŏn dynasty was coming to its end and critically examine Sinitic literature's place in that landscape. In this, I draw on the writings of Pierre Bourdieu and others that use the concepts of habitus, capital and field to understand the cultural currents that shaped the birth of a new literary landscape. More specifically, I seek to explore how the once valued capital of the Chosŏn era, literacy in literary Sinitic, was to be negated through the crisis of a tempestuous era. How such a crisis would maintain the negation of Sinitic literary production into the twentieth century will also be explored.

I use this discussion to then highlight how Sino-Korean poetry, despite its popularity, would easily fall into a void that grew between the two centuries, exacerbated by scholarship and academic writings. This work thus also seeks to build upon scholarship that challenges the

³² The discussions of *tonggugŏ*, *tonggungmun* and *tonggugŭm* is taken from writing by Sin Ch'ae-ho which will be examined later in this thesis.

dichotomies of ‘premodern’ and ‘modern’ that restrict our understanding of history, literature and culture. This is particularly problematic in regard to Korean literary studies, with literary history and literary genres having long been compartmentalised into ‘classical’ or ‘modern’ to the field’s detriment. Such language creates a sense of historical discontinuity, allowing for tangible elements of continuity from the so-called ‘premodern’ to the ‘modern’ to become overlooked. Exploring the thematic content of Sino-Korean poetry of this time, we come to see that established perimeters of literary history and conventional understanding of Sino-Korean poetry can be challenged.

This thesis aligns itself with recent historical scholarship such as the work of Holly Stephens and others. Stephens argues that “we need an alternative conception of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that explicitly aims to look beyond the category of ‘the modern’ in order to bridge the historiographical divide of late Chosŏn and colonial Korea. [...] the collective focus on modernity has arguably limited the scope of historical inquiry to topics that fit within chosen definitions of modernity.”³³ Such work compels us to look upon the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century not as a break, divided into two binaries but a time of significant overlap and blending. We must continue to acknowledge the problems caused by rigid compartmentalisation of culture, history and literature into the categories of modern or premodern for ease.

Mittler also touches upon the problems of binaries and the vocabulary we use when dealing with transitional history. She states that, “[I’m] not interested in confirming dichotomies of new and old, traditional and modern, foreign and Chinese, *even if [my work] makes use of them*. It does so only to uncover the process of adaptation and transformation.”³⁴

³³ In her work, Stephens also draws on writing by Albert Park and Kyung Moon Hwang, both of which seek to challenge the problem of an enforced pre/modern binary. For more Cf. Holly Stephens, “Three Reforming Regimes? Modernity and the Fiscal State in Modern Korean History,” *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 32 no. 1 (2019): 109-10.

³⁴ Cf. Mittler, *A Newspaper for China*, 6-7.

I acknowledge that finding a new vocabulary to break down such a binary is not easy. I also acknowledge that sometimes this thesis also uses binary terms such as new/old, sino/vernacular, feudal/enlightened in a way that may seem reductive. Echoing Mittler's words, however, this thesis tries to only make use of such terms for illustrative purposes or when referring to commonly held beliefs or ideas about a particular time. One positive step this work actively seeks is to avoid constant references to 'premodern' and 'modern' literature; the issue of the pre/modern literary divide and historical discontinuity is a paramount focus of this thesis. Attempts to correct what Cho Tong-il calls the "the error of bifurcating Korean literary history" is of vital importance to the future of Korean literary studies in a global context.³⁵ And like Mittler, the attempt to at least draw attention to this issue is a step towards a more appropriate vocabulary.

Due to the transitional nature of the time and the way this research sits across intersecting lines of languages (literary Sinitic and vernacular Korean), historical epochs (dynastic times and the twentieth century) as well as 'old' knowledge elites and 'new' knowledge intellectuals (the *yangban* literati and the new-intellectual class), structuring a thesis on such a topic has been challenging. This challenge is further exacerbated by the (at times) unhelpful and stifling periodisation of literary history. With time, a theoretical approach to the topic has evolved. The opening of this thesis outlines the main tenets of Pierre Bourdieu's theories and their general applications. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital, as well as his musing on the way power structures shape tastes and cultural trends will be set forth. Then, said concepts will be utilised to understand sociocultural changes in late nineteenth century to early twentieth century Korea in regard to the decline of the Neo-

³⁵ Cho Tong-il, *Korean Literature in a Cultural Context and Comparative Perspective* (Seoul: Jipmoondang, 1997): 105.

Confucian yangban elite and the rise of the new-intellectual class, as well as this time's complicated literary landscape.

Into chapters two, three and four, this work dives further into applications of Bourdieu to a Korean literary-historical context. Bourdieu's theories provide new understanding of the hidden power structures at play that have long shaped cultural tastes in Chosŏn, while also starting to look at ways we may expand on his ideas. Bourdieu has been criticized due to (at least at first glance) his idea that power structures are constant and inescapable. I explore the possibility of change – seeking to look at how what a society considers 'valuable' cultural capital may change when faced with significant social, political or cultural upheaval. To elaborate, while the elites of Chosŏn saw literary Sinitic as the defining symbol of cultural superiority *par excellence*, the arrival of the West (both through contact with Western nations and Japan) caused an irreparable cultural and political rupture that was unable to heal. Said rupture was so severe, that the old elite were unable to maintain dominance and the growing new-intellectual class moved in through their progressive approach to print media for all. Through the ability to shape public opinion through their monopoly on the media, the 'good' cultural capital of literary Sinitic, became 'bad.' Through that change, and due to twentieth-century's Korea's troubled history as a nation in strife, attitudes towards literary Sinitic as 'bad' capital has continued due to nationalistic historical trends that stressed cultural survival and preservation in the face of colonialism, the cold war and dictatorships.

Chapters five through eight break from theoretical explorations of literary history. As highlighted, if Sino-Korean literature really was a symbol of a Sinitic past that provided little to the twentieth-century Korean intellectual that supposedly sought enlightenment, civilization and technological progress, why was Sino-Korean poetry still so popular in print media and what do these poems tell us about this so-called 'backward' genre as it struggled for relevance in what may be seen as a progressive, twentieth-century space? Here, I provide the reader with

an overview of relevant themes, imagery and trends in Sino-Korean poetry of this time. Through poetic analysis of a wide variety of poems from roughly 1900 to 1910, this thesis seeks to explore how Sino-Korean poetry spoke in the voice of the patriotic Korean intellectual as effectively as poetry in the vernacular.

Utilising the subtleties of the genre as an asset, the poems explored in these chapters highlight how this genre was able to challenge the Japanese, sing patriotic songs of Korea's excellence and both celebrate and ponder over a changing world. This gives way to a more forward-looking chapter nine, that seeks a practical application of this research by turning to the topic of canonicity and opening the canon for a better reflection of *hyōndae munhaksa* (현대문학사 現代文學史) or modern literary history. As Kolbas mentions, "canon formation has been fraught with episodes of ambiguity, unrest, and even radical contention throughout history."³⁶ In this, this work takes a new turn and provides a foundation for future study, exploring the key tenets of the canon debate. Then, ways that nationalism may have fashioned a curriculum of exclusion will be explored. Finally, how such exclusions can be remedied and how, more specifically, the genre of Sino-Korean poetry can find its place within a 'modern' canon will also be investigated.

³⁶ Dean Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2001): 22.

Literature Review:

1. Introduction:

Although interest in Korean literature has grown considerably in recent years, there still remains significant gaps in available scholarship in English. Elements of Korea's vibrant literary landscape (particularly poetry, drama and the essay) continue to lack exploration in English, which is in stark contrast to what is available on Chinese and Japanese literature. In particular, in-depth academic enquiry into the literary developments of Korea's enlightenment era (1880s-1910) continues to be underexplored. This is especially evident regarding specific academic enquiries into Korean poetry and poetic history. While translated anthologies of Korean poetry have and continue to be produced to some degree, of what interest there is in reading works by Korean poets has yet to translate to significant scholarly interest, academic publications and monographs comparable to that available on Korean prose fiction or research into Chinese and Japanese poetry. Albeit somewhat understandable, the field continues to lack academic publications and varied scholarship on Korea's many poets, poetic movements and poetic history comparable to the depth and breadth of scholarship that has been undertaken in South Korea.

2. General Readers and Literary Histories:

Of the English language publications available, the enlightenment era stands out as lacking the most representation of *any* period, with poetic genres of this time some of the least explored elements of Korea's literary genres. Scholarship tends to overlook this fruitful era potentially due to its highly transitional nature – neither 'classical' (古典) nor 'modern' (現代) at the turn of the century. To date, only three publications in English have ever mentioned some aspects of poetic developments during the enlightenment era: namely, Peter Lee's early work entitled *Korean Literature: Topics and Themes* in 1965, Sim Myeong-ho's *The Making of Modern Korean Poetry: Foreign Influences and Native Creativity* in 1982 and Lee's most well-known edited volume, *A History of Korean Literature*, first published in 2003.³⁷ Even these three examples provide little space to explore what is the most diverse era of poetic writing in Korea. All other major publications located on Korean poetry that exist in English from the 1960s to the present do not mention this period within their explorations of Korean poetry.³⁸

This is a significant issue. Categorically, the late nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century was the most diverse period of Korea's entire poetic history, a period in time that saw the widest array of genres, styles and indeed participants (poets as well as readers) coexisting together. Subsequently, this lack of exploration by scholars working in English highlights a substantial gap in available literature and a glaring issue to overcome. Most worrying, however, is that of all of these English language texts cited above, not *one* mentions

³⁷ Cf. Peter H. Lee, *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Peter H. Lee, *Korean Literature: Topics and Themes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965) and Sim Myeong-ho, *The Making of Modern Korean Poetry: Foreign Influences and Native Creativity* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1982).

³⁸ Cf. Peter H. Lee, *Anthology of Korean Poetry from the Earliest Era to the Present* (New York: John Day, 1964), Kukche PEN Han'guk Ponbu, *Modern Korean Poetry* (Seoul: Korean Centre International PEN, 1970), Zong Insob, *A Guide to Korean Literature* (Seoul: Hollym International, 1984), Kim, Yong-jik et al, *Making of Korean Literature* (Seoul: Korean Culture and Arts Foundation, 1986), Lee Young-gil et al, *Korean Poetry* (Seoul: Korean Culture and Arts Foundation, 1987), Kim Yoonsik, Chang Kyeong-nyeol (Trans.), *Understanding Modern Korean Literature* (Seoul: Jipmoondang, 1998), Peter H. Lee, *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Korean Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), David McCann, *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Korean National Commission for UNESCO, *Korean Literature: Its Classical Heritage and Modern Breakthroughs* (Elizabeth, N.J.: Hollym, 2003).

the fact that Sino-Korean poetry or *hansi* continued to exist, be written, published and enjoyed beyond the Chosŏn dynasty into the twentieth century.

There is, however, a valuable doctoral dissertation worthy of note. Peter Wayne de Fremery's 2011 thesis, *Why Poetry Mattered in 1920s Korea*, provides arguably the first substantial mentioning of Sino-Korean poetry in the twentieth century in English. Focusing on the publishing industry and modern poetry in the 1920s, his work highlights that despite the existing narrative of a so-called history of modern Korean poetry, an exploration of print and publishing culture provides the field with clear evidence of the genre's continued presence through substantial appearances in print culture of the 1920s. As de Fremery mentions, "although there has been no systematic accounting of poetry composed and published during the Japanese colonial period [...] [it is] clear that poetry and other literary works composed in classical Chinese were sold and circulated alongside vernacular poetic compositions and works about poetry. [...] Poetry composed in classical Chinese had a *broadly visible place* in the burgeoning vernacular print media of 1920s Korea."³⁹

De Fremery rightfully points out that from daily newspapers like the *Tonga Ilbo*, to popular magazines like *Kaebyŏk* (開闢), *Sisa p'yŏngnon* (時事評論) and *Sŏul* (서울), as well as Japanese language publications like *Chōsen oyobi Manshū* (朝鮮及滿州) and *Keimu ihō* 警務彙報 (Police Bulletin), Sino-Korean poetic works feature to a significant degree. Newspapers like the *Tonga Ilbo* feature advertisements for Sino-Korean poetry submissions and contests.⁴⁰ While de Fremery's scholarship focuses on the publishing industry and the printing and distribution of poetry as a product rather than looking at Sino-Korean poetry's thematic content, this is a welcome contribution to scholarship in English. In short, the lack of

³⁹ Peter Wayne de Fremery, "How Poetry Mattered in 1920s Korea" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011): 26. Italics my own.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 25-27.

mentioning (let alone deeper scholarly exploration) across available English language publications is problematic, as this imperfect line of academic enquiry continues to contribute to a narrative that suggests that this was a genre that met its end in Korea's 'past' rather than being a genre that could (and indeed did) continue on into the 'present' of modern Korean literary history alongside vernacular genres.⁴¹

But what of *hansi*'s twentieth-century relevance? This thesis locates this topic as an important issue for the future of English language scholarship on Korean literature and thus the presented research aims to explore Sino-Korean poetry published in print media such as newspapers, magazines, journals and student publications during the latter years of the enlightenment era (specifically 1900-1910) in English, while also aiming to tread new ground through the exploration of theoretical questions relating to language, power and canon formation.

While there is an issue surrounding the lack of exploration of enlightenment era literary developments in English, this epoch has been explored by South Korean scholars. First and foremost, highly respected general literary histories, work by prominent names such as Cho Tong-il, Kim Yun-sik, Kwŏn Yŏngmin and Kim Hŭnggyu provide thoughtful overviews of changes in literary production as Korea transitioned from dynastic rule.⁴² These literary histories explore the importance of the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century,

⁴¹ "While it is futile to dispute the growing influence of 'modern' changes in the late nineteenth century, it is also necessary to acknowledge the continuity of 'non-modern' aspects as well. These exceptions highlight the risks of limiting historical research to the exploration of the modern attributes of Korean society, through the elision and marginalization of significant research topics." Cf. Stephens, "Three Reforming Regimes? Modernity and the Fiscal State in Modern Korean History," 115.

⁴² Cho Tong-il, *Han'guk Munhak T'ongsa 4* (Seoul: Chisiksanŏpsa, 1986), Kim Yun-sik, *Han'guk Munhaksa* (Seoul: Minumsa, 1998) and *Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhaksa* (Seoul: Hyŏndaemunhak, 2014), Kwŏn Yŏng-min, *Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhaksa 2* (Seoul: Minumsa, 2002) and Kim Hŭng-gyu, *Han'guk Munhakŭi Ihae* (Seoul: Minumsa, 1998). The work of Sim Kyŏng-ho also deserves mentioning. Even in his introductory work on literary Sinitic studies, he provides context to learners as to how the genre was changing from the latter Chosŏn period and beyond. His exploration of some of Sin Ch'ae-ho's poetry is worthy of note. Cf. *Hanhak Immun* (Seoul: Hwangsojari, 2007). In addition, Sim's chapter (jointed written with Peter Kornicki) on Sino-Korean literature is an important overview. Cf. Sim Kyŏng-ho [Kyung-ho] and Peter Kornicki, "Sino-Korean Literature," in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature 1000 BC - 900 CE. 510-532* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 551-568.

surveying the complex relationship between a new print media, Western thought and geopolitical issues, together with shifts in attitudes towards vernacular language and literary production.

Cho Tong-il's *Han'guk Munhak T'ongsa* (한국문학통사) "A Comprehensive History of Korean Literature" is most worthy of note in the care that has been taken to properly explore Sino-Korean literature's place in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. As Cho stresses, while it may seem that literary Sinitic was discarded after the civil service exam was abolished in 1894, in fact there was a period of unusual growth. Without the examination system (과거 科擧), *anyone* regardless of geography or social class, could now learn such a language as it became untethered from the Sinitic elites of dynastic Chosŏn, becoming an object of interest among 'ordinary' folk.⁴³ Cho's fourth volume is extensive in its breadth and detail, covering what he describes as the late transition from the 'medieval' to the 'modern' era (중세에서 근대로) from 1860 to 1918. In particular, chapters 10.4 to 10.7 (as well as a chapter 11.16 in volume five) were of most help to this project. They provide the field with an in-depth exploration of *hanmunhak*'s decline, as well as a truthful portrayal of Sino-Korean poetry's interesting flourish in the literary landscape of the twentieth century.

Another general literary history that initially contributed greatly to this thesis and provided the early initial impetus to explore this line of academic enquiry, is *A History of Modern Korean Poetry* (한국현대시사) which was published by the Society of Korean Poets

⁴³ Cho Tong-il, *Han'guk Munhak T'ongsa 4*, 155. Both Fraleigh and Tuck highlight similar events in Japan. Particularly from the Meiji era, far more egalitarian educational opportunities gave way to greater access to material that could allow the population to broadly develop proficiency in Sinitic literacy. Cf. Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, 3. Published materials such as textbooks and primers that taught beginners in composition of poetry boomed to meet public interest and demand. Cf. Tuck, *Idly Scribbling Rhymers*, xxxiii. But as Fraleigh emphasises, "as kanshi's practitioner based expanded, so its value as social and cultural capital was *called into question* [...] at the same time as print capitalism thus expanded the boundaries, real and imagined, of the kanshi community throughout Japan, it also created and reinforced mechanisms of hierarchy and differentiation that were essential to how such communitites were envisioned." Fraleigh, *ibid.*, 5-6.

(한국시인협회) in 2007.⁴⁴ Featuring contributions from prominent names in Korean academia such as Oh Se-yŏng, Yu Sŏng-ho and Ch'oe Tong-ho, this thesis holds this publication in high regard as arguably the most extensive volume in print on the history of Korean poetry to date, exploring poetic history from the 1890s until as recently as the 2000s. It is extensive both in its historical scope but also in its detailed exploration of poets, poetic movements and specific works. More specifically in its exploration of genre, style and trajectory of poetic production of the transitional era between late-Chosŏn and early 1910s poetry, this work stands out as a significant contribution to the field and by extension this thesis.

3. Review of Literature on Enlightenment Era Poetry:

While publications by Cho, Kim and Kwŏn provide readers with broad and detailed literary histories that highlight the enlightenment era's place within the context of Korea's long literary history in a general sense, we can also point to Kwŏn Oman, Kim Hak-dong, Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl and Pak Ŭl-su⁴⁵ as academics that have contributed more detailed, full-length works that specifically seek to shape conventional understanding of late nineteenth and early twentieth century poetic developments and trajectories. In their work, we come to see in-depth explorations of the fundamentals of so-called modern poetic genre formation, their idiosyncrasies and their relationship with the changing culture that shaped their creation, popularity and status of canonization.

Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl emphasizes that, of what studies are available, 'research and evaluation on the *Sino-Korean poetry* of the enlightenment era leaves one with the feeling that

⁴⁴ Han'guk Siin Hyŏphoe, *Han'guk Hyŏndae Sisa* (Seoul: Miŭmsa, 2007).

⁴⁵ Kwŏn Oman, *Kaehwagi Siga Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Saemusa, 1989), Kim Hak-dong, *Kaehwagi Siga Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Saemusa, 2009), Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Siga Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Saemusa, 2004) and Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chŏhang Siga Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Sŏngmun'gak, 1998).

the field is severely lacking'⁴⁶ and that 'the scope of research on enlightenment era poetry is limited almost entirely to focusing on *ch'angga* (창가 唱歌) and *sinsi* (신시 新詩) with Sino-Korean poetry sidelined.'⁴⁷ Of the above, Kim and Pak's work bring Sino-Korean poetic writing into their discussions to a high degree, providing the field with publications that provide to a more comprehensive reflection of Korea's poetic landscape. Pak Ŭl-su's work on resistance poetry (저항시가) is particularly important in that his work also explores Sino-Korean poetry from the standpoint of resistance to contemporary imperial shifts, ultimately playing an important role towards what this thesis hopes for in terms of a reappraisal and recalibration of 'Sino' literary genres as genres of relevance to the story of twentieth-century Korea.

While we can highlight some of the above as contributing towards a recalibration of the Sino-poetic genre as twentieth-century poetry, there are also a number of scholars that have sought to paint a more complete picture through a more in-depth focus on latent Sino-Korean literary production. These scholars have contributed robust research more specifically on Sino-Korean literary production around the turn of the century. Herein academic scholarship by Korean scholars than explore *Sino-Korean* poetry of the enlightenment era will be explored.

Through exploration of the existing literature available on this niche area of literary history, we can point to a handful of scholars – Yi Hŭi-mok, Kim Chin-gyun, Chu Sŭng-t'aek, Chin Chae-gyo and Yi Kyu-ho as the most significant contributors and indeed the founders of this specific area of enquiry.⁴⁸ These scholars essentially form a group that can be described

⁴⁶ Italics my own.

⁴⁷ Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl, "Kaehwagi Hansiŭi Hyŏnsil Insik Yŏn'gu," *Han'guk Sihak Yŏn'gu*, 5 (2001): 41-63.

⁴⁸ Yi Kyu-ho's work stands out as a highly significant contribution to study on Sino-Korean poetry from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century but his book looks specifically at structural changes of Sino-Korean poetry of this time. This thesis' primary focus is thematic content rather than structure, meter or rhyme hence why his contributions are not explored in detail. For more Cf. Yi Kyu-ho, *Kaehwagi Pyŏnch'e Hansi Yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏng Ch'ulp'ansa, 1986).

as forerunner academics of *modern hanmunhak* (근대한문학 近代漢文學) studies, looking in depth at Sino-Korean literary production of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The work of Yi Hŭi-mok (Lee Hee-mok) has provided some of the most groundbreaking foundational research on Sino-Korean poetry of the enlightenment era;⁴⁹ his work is some of the few examples of scholarship to specifically highlight the importance of Korean students and their poetry in the early years of the twentieth century as territory for deeper enquiry into Sino-Korean poetry. Yi's scholarship overturns the field's conventional understanding of Sino-Korean poetry as a purely 'premodern' genre. He does this through his exploration of core themes and styles of this medium in the twentieth century by working hard to bring Sino-Korean writing back into line with all the other poetic genres of the day.

To date, Yi Hŭi-mok is one of the most prolific academics who has written about Sino-Korean poetry of this transitional era. Yi's most significant contributions to the field are his lengthy sourcebook publications – *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (애국계몽기 한시 자료집 “Patriotic Enlightenment Era Sino-Korean Poetry Sourcebook”) and the *Singminji Sigi Hansi Charyojip* (식민지시기 한시 자료집 “Colonial Era Sino-Korean Poetry Sourcebook”) published in 2005 and 2009, respectively. These anthologies are the only publications to date that contain almost all the Sino-Korean poetry published in print during the years 1905-1910 and 1910-1945 of Korea and stand out as examples of essential scholarship that shapes our understanding of Sino-Korean poetry as a genre that persisted.

⁴⁹ Yi's publications are extensive but for specific works on the topic of enlightenment era Sino-Korean poetry, Cf. Yi Hi-mok, “Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi,” *Han'guk Hanmunhak Yŏn'gu* 15 (1992): 151-175, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sŏnggyun'gwan Univ. Taedong Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 2005), *Singminji Sigi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sŏnggyun'gwan Univ. Taedong Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 2009), “Aeguk Kyemonggi Chaeil Yuhaksaeng Hansi Yon'gu,” *Tongyang Hanmunhak Yŏn'gu* 18 (2003): 153-178, “Aegukkyemonggi Hansie Nat'an'an Minjokchŏk Chŏnt'ong,” *Hanmunhakpo* 18 (2008): 1231-1255 and “Ilche Kangjŏmgi Hansi Sogo,” *Inmun Kwahak* 45 (2010): 5-26.

This project locates a number of points for expansion. One aspect of Yi Hŭi-mok's scholarship that may be said to be lacking is his analysis of poetry. While providing a foundational understanding of core thematic threads of Sino-Korean poetry in print, he focuses on only a small number of examples. Considering the sheer number of available works in both anthologies, this thesis locates this as a point of expansion to give readers a deeper look into the Sino-poetic world of the early twentieth century. Furthermore, Yi's work does not seek to explore how these poems could potentially *change* the historiography of literature and way we write, teach and understand modern literary history. This thesis seeks to read a wider variety of Sino-Korean poetry to provide new understanding of the genre's flexibility, while also bringing Sino-Korean poetry to the contemporary crossroads of canon formation.

Beyond Yi's work, we can point to a number of publications by Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl that focus on poetic developments of the enlightenment era. In his work, Sino-Korean poetry comes to the fore as a prominent genre of 'modern' poetry worthy of better understanding.⁵⁰ Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl thus stands out as another important figure to contribute to the study of literary genres in transition, also highlighting Sino-Korean poetry as its own defining genre in the early twentieth century poetic landscape. Kim is one of the earlier scholars to start exploring this area – his first publication on enlightenment era literary developments appearing as early as 1990, with further works appearing through to 2001. This scholarship would lead to his contribution in the Korean Poet Society's *History of Modern Korean Poetry* volume, where he outlines the perimeters of enlightenment era poetry and firmly includes Sino-Korean poetry in his exploration. In particular, his 2001 publication *Kaehwagi Hansiŭi Hyŏnsil Insik Yŏn'gu* (개화기 한시의 현실 인식 연구 “A Study on the Reality Cognition of Sino-Korean Poetry

⁵⁰ Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl, “Kaehwagi Sigaŭi Ch'angjakkyech'ŭng Yŏn'gu,” *Uri Mal Kŭl* 8 (1990): 63-89, “Kaehwagi Sigaŭi Changnŭjŏng Sŏnggyŏk,” *Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhak Yŏn'gu* 1 (1991): 297-319, “Kaehwagi Chŏnt'ong Sigaŭi Changnŭjŏk Sŏnggyŏkkwa Pyŏni,” *Han'guk Siga Yŏn'gu* 1(1) (1997): 89-120 and “Kaehwagi Hansiŭi Hyŏnsil Insik Yŏn'gu,” *Han'guk Sihak Yŏn'gu* 5 (2001): 41-64.

of the Enlightenment Period”) marks an important step in contributions to scholarship that focuses solely on Sino-Korean poetry of the enlightenment era. This paper stands out due to the way Kim seeks to explore the content of Sino-Korean poetry of this era and the significance of said content.

In Kim Yŏng-ch’öl’s words, the presence of Sino-Korean poetic works throughout print media publications ‘highlights the historic significance of the enlightenment era all the more’ since Sino-Korean poetry came to ‘transform into a “literature of participation” that bent itself to the historical situation and the wills of enlightenment era and its *minjok* sentiment.’⁵¹ Kim’s research also demonstrates that Sino-Korean poetry of the very last years of the nineteenth century and into twentieth century was a poetic genre shaped by three clear groups of writers: established literati figures or *munin* (문인 文人), Sino-Korean work by the righteous army or *ũbyŏng* class (의병 義兵) and finally the more ‘modern’ Sino-Korean works produced by what he refers to as the *general reader* class (일반독자층) – works published in poetry sections (사조란 詞藻欄) of newspapers and magazines. Kim’s work thus plays an important role in helping solidify academic consciousness of the tight relationship between blossoming print and publishing culture, a developing public sphere and modern poetry in academic discourse, with Sino-Korean poetry also being a genre for another more ‘general’ group who sought novel engagement with new print to bring the genre into a new era. His work on this area of poetic history is detailed and broad in scope exploring a variety of classes, genre and changes in typically ‘traditional genres’ of Korean poetry into the early twentieth century.

Finally, we see figures like Kim Chin-gyun, Chu Sŭng-t’aek and Chin Chae-gyo who have all contributed greatly to scholarship on what has been dubbed *kŭndae hanmunhak*

⁵¹ Kim Yŏng-ch’öl, “Kaehwagi Hansiŭi Hyŏnsil Insik Yŏn’gu,” *Han’guk Sihak Yŏn’gu* 5 (2001): 43-4.

(근대 한문학 近代漢文學) “Modern Hanmun Literary Studies” as a new discipline and area of academic enquiry.⁵² The published works of these academics are broad, ranging from late Chosŏn literati poets, through to early twentieth-century Sino-Korean literary developments as well as also touching upon literary Sinitic studies as a distinct academic field in contemporary times. Beyond his two extensive monographs on Sino-Korean literature during the enlightenment era, *Hanmunhakkwa Kūndaejŏnhwan'gi* (한문학과 근대전환기 “Sino-Korean literature and the Modern Enlightenment Era”) published in 2009 and *Modŏn Hanmunhak* (모던한문학 “Modern Sino-Korean literature”) in 2015,⁵³ Kim Chin-gyun has also published a wide variety of articles on Sino-Korean literature in general, as well as modern Sino-Korean literature as a new element of Korean literary studies as an academic discipline.⁵⁴ Kim’s publications stand out through his questioning of modern and contemporary literary discourse. As he concludes, while ‘[the field of] modern *hanmunhak* acknowledges the foreignness of Korean literature written in hanmun’ ultimately it is through scholarship by him and others that the field is presented with a clear attempt to ‘make positive use of hanmun as an innate aspect of the Korean *minjok*.’⁵⁵ In this, we see a new approach to Korean literature that, regardless of time period, Sino-Korean literature is allowed to transcend the traditional limitations forced upon it by academia that has consistently stressed the vernacular as the defining element of so-called modern literary language.

Chu Sŭng-t’aek started his exploration of the genre with a master’s degree thesis on

⁵² Or sometimes *modŏn hanmunhak* (모던한문학) using the English ‘modern,’ as in the case in Kim Chin-gyun’s publication.

⁵³ Kim Chin-gyun, *Hanmunhakkwa Kūndaejŏnhwan'gi* (Seoul: Taunsaeng, 2009) and *Modŏn Hanmunhak* (Seoul: Hakchawŏn, 2015).

⁵⁴ Kim Chin-gyun, “Hanhakkwa Han'guk Hanmunhagŭi Sai, Kūndae Hanmunhak,” *Kukcheŏmun* 51 (2011): 137-166, “Kūndae Hanmunhagŭi Sae Chihyang,” *Inmun Kwahak* 49 (2012): 73-91, “Kūndae Hanmunhagŭi Chinjŏngsŏng,” *Hanmun Kojŏn Yŏn'gu* 26 (1) (2013): 205-229 and “Hanmunhak Yŏn'guwa 20Segi Munhwa Kwŏllyŏk,” *Hanmunhak Nonjip* 51 (2018): 35-58.

⁵⁵ Kim Chin-gyun, “Hanhakkwa Han'guk Hanmunhagŭi Sai, Kūndae Hanmunhak,” *Kukcheŏmun* 51 (2011): 137.

enlightenment era Sino-Korean poetry as early as 1984.⁵⁶ He went on to produce research on the changes to Sino-Korean literature through his paper titled *Kaehwagi Hanmunhagüi Pyöniyangsang* (개화기 한문학의 변이양상 “Changing Aspects of Hanmun Literature of the Enlightenment Era”) in 1985. His contributions to the field over the years have culminated in an extensive study into Sino-Korean literature’s relationship with modern literature through the 2009 publication *Hanmunhakkwa Kūndaemunhak* (한문학과 근대문학 “Sino-Korean Literature and Modern Literature.”)⁵⁷

Chu Sūng-t’aek’s contribution to the field is significant in how he homes in on the glaring issues surrounding our understanding on the decline of literary Sinitic in Korea. Chu’s work highlights three core issues that have plagued understanding and research on Sino-Korean literature and the enlightenment era, namely, ‘the evaluation and organization of enlightenment era hanmun literature itself, the mutual connections between hanmun literature and modern literature, and the process of decline of hanmun literature and delineations of that decline.’⁵⁸ At the time, Chu pointed out that ‘there is almost no review nor serious critique regarding the issue surrounding when one may mark the line of decline of hanmun literature.’ With him stressing that this issue ultimately has great sway on how we come to understand Sino-Korean literature and most importantly, whether the existing narrative reflects the reality.⁵⁹

Not only is Chu an important voice in the field through his early attempts at marrying the two areas of ‘Sino-Korean’ and ‘modern’ literature, he is also important due to how his research highlights the subtleties of Sino-Korean literature’s decline that is too often overlooked and perfunctorily explained by other scholars and literary history books. In his

⁵⁶ Chu Sūng-t’aek, “Kaehwagi Hansi Yōn’gu” (Masters diss., Seoul National University, 1984) followed by “Kaehwagi Hanmunhagüi Pyöniyangsang,” *Kwanak Ōmun Yōn’gu* 10 (1) (1985): 355-374 and “Han’guk Kūndaesi Hyōngsōngüi Changnūronjök Ch’ūngmyōn - Hansiwa Kūndaesiüi Kwan’gyerül Chungsimūro,” *Hyōndaesi* 2 (1985): 44-67.

⁵⁷ Chu Sūng-t’aek, *Hanmunhakkwa Kūndaemunhak* (Seoul: T’aehaksa, 2009).

⁵⁸ Chu Sūng-t’aek, “Kaehwagi Hanmunhagüi Pyöniyangsang,” *Kwanak Ōmun Yōn’gu* 10 (1) (1985): 356

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 357.

words, ‘hanmun literature’s history of two thousand years could not possibly be destroyed in ten or twenty years. In fact, judging by its two-thousand-year history and tradition it is impossible to expel the feeling that it was too sudden but the formation process of modern literature and the decline process of hanmun literature naturally overlapped for a significant period of time.’⁶⁰

As his work further elucidates, the decline of Sino-Korean literature is far more nuanced than we are often led to believe. Sino-Korean literature’s end ‘did not come about collectively all at once – the decline among the central literary circle (중앙문단 中央文壇) came earlier than the provincial circles (지방문단 地方文壇) and the decline in *prose* (文) came before a later decline in *poetry* (詩).’⁶¹ From the late 1890s with the arrival of mixed-script (국한문체) style that was popular in print media, the first stage of decline of Sino-Korean literature had begun with the decline of prose and it would be after around another thirty years from then that the second phase of decline – the decline of poetry – would follow.

Chu Sŭng-t’aek’s research stands out as an essential contribution to literary studies. We come to understand the complexities of literary Sinitic decline and most importantly, the *fallacies* in the established narrative that surrounds it. His exploration of the lack of nuanced discussion, especially surrounding the difference in decline rates for prose and poetry, is particularly important. Chu put forth these ideas as early as 1985 but the field is still facing continued issues of simplification of the narrative of Sino-Korean literature. The reappraisal of poetry in literary Sinitic into the twentieth century continues to lack exposure and understanding as a genre that continued into the 1940s.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 358.

⁶¹ Ibid., 358-9.

Finally Chin Chae-gyo has published a number of papers on literary Sinitic at the turn of the century, exploring a number of themes such as research into Sino-Korean poetic writing of this time, literary Sinitic education as well as work into the reception of Sino-Korean poetry in Korea pre and post Japanese colonial era as well as research that explores the intersections between Korean literary studies and classical Chinese studies.⁶² Most pertinent to this study is his influential paper *Kūndaejōnhwan'giwa Hansiūi Taeūng* (근대전환기와 한시의 대응 “Transition to Modernity and Response of Hansi in Korea”) which contributes significantly to the field through his in-depth exploration of the connections between new print culture and Sino-Korean poetic production. In Chin Chae-gyo’s words, this research ‘focuses on how Korean poetry, which was only recognized as literature of the pre-modern intellectual class, was able to enter print media in the distribution structure of modern knowledge’ and came to be ‘classified and arranged along with a variety of knowledge in the print media.’⁶³

Chin Chae-gyo’s enquiry into Sino-Korean poetry provides insights into the reasons why Sino-Korean literary practices were able to defy our conventional understanding of Korean literary history and actually transcend the ‘classical/modern’ dichotomy and continue to attract interest as a medium for social commentary in the twentieth century. As he elucidates, although a genre with origins and style at odds with the new global order, it came to stand side by side vernacular literary works as a contributor to knowledge in a general sense. In Chin’s view, the people had a thirst for knowledge in *all* its forms; publications like newspapers and

⁶² For some of his most significant contributions to this area, Cf. Chin Chae-gyo, “Hanmunūi Sōsajōnt’onggwa Kūndae Kyemonggi Sinmunūi Sōsa - Sōsaūi Kūndaejōk Mosaek,” *Han’guk Hanmunhak Yōn’gu* 37 (2006): 65-101, “Kūndae Chōnhwan'giwa Hansiūi Taeūng - Maech'ewa Hansiwaūi Sanggwangsōng,” *Han’guk Siga Yōn’gu* 24 (2008) 77-111, “Tongasiaesō Han’guk Hanmunhagūi Pop’yōnsōnggwa T’ūksusōng - Chungsimgwa Chubyōnūi Pyōnjūngbōp, Kūrigo Hanmunhak,” *Inmunhak Yōn’gu* 57 (2009): 229-264, “Kūllōbōl Sidaēūi Kukka Kyōngjaengnyōkkwa Hanmun Kyoyugūi Wisang,” *Taedong Hanmunhak* 39 (2013): 447-478 and “Han’gugūi Kojōnūi Siwōn’gwa Yōngt’o - Kungmunhakkwa Hanmunhagūi Kyojiphap,” *Hanmun Kyoyuk Yōn’gu* 43 (2014): 201-237.

⁶³ Chin Chae-gyo, “Kūndae Chōnhwan'giwa Hansiūi Taeūng - Maech'ewa Hansiwaūi Sanggwangsōng,” *Han’guk Siga Yōn’gu* 24 (2008): 79

magazines presented themselves as an arrangement of knowledge and information together in one space where we see a sense of equality. Through shared space on the page, ‘Sino-Korean literature and vernacular Korean literature do not have any differences or divisions, and they merely converge in the notion of literature’ and a process of homogenization occurs among written styles, simply ‘delivered to the reader as part of ‘knowledge’ along with other information in the space of modern media.’⁶⁴

This thesis aligns itself with Chin Chae-gyo’s line of enquiry in how it seeks to explore Sino-Korean poetry’s intriguing transformations into the twentieth century while also continuing to expand on this exploration through asking broader questions about how this can give way to reimagining the modern canon (근대정전 近代正典). If, as Chin highlights, Sino-Korean works came to find their place in new print media in the enlightenment space, why can they not find their place in the modern canon? Why do they lack representation in school textbooks and university syllabi?

While those above have effectively given birth to a new area of Korean literary studies through the breaking down of the dichotomous barrier that separates ‘premodern’ and ‘modern’ literary production, what one can ascertain from this existing scholarship is that there is a clear trend among their work that tends to emphasise the late nineteenth century as their main focus – the established *munin* class of writers such as those often called “the Last Chapter of Sino-Korean Literature” (漢文學의 終章), namely a group dubbed the *Four Masters* (사대가 四大家): Kang Wi (강위 姜瑋 1820-1884), Hwang Hyön (황현 黃玹 1855-1910), Kim T’aeg-yöng (김택영 金澤榮 1850-1927) and Yi Kõn-ch’ang (이건창 李建昌 1852- 1898)

⁶⁴ ‘Sino and vernacular literature are integrated, and each style of literature is treated the same without any difference. [...] In this, the works published in newspapers and magazines of the enlightenment era come to be treated as ‘one knowledge’ in the space of modern print and these works come to exist and be transmitted within the territory of modern knowledge. Thus, the literary works of enlightenment era print media can also be called ‘literature of knowledge.’ Cf. *Ibid.*, 81.

taking centre stage rather than giving significant space to explorations of print media publications and their poetry.⁶⁵ Although Pak Ŭl-su, Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl and the most significant contributor Yi Hŭi-mok do devote significant space in their explorations to print media Sino-Korean poetry from the 1900s, there is still a clear trend whereby large book publications and more in-depth studies on hanmun literature at the turn of the century such as *Hanmunhakkwa Kŭndaejŏnhwan'gi* and *Modŏn Hanmunhak* by Kim Chin-gyun and *Hanmunhakkwa Kŭndaemunhak* by Chu Sŭng-t'aek focus far more on the more established *munin* class for their scholarly focus during the enlightenment era.

Despite the vast wealth of textual sources, what is the reason as to why existing scholarship may prioritize more prominent classes of writers from the latter years of the nineteenth century? We can argue that this is potentially due to the fact that the established writer class of the later years of the Chosŏn dynasty have biographies and a wealth of information on their lives and their literary production; poetry of print media from the 1900s onwards tends to disrupt the author-lead approach to exploring literature. Because most were submitted under pseudonyms – names such as Ch'un Mong-in (春夢人) “Spring Dreamer,” Maeyusaeng (梅癩生) “Ailing Plum Student,” Sansŏ Kwagaek (汕西過客) “Westbound Wayfarer” – a reliance on who they were in order understand what and why they wrote is redundant, meaning that full exploration of the poetry itself through close reading without exploring the poet is all that can occur.

This thesis will lean toward the last years of what historians typically discuss as the enlightenment era, focusing primarily from 1900 through to 1910 in order to help flesh out in-depth explorations of Sino-Korean poetic works from this period. The emphasis of this research

⁶⁵ Min Pyŏng-su is well known for his work that makes reference to the Four Masters as ‘the last chapter’ of Sino-Korean literature. For reference Cf. “Hanmunhakŭi Chongjang” in *Han'guk Hansisa* (Seoul: Taehaksa, 1996): 463-502 and “Aeguk Kyemonggi Hanmal Sadaegaŭi Hansi,” *Han'guk Hansi Yŏn'gu* vol. 13 no. 5(2005): 5-12.

is entirely on what Kim Yŏng-ch'ŏl refers to as the *general reader class*. Sitting between scholarship on classical literature of the Chosŏn dynasty and work on literature of early twentieth century Korea, the enlightenment era has always been an area of literary studies that breaks conventional discussions of both 'modern' and 'premodern' literature. What we see in the aforementioned contributions to scholarship is an important step towards fixing the gaps in knowledge on the depth of literary developments of the enlightenment era while simultaneously highlighting its importance as an era that unites two broad periods of Korean history.

Theoretical Framework

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) stands out due to his work having been so widely discussed and incorporated into vastly different areas of scholarship. One of the most discussed aspects of Bourdieu is how his writings challenge and expose both the hidden and visible power dynamics of our social world. More specifically, his work often explores how societal power dynamics may maintain a certain status-quo, one that often has profound consequences. In essence, Bourdieu's work on society seeks to understand "the question of why forms of social inequality *persist* without powerful resistance" and "the answer, Bourdieu argues, lie in how cultural resources, practices, and institutions function to maintain unequal social relations."⁶⁶

As Speller mentions, although Bourdieu has written a significant amount on literature and art, his exploration of literature has often been seen as a more marginal element of his larger body of work.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, this thesis locates Bourdieu's ideas as a critical apparatus with which one can explore the intersections of literary Sinitic language, vernacular Korean,

⁶⁶ David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997): 285. Italics my own.

⁶⁷ John R. W. Speller, *Bourdieu and Literature* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2011): 17.

‘classical’ and ‘modern’ literature and the Korean academic sphere which writes, researches, publishes and indeed controls the narrative on these broad areas. Through a Bourdieusian theoretical lens, this research seeks to understand the ramifications of power shifts among the leading intellectual and learned class of Chosŏn as the nation of Korea moved from a dynastic monarchy closed off from the world to a nation seeking to embrace intellectual and industrial change and the effect that said shifts would have on attitudes to the varying shades that make up the spectrum of Korean literary language and the narrative of Korean literature throughout to the present.

Bourdieu is most well-known for his theories on culture, power and reproduction which shape his most well-known concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *capital*. However, as Swartz states, while said concepts and theories may be well known and have become part of the common parlance of sociologists and anthropologists today, they still remain “far from well understood” and “even among those knowledgeable about Bourdieu’s work, considerable disagreement exists on just what Bourdieu’s concept represents.”⁶⁸ As a result, the theoretical discussions of this thesis draw on a vast body of writing, both work by Bourdieu himself, as well as that of academics trying to understand his approaches. In this, I put forth my understanding of his theories and the ways in which they may be relevant to Korea as it transitioned from the late Chosŏn dynasty through the Korean enlightenment era.

While Bourdieu’s key concepts are applied as a means of ‘setting the scene’ of the power politics of the enlightenment age and intellectual culture of the times, this foundation will be built upon further, specifically exploring the way a society’s power dynamics may *change* and the ramifications of said changes on the cultural and intellectual landscape. This thesis follows the idea that the established and ‘valued’ cultural capital, or what Guillory refers

⁶⁸ Swartz, *Culture & Power*, 96.

to as the “most expensive form of cultural capital”⁶⁹ can be altered significantly when a society is faced by substantial social, cultural and political upheavals – such as a revolution, war, economic strife, changes in monarchy or the collapse of a dominant ideology. In such circumstances, power dynamics experience a palpable shift, providing the impetus for a change in the tastes, interests and values of those atop the cultural pyramid. These shifts may ultimately have significant consequences for a nation, a people and a culture into the future, including the way a national literature is canonised.

The following chapters offer a nuanced application of Bourdieu to the context of a pre and post-twentieth century Korea, providing a theoretical basis explaining changing attitudes towards literature and language and issues surrounding the historiography of a national literature. In this, one will be able to trace a clear cultural nationalist line that has and continues to shape scholarly discourse on Korean literary history. This can then provide understanding as to how canon reformation may take place for a future of inclusivity that is more befitting of a more comprehensive look at literary history.

⁶⁹ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 76.

2. Through a Bourdieusian Lens: Literature, Language and New-Intellectualism During the Enlightenment Era

1. Introduction:

In order to understand the shifts in sentiment towards literary Sinitic as the nation transitioned from the final years of dynastic governance and beyond, this thesis first seeks to explore this era of transition and the literary developments that occurred therein from a Bourdieusian approach to the literary field. In the following, this work puts forth that changes in power dynamics and its effects on literary production and the historiography of literature as an academic discipline during and after the Japanese colonial era can be understood by applying Bourdieu to Korean literary history.

This chapter draws attention to an anomaly that existed during the enlightenment era and continued on into the era of Japanese colonial rule that lacks presence in the established narratives of Korean literature history and literary genres. That is to say, the production of literary works written in literary Sinitic did not disappear as prescribed, nor did its popularity necessarily wane. In fact, upon close examination of newspapers, student magazines and journals from roughly around 1900 to the mid-1940s, we meet with an unexpected phenomenon whereby Sino-Korean poetry was consistently published for readers well into the twentieth century.⁷⁰ On one hand, in this chapter, I seek to understand this phenomenon of twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's theories. On the other, I more

⁷⁰ One could also feasibly put forth the stronger argument that the genre was well received in print. In particular Sino-Korean poetic works of the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* newspaper often being printed together with anonymous comments about the work – the majority of which demonstrate interest and intrigue as well as other commenters who agree with the emotions expressed. This phenomenon represents a sense of engagement between reader and genre, public and publisher that is of note.

specifically seek to explore the reason why this continued interest in Sino-Korean poetic writing as a genre into the twentieth century continues to lack representation in literary history.

Thus, in applying elements of Bourdieu's sociological theories to the literary field of Korea, in the first section of this chapter I explore the changes in the power dynamics between two classes of very different types of intellectual elites at the time – the old elite Chosŏn yangban that continued to adhere to a Sinitic worldview as well as the new-intellectuals who had begun to engage with new learning through greater exchange with the West and studying abroad, primarily in Japan. The rise in the new-intellectual class saw a change in Korea's intellectual *habitus*, leading to the denigration of literary Sinitic, a symbol of the classist old elite, a language of the 'Middle Kingdom' too complicated for the ordinary people to learn.

Finally, I will explore the consequences of the vilification of literary Sinitic that I argue has continued to linger (to some extent) until the present. In this second section, I argue that the nature of Korea's twentieth-century trajectory has shaped a unique, cultural nationalist history, whereby a reappraisal of the literature in Sinographs has recovered to an extent but not completely. What I seek to argue is that throughout the twentieth century, with all the challenges that Korea has faced, maintaining a uniquely *Korean* identity was paramount. The historiography of literature of this era, as a consequence, has and continues to prioritise the native Korean elements of literature rather than the Sinitic elements.

In this, I argue that, in creating a narrative of *kungmunhak* (국문학 國文學) or "national literature" (i.e. Korean literature *for* the nation), literary Sinitic and its legacy would develop characteristics of what I refer to as *negative* cultural capital. I ultimately argue that these changes have greatly shaped why *kūndae hanmunhak* (근대 한문학 近代漢文學) or "modern hanmun studies" and by extension, *kūndae hansī* (근대 한시 近代漢詩) or "modern

Sino-Korean poetry” continue to lack definition, understanding and also general exploration in modern literary history and a place in the canon even today.

2. Habitus, Capital and Field – Bourdieu’s Key Concepts:

Pierre Bourdieu provides a theoretical explanation for the way often unobservable societal powers structures and unspoken cultural rules have great sway over the lives of human beings. As the agent navigates through various fields that overlap to form society, one may be led to believe choices and tastes are purely informed by free will and independent agency. Yet Bourdieu raises the question, to what extent said power dynamics may in fact actually inform our choices and tastes?⁷¹ His concept of *habitus* provides an explanation of how an individual has been conditioned towards taking certain actions or certain behaviours, as well as making specific choices or decisions – specifically through our established place in the world of social relations. Bourdieu himself gives broad examples of the “social distinctions and practices” of the habitus, ranging from “the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body.”⁷²

Habitus thus provides a way for the choices we make that shape our social world to be better explained; the concept allows for us to understand the way in which human beings, as agents navigating through a social world of probabilities, are shaped (for better or worse) by underlying structures that influence individual comportment and social choices.⁷³ According to Bourdieu, as individuals we are “open to the world, and therefore exposed to the world, and

⁷¹ Bourdieu writes, “all of my thinking started from this point: how can behavior be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?” Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words. Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990): 65.

⁷² Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement and Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984): 466.

⁷³ He calls these the “subjective expectations of objective probabilities.” Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990): 59.

so capable of being conditioned by the world, shaped by the material and cultural conditions of existence in which it is placed from the beginning.”⁷⁴ The habitus of the individual is thus fashioned by our environs, a concept “that expressed, on the one hand, the way in which individuals ‘become themselves’ – develop attitudes and dispositions – and, on the other hand, the ways in which those individuals engage in practices.”⁷⁵

Another aspect that manifests itself in the habitus of an individual is *capital*, namely, social, cultural and symbolic capital – another of Bourdieu’s most defining sociological theories. First developed through his research into inequalities in scholastic abilities of French children of differing educational backgrounds,⁷⁶ Bourdieu’s theory of capital “covers a wide variety of resources, including such things as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system and educational credentials.”⁷⁷ Through these aforementioned shared elements among a particular group, capital, in essence, shapes society through a conditioning process that produces a distinct *collective* cultural identity.

Capital and the process an individual agent (or indeed group) may accumulate it is intrinsically linked to both tangible and intangible social and cultural connections. Through greater engagement with the ‘right’ groups or influential and powerful individuals, the agent finds their own feet in the social world and has the potential for more personal growth themselves. Through said networks and associations, a sense of mutual reciprocity takes places and one is theoretically able to develop capital gains (both social and cultural), which can also

⁷⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000): 134.

⁷⁵ “An artistic habitus, for example, disposes the individual artist to certain activities and perspectives that express the culturally and historically constituted values of the artistic field.” Cf. Jen Webb, Geoff Danaher and Tony Schirato, *Understanding Bourdieu* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002): xii-xiii.

⁷⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 243 and Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): 160.

⁷⁷ Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, 75.

develop into tangible economic capital. This leads to a process whereby agents come to develop greater cultural, social and political sway; in this, the most eminent social groups are able to stratify cultural and social pursuits in *their* image – positioning their own tastes, educational credentials and ideas at the top of the societal power pyramid, while also simultaneously delegitimizing others.

To Bourdieu, individuals are shaped by social relations and our connections to those around us are paramount. Human beings become defined by those we surround ourselves with, and individuals find themselves maneuvering through various circles in society that Bourdieu defines as *fields*. Bourdieu defines the field (or *champ* in French) as “a field of forces within which agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these positions-takings being aimed either at conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field.”⁷⁸ In Bourdieusian terms, fields are omnipresent and intrinsically shape us both on a subconscious and non-subconscious level.

Although Bourdieu himself may have seen habitus and cultural capital as somewhat separate,⁷⁹ Lash sees one’s habitus as being *made up* of cultural capital.⁸⁰ The habitus of an individual (comprised of their cultural and social capital) allows them to find their correct role or place within the field. In this social framework, an agent entering the field attunes themselves to the ‘rules’ of the field they inhabit, ‘playing the game’ of the field, and through their role ultimately work to *exchange* their valued social and cultural capital for further symbolic and economic capital.

⁷⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field” in *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, ed. Rodney Benson and Érik Neveu (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2005): 30.

⁷⁹ As illustrated by his formula put forth in *Distinction: (Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice*. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgement and Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984): 101.

⁸⁰ Scott Lash, “Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Economy and Social Change” in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993): 197. Italics my own.

Said ‘rules’ are referred to as *doxa* by Bourdieu. An agent attunes oneself to established or *doxic* tastes, beliefs and practices. In this, they are able to keep their place within the field. Through growing influence, attained by growing symbolic capital within, the agent maintains status and authority while also attracting others of similar culture and outlook, economic status and/or educational levels. This ultimately perpetuates a cycle that strengthens the power structures and dynamics of society as a whole. In essence, fields become governed and shaped by power and its acquisition.

Pierre Bourdieu’s habitus, field and capital ultimately provide us with the means to understand the hidden nuances that shape the social world and our relationships within. His ideas have long been debated and scrutinized. Nevertheless, Webb concludes that his concepts “constitute what is arguably the most significant and successful attempt to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practices (what people do, and why they do it).”⁸¹

3. Bourdieu and Korea – Exploring Clashing Intellectual Dispositions During the Enlightenment Era:

In applying Bourdieu’s ideas of habitus, capital and field to a late nineteenth and early twentieth century Korean context, it is possible to understand culture and power structures that were significant in maintaining dynastic Chosŏn society’s long-established inequalities.⁸² This is

⁸¹ Webb, *Understanding Bourdieu*, 1.

⁸² This is by no means the first attempt to explore Korean culture, society and history through a Bourdieusian lens. His applications are common in Korean academia. Said applications most typically focus on contemporary topics and do not typically focus on the literary field. For some salient recent scholarship on Bourdieu and Korea, Cf. Chŏng Okhŭi, “Purŭdioeŭi Munhwajaesaengsanironŭl T’onghae Pon Han’guk Hakkyo Misulgyoyugŭi Chedojŏk Kwanhaeng,” *Misul Kyoyuk Nonch’ong* vol. 23 no. 2 (2009): 77-100, Kim Sujŏng, Ch’oe Saetpyŏl, “Purŭdioeŭi Chijŏk Chŏnt’ongi Han’guk Munhwajŏngch’aegae Kannŭn Hamŭi,” *Munhwa Chŏngch’aek Nonch’ong*, vol. 32 no. 2 (2018): 33-55, Kim Hyŏnsaeng, “Han’guk-Miguk-Pet’ŭnamŭi Pet’ŭnam Chŏnjaeng Sosŏl

especially relevant to the literary and intellectual field, as until the latter years of the Chosŏn dynasty, the ability to read and write in literary Sinitic was one of, if not the *paramount* differentiator of status, class and education. Skills in comprehension and composition of the Chinese Classics formed the basis of the civil service examinations. Although technically open to many, the opportunity to learn to read and write was only available to those pertaining to the highest echelons of Chosŏn society who had the time and economic capital to pursue learning. The ability to compose and admire poetry was a fundamental element of the exam and one of the greatest skills of the time. It was a skill out of reach for the overwhelming majority of the population as it required time, experience and perseverance that the lower, working classes could never realistically attain.

Literary Sinitic as a gentrified communicative and cultural pursuit, as well as the civil service exam that held it in such high esteem, can be seen as an example of institutionalised cultural capital throughout the Sinographic cosmopolis. In Bourdieusian terms, the upper echelons of Chosŏn society, the yangban class and their spheres of influence, also represent and shape distinct example of *fields* that separated the literate, cultured and wealthy from the illiterate, unrefined and poor. Be it the court, the *Sŏwon* Confucian schools, or various establishments they would frequent, these cultured and intellectual spaces of the Chosŏn elite overlap, forming a series of strongly codified spaces whereby the elite navigate and locate themselves within a hierarchy of power and ultimately maintain their grip over a Confucian and Sinitic status-quo. Access to learning, and as a result, the opportunity to be educated in literary Sinitic was a defining characteristic of the habitus of dynastic elites – positive cultural capital of learned men throughout the Sinographic cosmopolis, whereby passing the civil

Yŏn'gu: Purŭdioeŭi 'Chang'gwa 'Abit'usŭ' Ironŭl Chŏkyonghayŏ," *Yŏngmi Munhak* vol. 0 no. 121 (2016): 33-57, Kim Chŏngnam, "Purŭdioeŭi Sangjing P'ongnyŏkkwa 1950nyŏndae Sanggyŏnginŭi Sooeŭisik: Chŏnhu Sŏurŭi P'yojingŭrosŏŭi Ch'oe Illamŭi 'Sŏurŭi Ch'osang' Ikki," *Pigyo Munhak*, vol. 29 no. 1 (2021): 183-210 and Pak In Yŏng, Yu Sungho, Chang Ansik, "Han'guginŭi Yŏga Hwaltonggwa Munhwajabon - Chamjae Chiptan Punsŏkŭl Chungsimŭro," *Munhwa Kyŏngchae Yŏn'gu*, vol. 25 no. 1 (2022): 105-131.

service exam represented significant positive capital to further aid their maneuvering in the field.⁸³

In Bourdieu's discussions on what he dubs symbolic violence, he stresses that within a society "the dominated accept as legitimate their own conditions of domination"⁸⁴ and this symbolic violence is perpetuated due to power structures that *favour* the dominant group and their field's power structures that maintain governance over the definitions of valued capital and the ideal habitus. It is through this unbreakable cycle of dominance over the dominated that power structures of fields and societies were to be kept in place and *internalised* by the populace of Chosŏn for so long. As Yang Yang and Xuanyang Gao stress, the agent is:

"led towards a predefined future and his or her so-called position-seeking journey becomes a section of the collective trajectory constituted by all of those who share similar conditions of existence. In this way, existing social structures are perpetuated and reproduced through such an inherent match between habitus and field, and through the collectivity of individual movements."⁸⁵

Mentioned previously, Bourdieu's work typically focuses on "why forms of social inequality *persist* without powerful resistance" and "how cultural resources, practices, and institutions function to *maintain* unequal social relations"⁸⁶ and it is this application of his work that is most common – providing answers to questions surrounding the *inescapability* of hidden dynamics that shape the social world and human beings as social agents. Highlighted above, in applying Bourdieu's ideas to the Chosŏn intellectual landscape, the inescapable inequalities of a past dynastic system that strictly held classes in their place can be explained well through

⁸³ Depending on the level of exam taken, the individual that passed could be allocated certain professional positions based on their passing level, the highest of which were highly coveted.

⁸⁴ Bourdieu, Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 169.

⁸⁵ Yang Yang, Xuanyang Gao, "Social Transformation and Cultural Reproduction: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Post-Reform China," in *The Anthem Companion to Pierre Bourdieu*, ed. Derek Robbins (London: Anthem Press, 2016): 229.

⁸⁶ Italics my own, Cf. Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 285.

Bourdieu. Yet as the twentieth century beckoned and greater contact with outside powers brought about new thinking, tastes, attitudes and morals, we know that attitudes towards long standing power structures of Chosŏn did start to *change*. In essence, the structural integrity of Chosŏn's class system and its cultural hegemony, its inequalities and the way this system dictated or prescribed value to various forms of capital, would come to be shaken in a way that Bourdieu's apparatus (at first glance) does not seem to account for.

To further elucidate, by the late nineteenth century, the halcyon days of Chosŏn were gone. Once the centre of the world, China's defeat in the Opium Wars had bought an end to an era of Sinitic cultural supremacy. The opening of the ports meant direct contact with foreign nations, which led to an increase in exchange and exposure to the outside world and the balance of power in Chosŏn shifted from the toadyism of *hwairon* and "defend the orthodoxy and expel the heterodoxy" supporting past Sinitic elites, with the rise of "Eastern way, Western technology" supporters and then the new-intellectuals and reformists belonging to the enlightenment era movement.

The civil service examinations, a defining target in the lives of any man of status in Korea for centuries, came to an end with the Kabo Reforms of 1894. With such seismic changes to intellectual culture, attitudes towards the nation's future socio-political developments had also begun to change in a way unprecedented throughout dynastic times. The culmination of such changes led to an interesting turn of events in Korea's history. Namely, literary Sinitic (a form of writing that, if one could read and write it, represented possession of highly valued cultural capital vital for progression in the field of high society for centuries) had begun to *lose* its prestige.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ As written by Yun Ch'i-ho, 'the gross materialism of Confucius has reduced the full range of human duty to the four walls of one's house. Beyond these walls, one's duty ceases; witness with what indifference the Korean officials barter away the dearest interests of their country just to enrich their dirty selves.' And later on, 'the Koreans' brain seems to have been pressed into little blocks of wood with a few crude ideas immovably buried in

It came to be challenged and questioned by a rising new group of intellectuals that looked away from China and towards the West (and also Japan due to their earlier acceptance and successful application of new ideas from the West). With this, instead the once overlooked vernacular language, favoured by the patriotic new-intellectuals due to its symbolic nature as a uniquely Korean writing system, came to hold the cards of power as Korea faced a new world order at the turn of the century.

As mentioned, Bourdieu's ideas typically illuminate the currents of power that shape a culture and a people's attitudes, tastes and interests. What is considered valued culture and what is considered base is predictably dictated by those at the top of the societal pyramid, with those below facing difficulty in trying to improve their social mobility. At a glance, Bourdieu's exploration of society's power dynamics is seemingly built on the unshakable foundation that these hidden power structures are rigid and inescapable.⁸⁸ Yet, as has been explored above, those who claim the top of the social and cultural pyramid can change and with that change (as demonstrated in the Korean case) cultural shifts can be marked and profound.

Can it be said, then, that Bourdieu truly saw such structures as inescapable and perpetual? Due to a perceived lack of account for change, scholars have criticized Bourdieu;⁸⁹ his key concepts supposedly do not account enough for the potential of change in cultures, societies and individual agents. In Swartz's work, he summarizes this critique, pointing to an innate "inescapable structural determinism"⁹⁰ that characterizes Bourdieu's theories whereby

them like fowls embedded in prettified substances.' Cf. *Yun Ch'ih'o Ilgi*, vol. 5, 310 and 382-3, quoted in Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 50-1.

⁸⁸ In the introduction to *Pascalian Meditations* (Méditations Pascaliennes) Bourdieu famously professed his feelings on his project as "a kind of negative philosophy that was liable to appear self-destructive" to others. Cf. *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000): 7.

⁸⁹ "Bourdieu's work has been misjudged as a determinist theory of pitiless social reproduction alone. This accusation – [is] especially common in [the] Anglophone sphere..." Cf. Bridget Fowler, "Pierre Bourdieu on Social Transformation, with Particular Reference to Political and Symbolic Revolutions," *Theory and Society* vol. 49 (2020): 459.

⁹⁰ "Critics charge that despite Bourdieu's claim to insert agency into his structural analysis, habitus harbors an inescapable structural determinism [...] habitus is unable to account for innovation and change, for it reduces action to the interests of the types of capital it internalizes in dispositions and generates only practices

the individual moving through society lacks agency and is trapped by their class, status and education.⁹¹ As is also outlined by Bridget Fowler, “he is criticized widely for insufficient rigor in showing precisely how the habitus offers a non-reductive account of actors’ dispositions, given that differing trajectories and improvised practices are sieved first through the ‘historical unconscious’ of family and class experiences.”⁹²

Indeed, societies do not always maintain an adherence to a particular ideal; the power dynamics of the dominator and the dominated are not always so steadily maintained. The Korean case above is testament to this – power structures, maintained across hundreds of years of dynastic history, faced a dramatic upheaval through a cultural collision with the world beyond the Sinitic sphere. The so-called ‘pessimistic determinism’ of old Chosŏn tastes and values of their dominant group, “lack[ing] the liberal spirit that believes in the potential of human practice” was to be challenged and ultimately *overturned* through the influx of enlightenment thought as a result of greater contact with the outside world.⁹³

So how may one make sense of the seismic changes to Korean intellectual culture and national identity at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty? Do these changes delegitimise Bourdieu’s

corresponding to those interests.” Swartz, *Culture & power*, 211. Swartz further highlights that “concepts of habitus, cultural capital and field stress the tendency to perpetuate structures inherited from the past [...] his framework does not encourage researchers to seek out forms of change.” Ibid., 289-90.

⁹¹ As highlighted by Yang and Gao: “here it is almost, a truism that Bourdieu’s sociology falls into pessimistic determinism and lacks the liberal spirit that believes in the potential of human practice. It is equally important to note that Bourdieu’s theorization of society and reproduction developed over time. In many of his later writings [...] Bourdieu devotes increasing amounts of time to steering away from determinism. Even without those attempts, it would be a considerable injustice to Bourdieu to regard him as a ‘hyperdeterminist’ sociologist [...] However, it is also correct that those discussions were buried underneath his overpowering arguments concerning the structuralist proclivity of capital, habitus and field freedom in Bourdieu’s theory is always ‘marginal’, as he writes in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000: 234-6).” Cf. Yang Yang and Xuanyang Gao, “Social Transformation and Cultural Reproduction: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Post-Reform China,” 230. Also Cf. Yang, “Bourdieu, Practice and Change: Beyond the Criticism of Determinism,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* vol. 46 no. 14 (2014): 1522-40.

⁹² Fowler, “Pierre Bourdieu on Social Transformation,” 441, quoting Bourdieu, *The logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990): 56, 60. Fowler goes further in her summary, highlighting that the likes of Alex Callinicos and Craig Calhoun “argue that Bourdieu’s sociology has a ‘relatively weak conception of systemic contradiction’ (Callinicos 2006, 82; Callinicos 1995, 141) whilst for Scott and Wacquant (1987) it is lacking in any resources to conceptualize peasant or working-class resistance in the face of oppression (Scott 1987, 323-5).” Cf. Ibid, 441.

⁹³ Yang and Gao, 230.

sociological apparatus? Despite criticisms, Bourdieu himself admits that “cultural capital is not as stable or as universal a currency as is economic capital. Cultural capital is more unstable in that its accumulation can be undermined by criticism and suspicion”⁹⁴ and over the years, academics have equally sought to explore how Bourdieu does indeed address the matter of change.

As Thomson attests, at various intervals, Bourdieu *has* touched upon how agents may experience change – one, for example, when they find themselves in fields where “there is a disjunction between their habitus and the current conditions” therein,⁹⁵ leading to what Bourdieu dubs *hysteresis*.⁹⁶ Again overlooked, is how Bourdieu makes mention of the way:

“Dominant fields can determine change and how external material shifts such as the development of new technologies or new kinds of demographics can force changes in fields. But, above all else, Bourdieu theorized fields as antagonistic, as sites of struggle. While the game that is played in fields has no ultimate winner, it is an unending game, and this always has the potential for change at any time.”⁹⁷

The topic of Bourdieu and change has been explored in detail in recent scholarship by Bridget Fowler. Her 2020 work on Bourdieu and so-called political and symbolic ‘revolutions’ succinctly lays out a variety of moments in his work where he makes mention of change and

⁹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “The forms of capital,” *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 254 and Pierre Bourdieu, *Choses Dites* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1987): 80.

⁹⁵ Patricia Thomson, “Field” in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Grenfell, ed. Michael James (Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2014): 77-78.

⁹⁶ Bourdieu appropriated the term *hysteresis* from the Greek ὑστέρησις meaning ‘deficiency’ or ‘lagging behind’ to explore the potential for discordance and lag that can occur between an ‘old’ habitus and ‘new’ fields and vice-versa as a result of sudden and dramatic societal change: “as a result of the hysteresis effect necessarily implicated in the logic of the constitution of habitus, practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that in which they are objectively fitted.” Cf. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 78. Bourdieu uses hysteresis as a means of exploring a number of phenomena in the social world in a variety of contexts. For in-depth explorations of these examples and others, Cf. subchapter “Bourdieu’s Use of Hysteresis” in Hardy, “Hysteresis,” 129-137. In these examples, we come to see how changes in fields, or mismatches in habitus, gives way to incongruity of one’s current habitus and or field. As Bourdieu mentions, this occurs “in particular, when a field *undergoes a major crisis and its regularities (even its rules) are profoundly changed.*” Cf. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 160. In this state of change, the agent is now lost, lagging behind as they now no longer know the doxa of the field. In other words, they know longer know the ‘rules of the game’ and have to either remove themselves from the field or learn and adapt.

⁹⁷ Thomson, “Field,” 77-78.

its implications. As Fowler points out, although further elucidation may have given way to clearer conclusions, Bourdieu does provide us accompanying theories that explain change.⁹⁸ When cultural, social or political ‘crisis’ occurs, subordinated agents come “to question the taken-for-granted order of things and orchestrate their resistance.”⁹⁹ In particular, the development of a broader *national identity* is of paramount importance to this orchestration. In this environment, societies may see the emergence of national figures, leaders or religious prophets, who give rise to a new ‘national habitus’ through acts of resistance against a long-maintained status-quo. These figures typically have a connection to this past order, but through external stimuli that has given way to changes in their own tastes, ideas and outlooks, they provide “an imaginative new vision and division of the world.”¹⁰⁰

“Bourdieu adds that wherever there is a struggle over the symbolic, *secular* intellectuals are crucial for producing weapons that are ‘[...] coherent and distinctive’ (1987b, 134) deriving from their professional associations that champion universalist human rights (1989). But – once again – such intellectuals also possess their own symbolic and material interests.”¹⁰¹

While Bourdieu points out French modernist painter Édouard Manet and naturalist writer Émile Zola as examples of figures to incite new vision in France and bring about changes in habitus, capital and field dynamics, in the Korean context, we can point to a more *collective* group of individuals that also produced similar changes.¹⁰² Namely, the seemingly swift rise of a new

⁹⁸ “His theory needs further elucidation of the *precise situations* in which crises emerge and successful symbolic or social revolutions are provoked.” Cf. Fowler, “Pierre Bourdieu on Social Transformation,” 444.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 439.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 459.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 454, making reference to Bourdieu, “Legitimation and Structured Interests in Max Weber’s Sociology of Interests,” *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*, ed. S. Lash, S. Whimster (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987): 119-136 and “The Corporation of the Universal,” *Telos* 81 (1989): 99-110.

¹⁰² To Bourdieu, Manet possessed of what he called a “*habitus clivé*” or split habitus that allowed him to maneuver through both ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural realms, while also providing him with the spirit to rebel and disrupt the system. “What is it about those people who whilst totally ‘in’ are also totally ‘out’? It’s this, a symbolic revolutionary: it’s someone who, completely possessed by a system, comes to take possession of it by returning the mastery he possesses against the system.” Cf. Bourdieu, *Manet: Une Révolution Symbolic* (Paris: Seuil, 2013): 377-378, quoted and summarized in Fowler, “Pierre Bourdieu on Social Transformation,” 452. Meanwhile Gartman’s work highlights how in the nineteenth century a new upward mobility birthed opportunity for writers

‘prophetic’ cultural elite – the new enlightenment era intellectuals, whose rise in cultural and intellectual dominance led to a complete rejection of the past modes of literary language and artistic expression.

Their change of the ‘game’ highlights the instability of Chosŏn habitus and valued cultural capital of a dynastic era and this new attitude received significant support. “Bourdieu argued that there was the possibility of ‘free play’ in fields and, that events in adjacent fields and external to fields (demographic change, new technologies, *global crises*, natural disasters and so on) could also produce change within them.”¹⁰³ One can argue that in this new era of intellectualism, the arrival of the outside world constitutes what is referred to here as ‘global crisis.’ In this, such seismic changes in the Sinitic cultural sphere and its new relationship with its collision with the Western (or more broadly outside) world gave way to discussions of Korea’s unique sovereignty, identity and nationalism in front of the backdrop of imperial expansion around the world.

Highlighted above, inescapable structural determinism, a long-held critique of Bourdieu’s ideas, is actively negated by evidence of the possibility of ‘free play’ in fields. In essence, Thomson’s comments on adjacent fields and external fields initiating change in a dominolike fashion is ascertainable in the Korean context. The new group arose, and through their know-how, the adoption of print and their engagement on the international stage, were able to influence the fields of power to such an extent that they could soon find themselves at the top of the pyramid.

of the working classes, of which Zola was one. They “distinguished themselves from the established bourgeois literature in the field by pioneering realism or social art, whose aesthetic was determined by their lower-class disposition for the functional and the politically engaged (Bourdieu 1996). The aesthetic upstarts in the cultural field very often draw support for their internal struggles against established classes.” Cf. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996): 71-6, 85-6, summarized and expanded upon in David Gartman, “Bourdieu’s Theory of Cultural Change: Explication, Application, Critique,” *Sociological Theory*, 20 vol. 2 (2002): 260.

¹⁰³ Thomson, “Field,” 71-72. Italics my own.

As literacy rates grew and print media spread among the general population into the early years of the twentieth century, the educational horizons of the people of Chosŏn also grew. This was further aided considerably by Western missionaries, key in establishing schools across the country, including those for women.¹⁰⁴ Beyond, through new opportunities to study abroad, new-intellectualism of the enlightenment age was being strengthened exponentially, with the majority of young intellectuals abroad developing early nationalist ideals towards the construction of a new Korean state comparable to what they were experiencing as students abroad and reading about in foreign languages. It was in this changing intellectual landscape, that this group harshly rejected tastes and dispositions of dynastic Chosŏn and its adherence to an unequal education that fostered a love of a ‘Chinese’ language while for hundreds of years disparaged their own alphabet. This rejection of the past status-quo, the habitus of a highly stratified Chosŏn, and the strengthening of a new national Korean identity unique from its neighbours meant that a new history of literature could be written.

This cultural and intellectual crisis gave way to hysteresis or a ‘mismatched habitus’ for many of Chosŏn’s conservative intellectual circles. Chosŏn’s decline is characterised by a bloated and aging elite who for so long had been looking to China. Their habitus of Sinitic culture and tastes, and their fields of Confucian academies, the court, poetry reading gatherings, soon became at odds or *mismatched* when confronted with the presence of the West in Korea. In a new world order where China had declined and the West and Japan had risen on Korea’s cultural, social and political horizon, these elites tried in vain to maintain control over high culture and dictate the rules of valued social and cultural capital of Chosŏn. However, a new group who had more sway and a greater connection to the masses through their adoption of

¹⁰⁴ For more on this area, Cf. Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea – New Women, Old Ways* (California: University of California Press, 2009) and Sebastian C. H. Kim, Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

new ideas changed this situation, primarily through their adapted habitus and understanding of the rules of twentieth-century cultural fields.

4. Conclusion:

Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus, more often than not, seems to present a deterministic outlook on power structures, of which greatly shape social, cultural and economic inequality; individuals seemingly accept their fate in an inescapable system. This apparatus can be used to explore the intellectual, cultural and literary field of the Chosŏn dynasty. A system that perpetually held up literary Sinitic as the 'be all and end all' of social and cultural prestige, the civil service examination system and Confucian academies maintained the lower classes constantly at a distance, unable to ever learn the lingua franca of Asia and attain upward mobility through education. The inescapability of this power dynamic has long been explored by scholars interested in Bourdieu and it has often been seen as characteristic of his work. Highlighted above, however, more and more scholars have sought to highlight how Bourdieu may also explain social change, pointing to vulnerabilities in this system – both in Bourdieu's own writings as well as in their own expansions on his theories.

Through an application of this element of his work to a Korean context, one can ascertain that the attitudes towards the use of literary Sinitic and Sino-Korean literature in general went through a transformation following changes in the doxa of the field of the dominant intellectual class. Old literati culture met with new dominant enlightenment intellectualism causing a power struggle, or crisis, and this struggle or 'free play' was ultimately won by the new-intellectuals as Chosŏn's past elites experienced hysteresis, finding their habitus 'mismatched' with twentieth-century cultural tastes, attitudes and morals. Thus, the chalice of power had shifted hands from the old order of isolationist supporting elite to a

new powerful class of more engaging, enlightenment supporting intellectuals who used the media to their advantage. In this, the old Chosŏn elites – their tastes, attitudes and values of positive and negative capital, became disjoined from the socio-cultural reality of a new era of progress, as the fields of twentieth-century culture would be governed by new rules and shaped by intellectual interests attuned to the West.

In the following chapter, the specific ways that this intellectual shift was achieved by the new-intellectual class will be explored further. Namely, looking at how growing literacy, the birth of new print media and its circulation, as well as a budding nationalist consciousness would all converge in the intellectual sphere of twentieth-century Korea, strengthening the message of civilisation and enlightenment as people looked to a new future.

3. Consolidating Hanmun as ‘Negative’ Capital:
Exploring the Fall of Literary Sinitic through Print Media

1. Introduction:

In the previous section, this research explored the theoretical apparatus of Pierre Bourdieu. His concepts of habitus, field and capital were explained and then applied to a Korean context. Long-established Chosŏn dispositions were thrown into confusion through a ‘crisis’ that was brought about by the political, cultural and intellectual exchanges with a world beyond the perimeters of the Sinitic cultural sphere. Existing values, tastes and attitudes clashed and lost their battle in the face of the new rules of the twentieth century as the development of new printing, vernacular literary language and cultural exchange came to dramatically change the shape of Korea’s newly emerging dominant intellectual field.¹⁰⁵

In the following, exactly *how* the new-intellectual class came to be so successful in subverting the status-quo and bringing long-established, highly deterministic power structures to an end is explored. This chapter looks at how it was the new print media, and the new-intellectual’s engagement with it, that would stoke this ‘crisis’ that would mark a significant change in the definitions of a *new* Korean capital and habitus. One can argue that such dramatic shifts in the status-quo caused Sino-Korean literary production at the turn of the century to be negated, incompatible with the nation’s future direction. Written in the vernacular, the likes of *sijo* and *kasa* – often remodelled into proud symbols of Korean identity and treasured national art forms, could survive into a new era. The nature of literary Sinitic being ‘from outside’ or

¹⁰⁵ A new intellectual class now “derived their cultural capital and status from their ability to view the world in the same way as their supposed peers in what they saw as the world’s centers, and positioned themselves as the nation’s outwardly-oriented ‘brains’, knowledgeable of the ‘current trends’ in London and New York – or at least Tokyo.” Cf. Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 17.

‘Chinese’ meant that it could not be so easily remodelled as patriotic literary language. Consequently, this led to the demise of the appreciation of Sino-Korean literature in the patriotic enlightenment era and, as I argue, even into the present.¹⁰⁶

This was facilitated by the new-intellectuals and, arguably, their monopoly over print media into the early decades of the twentieth century. The new-intellectual class won – their governance of the field ascribed negative attributes to that which the old considered positive. This meant that literary production in han’gŭl came to be seen as highly patriotic. To them, hanmun was a style of literary language that was symbolically opposite to the progressive, patriotic, *new* Korea that enlightenment era intellectuals such as themselves were working hard towards. Thus, in the following, the historical narrative of Korean identity and patriotism, the abasement of hanmun and the apotheosis of han’gŭl in print media, as well as the sidelining of hanmun in twentieth-century literary history and criticism will be explored.

2. Hanmun versus Han’gŭl – “Decentering the Middle Kingdom” and its Supporters through New Print Culture:

In Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the bourgeoisie would gather in groups with shared interests as so-called ‘voluntary associations.’ At a time known as ‘the age of societies,’ literary groups, charities and social campaigners would frequent a variety of

¹⁰⁶ As Vipin Chandra adds, “the need in late nineteenth century Korea was not to create a new language but to lend both functional validity and symbolic esteem to a language that had been kept out of the corridors of power. In this way, not only would the government and the people be brought together but, more important, another powerful strike would be made against the attitude of revering China and in favour of developing Korean cultural autonomy. Korean national identity would thus get new vitality.” Cf. *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Korean Studies, 1988): 135.

establishments such as coffeehouses, cafés, gambling dens and social clubs to engage in debate. In these places, opinions were aired freely; most importantly, they became spaces where government and politics could be openly criticized. Such activities are said to have birthed what Habermas called ‘the public sphere’ where public opinion would be fostered.¹⁰⁷ Such developments were seen as vital step towards the development of a more egalitarian, democratic society.

There has been some debate surrounding whether civil society and a public sphere were already flourishing at a much earlier time during the Chosŏn period.¹⁰⁸ However, a core aspect of discussion on Habermas’ public sphere is the relationship between the media and the birth of far-reaching public opinion. Habermas stressed that a functioning public sphere of any country needs “specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it” and consequently, we can reflect on the role of the *aeguk kyemonggi*’s print media boom and its relationship to a flourishing public sphere.¹⁰⁹

The arrival of new printing technology in the 1880s Chosŏn undoubtedly ushered forth seismic social change by means of disseminating information. Print media gave way to a new horizon for Korean literacy and readership, while facilitating the development and promulgation of a new literary language. Maturing by the 1910s, the development of print media into a more fully-fledged intellectual industry – newspapers, literary coterie publications and magazines – contributed significantly towards increases in reading among the general

¹⁰⁷ As Habermas states, the public sphere comes about through “nongovernmental and noneconomic connections and voluntary associations.” Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996): 366.

¹⁰⁸ For more, Cf Jeong-woo Koo, “The Origins of the Public Sphere and Civil Society: Private Academies and Petitions in Korea, 1506-1800,” *Social Science History* vol. 31 no. 3 (2007) 381-409, John Duncan, “The Problematic Modernity of Confucianism: The Question of “Civil Society” in Choson Dynasty Korea,” in *Korean Society: Civil Society, Democracy and the State*, ed. Charles K. Armstrong (New York, Routledge Press, 2002): 33-53 and Cho Hein, “The Historical Origin of Civil Society in Korea,” *Korea Journal* vol. 37 no. 2 (1997): 24-41.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Habermas, Jürgen (1989), "The Public Sphere," in *Critical theory and Society: A Reader*, edited by Stephen E. Bronner, Douglas Kellner (New York: Routledge, 1990):136–142.

population and fostering public opinion. Sales of print media in the early years of Korean publishing did not reach anywhere near the numbers seen in neighbouring Japan. Nevertheless, as Andre Schmid highlights, ‘modern’ print proliferated widely throughout the peninsula, from urban metropolises to rural villages with new ideas, as well as stories and news from media spreading widely via word of mouth from the literate to the illiterate.¹¹⁰

On the birth of newspapers in China, Barbara Mittler describes how the press would contribute “to the prosperity of the nation by providing a mediating space and thus serves as a channel of communication between high and low,” developing into a what she calls a “transmission belt for public opinion” and a “marketplace of ideas.”¹¹¹ Early newspapers and other diverse publications put out by a variety of groups and organizations in Korea flourished, with an increase in circulation of both original and translated works. Through these explorations, an unprecedented access and exposure to diverse literary styles, genres and theories of national language and literary production occurred.¹¹² In writing on the birth of civil society in Chosŏn, Jeong-woo Koo points out that for Habermas, two things were of paramount importance in the birth of a public sphere and civil society in Europe:

“the first was the rise of modern nation states. Habermas views the emergence of the public sphere and civil society as a reaction to the expansion of European states and their administrative, military, and judicial functions. The second condition involved the emergence of early finance and trade capitalism. According to Habermas (1989 [1962]), as long-distance trade expanded and towns and markets arose, *traffic in public sphere media*,

¹¹⁰ These publications “belied their political influence during this period” and even “reform-minded county magistrates would have someone at public gatherings read from a paper such as the *Tongnip Sinmun*.” Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 52. Tikhonov also further highlights that “real outreach of the modernity discourses carried on by the new media was much broader, as it was customary to recite newspapers collectively in schools, city residential quarters and villages.” Cf. *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 84-5.

¹¹¹ Mittler, 10 and 16. Nevertheless, how influential newspapers really were on public opinion and how ‘modern’ the newspaper really was in China is examined in great detail here. This is a point also raised by Wagner, who concludes that the earliest newspapers still “remained rigidly with the discursive limits of the traditional imaginaire.” Cf. Rudolf Wagner, “The Early Chinese Newspapers and the Chinese Public Sphere,” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* vol. 1 no. 1 (2001): 20

¹¹² “The important role played by these newspapers and magazines in building Korean national strength and accelerating the patriotic movement can hardly be overemphasized.” Yong-ha Sin, *Modern Korean History and Nationalism*, 210

such as mail, newspapers, and journals, also developed, resulting in the regular supply of news to the educated public.”¹¹³

In the Korean case, we also see parallels with the arrival of a wide variety of voluntary associations and the beginnings of the new-intellectual era of societies. Mentioned previously, the *Chaganghoe*, *Taehan Hyŏphoe* and *Sŏu hakhoe* among many others produced many print publications comprising of social and cultural critiques – talking points for circulation. These publications gave way to a cultural shift and rupture in the habitus of the Chosŏn intellectual.

Through a Bourdieusian lens, through shifts in power dynamics as one era transitions into the next, we see that not only the consumption of literature, but also engagement in literary production as well as the pursuit of mere reading transitioned significantly from being an activity of the privileged elite to being a pursuit and curiosity for Koreans from far broader walks of life. Although there are discussions about the public sphere arising much earlier, there is an argument to be made surrounding the rise of ‘voluntary associations’ and their many publications in Chosŏn. If such a development can be described as the birth of a Korean public sphere, it is fair to say that such a socio-cultural phenomenon was galvanized by a growing class of progressive intellectuals.

There were attempts by the conservative *kujisigin* or “old-intellectuals” to fight back. According to Kang Myŏng-gwan, some conservatives did put down their brushes and turn to print media to try and maintain a voice in this changing intellectual landscape:

“the majority of the the *kujisigin* [...] could not help but develop a crisis of consciousness at the developing situation where they would find themselves completely deprived of the social and economic benefits and advantages that they had [previously] enjoyed under a feudal system; this sense of crisis gave

¹¹³ Italics my own. CF. Koo, “The Origins of the Public Sphere and Civil Society: Private Academies and Petitions in Korea, 1506-1800,” 384. Drawing on Habermas (1989 [1962]) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989[1962]).

way to the creation of reactionary conservative groups that sought to defend hanmun and Confucianism.”¹¹⁴

One can argue, however, that the new-intellectuals’ attunement to a new global compass and their louder voice through print media would contribute to the drowning out of the conservatives.¹¹⁵ This can be ascertained in Cho Tong-il’s work, who points out that *sinjisigin* such as Yi Ki, Chang Chi-yŏn, Pak Ŭn-sik and Sin Ch’ae-ho argued that it would only be through *kungmun munhak* and not *hanmun munhak* that ‘old customs could be actively overthrown [...] only when new literary pursuits were expanded would the nation be saved.’ Those that opposed such as Kim Yun-sik, Yŏ Kyu-hyŏng, Chŏng Man-jo and Yun Hŭi-gu unconvincingly argued for the need of literary Sinitic as a means ‘to preserve the traditional norms of ancestors and to keep [us] from being swept up in a corrupt world.’ We thus see two ideological lines drawn, one nationalist and ‘Korean’ the other conservative and ‘Sinitic.’¹¹⁶

Since many were fully versed in literary Sinitic, naturally there would be works of patriotic flavour and works of resistance against the Japanese across the country, ‘however, literary discourses that supported hanmun were unable go through a phase of innovation to become a modern literature.’ In other words, conservative literary discourses were bound to be criticised as anachronistic: they were restricted by their need to look to the past.¹¹⁷ The cultural and political moment that said clashes contribute to is defined by Andre Schmid as the

¹¹⁴ Kang Myŏng-gwan, “Ilche Ch’o Kujisiginŭi Munye Hwalgong,” *Ch’angjakgwa Pipyŏng* vol. 62 (1988): 143.

¹¹⁵ New-intellectual associations such as the *Chaganghoe* and *Taehan Hyŏphoe* are well-known. Their publications greatly shape our understanding of a new print culture. There were conservative attempts to do the same (with varying degrees of success) with publications by the likes of the *Taedonghakhoe*. These were highly conservative groups (many characterised by pro-Japanese sentiment) that tried to fight against the progressive, patriotic, nationalistic voices visible across print of the time. These groups came about as a reaction to the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement and its attack on Sinitic culture. Rather than use literary Sinitic to meet with the twentieth century and adapt as we see in the poetry of new-intellectual outlets, they mainly sought the revival of literary Sinitic practices as a *return* to the past. It is important to mention these groups, as they were active in promoting the learning and composition of poetry and also published ads in newspapers for hansŭ submissions. As Kang mentions, however, newspapers like *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (which Kang refers to as *uguk ŏllon* 우국인론 or ‘patriotic media’) fought hard against regressive entities like the *Taedonghakhoe*, attacking its president Shin Ki-son as a ‘loyal servant’ of Japan. Cf. Kang, “Ilche ch’o ku chisigin ŭi munye hwalgong,” 143 and 147.

¹¹⁶ Cho, *Han’guk Munhak T’ongsa* vol. 4, 214.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 216.

“decentering of the Middle Kingdom.”¹¹⁸ While beginning in the latter Chosŏn era, one can argue that print media in the early twentieth century accelerated this process and quickly mobilized changing attitudes through the shaping public opinion.

As seen from the first publication of the *tongnip sinmun* (독립신문 獨立新聞) newspaper, the zeitgeist of a new age led by new-intellectuals appears strikingly on the front page, proclaiming proudly that this newspaper is ‘only written in han’gŭl and not in hanmun’ so that it would be accessible to the many:

‘각국에서는 사람들이 남녀를 물론하고 본국 국문을 먼저 익히 능통한 후에야 외국 글을 익히는 법이니, 조선에서는 조선 국문은 아니 익히오더라도 한문만 공부하는 사둑에 국문을 잘 아는 사람이 드물리라. 조선 국문하고 한문하고 비교하여 보면 조선 국문이 한문 보다 얼마나 나은 것이 무어신고 하니 첫지는 익히기가 쉬흔이 요흔 글이요, 들지는 이 글이 조선글이니 조선 인민들이 알아서 익수을 한문 대신 국문으로 써야 상하귀천이 모도 보고 알아 보기가 쉬흔 터이라. 한문만 늘 써 버릇하고 국문은 폐흔 사둑에 국문으로 쓴건 조선 인민이 도로혀 잘 아라보지 못하고 한문을 잘 알아보니 그게 엇지 한심치 아니하리요.’

‘In each country, all people, men and women, first learn the language of their country before learning foreign languages. Meanwhile in Chosŏn, because we do not learn han’gŭl but only learn hanmun, it is rare to find those who know han’gŭl well. When comparing han’gŭl and hanmun, han’gŭl’s excellence lies first in its ease to be learnt. Second, since this is the written word of Chosŏn, it is easy for all people, rich or poor, high or low, to understand. However, due to only writing hanmun and invalidating han’gŭl, writing in han’gŭl is rather not easily understood by the people of Chosŏn and what a pitiful thing it is that they can understand hanmun?’¹¹⁹

“Ch’anggan nonsŏl (창간 논설),” *Tongnip Sinmun*, April 7, 1896.

¹¹⁸ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 55-100

¹¹⁹ The piece continues on: ‘if a person does not know hanmun, it does not mean that he is ignorant; but if he only knows han’gŭl well, yet still is in possession of other intelligence and learning, that person will become more useful and better than someone who only knows hanmun but lacks knowledge and learning [about other things]. If Chosŏn wives also excel at han’gŭl and learn various knowledge and studies, while having high opinions and honest conduct, these wives, both rich and poor, will become higher than noble men who know hanmun well and do not know anything else.’ Cf. “Ch’anggan Nonsŏl,” *Tongnip Sinmun*, April 7, 1896.

The inaugural issue touches upon arguably one of the most important issues to intellectuals of the enlightenment – the usage of literary Sinitic as the dominant style of written language in Chosŏn. Emphasized ardently through the clear and accessible medium of ‘pure’ Korean, the founder of the newspaper, independence activist Sŏ Chae-p’il (서재필 徐載弼 1864 – 1951)’s vernacular text is visibly and purposely void of any trace of Sinographs and presented with new spacing between words. The position of the new-intellectuals and their message to be presented to a new era through new media is clear: literary Sinitic was no longer valuable cultural capital. For the benefit of forging a new nation-state, one proud of their unique culture, traditions and contributions, literary Sinitic was to become a form of *negative capital* to be shed. Those in the seat of intellectual and cultural power were unapologetic. Their role was to spread the word, giving form to a new era and future for Koreans and highlight that it is ‘us’ versus ‘them’ in the race to define twentieth-century Korea.

At the time of publication, most active readers and established intellectuals had been thoroughly schooled in literary Sinitic, so this topic was of importance to them. Regardless, they also straddled the new future of Korean intellectualism. As a result, although many had a certain respect for long-established and respected literary traditions, the majority voiced strong opinions against the continued use of literary Sinitic and wrote about and discussed the topic in opinion pieces and magazine articles of the era.

The above *tongnip sinmun* article was printed in 1896. An early and highly visible example of this new critical stance against the old dominant order, but from the 1900s we can see the influence that publications like this had on its young readers, spurring on their patriotic zeal. The pace quickens and even stronger articles began to appear. Print media experienced a boom and across a diverse array of publications, we come to see how the new-intellectual class changed the shape of the field of literary production during the early twentieth century,

galvanising the ‘crisis’ that damaged Chosŏn culture and values beyond repair. Let us examine the following extracts taken from a variety of print media from 1886 to 1908:

‘凡歐洲大中小學校，皆教以本國文字言語，事物無有所沮，而其文以二十六字母，相連相生，分合成聲 與我國諺文，毫無殊異 [...] 比於東洋學制，則便否不啻霄壤也，然則我國設立學校，亦當以諺文教習學生...’

‘All the elementary, middle schools and universities of Europe teach in the native letters and languages of their home country and thus they have no impediments for anything. Their written language is comprised of 26 letters, with consonants and vowels connecting, they form vocabulary and through subtracting and adding [letters], they can produce [new] sounds. Compared with our country’s *ŏnmun* (諺文), there is no difference. [...] When compared with the East Asian scholastic system, the conveniences and inconveniences are like heaven and earth. Hence, in our country we must establish schools and properly instruct students through the medium of *ŏnmun*.’¹²⁰

“Non Hakchŏng - Sam”(論學政 三),” *Hansŏngjubo* (한성주보), February 15, 1886.

‘이러케 규모가 잇고 죠흔 글주논 천히 녀어 내 바리고 그러케 문리가 업고 어려운 그림을 위 쓰고 빅호논 거슨 글주 문드신 큰 은혜를 이져 바릴 썬더러 우리 나라와 주긔 몸에 큰 히와 폐가 되논 거시 잇시니 [...] 십여년을 허비 히야 공부히고셔도 성취치 못히논 사름이 반이 넘으며 [...] 우리 나라 사름들이 종시 이것문 공부 히고 다른 새 수업을 빅호지 아니히거드면 우리 나라이 어둡고 약함을 벗지 못히고 머지 아니히야 주긔 죠상들의게 전 히야 빛아 내려오논 전디와 가장과 주긔의 신골과 주손들이 다 어느 나라 사름의 손에 드러가 밥이 될지 야지 야지 못힐 증거가 목하에 보이니 참 놀랍고 위탄 힐 곳이로다 어지 죠심치 아니 힐 새리오 만일 우리로 히여금 그림 글주를 공부 히논 대신의 정치 속에 의회원 공부나 다투 공부나 외무 공부나 직령 공부나 법률 공부나 수륙군 공부나 항해 공부나 위싱 상경제학 공부나 장식 공부나 장수 공부나 농수 공부나 쏘 기외의 각식 사업상 공부들을 히면 엇지 십여년 동안에 이 여러 가지 공부 속에서 아모 사름이라도 쓸문흔 즉업의 히?지논 잘 졸업힐 터이니...’

¹²⁰ Cf. “Non Hakchŏng Sam,” *Hansŏngjubo*, February 15, 1886.

‘Such a variety of worthy letters, yet we looked on them as lowly and threw them away. Meanwhile we exerted ourselves drawing out illogical and difficult pictures, learning them [instead]. Not only has [this act] allowed us to forget the great kindness bestowed upon us by he who created our letters, but it has also caused great harm and damage to our country and ourselves. [...] There are some that waste ten years studying [hanmun] but in the end, more than half do not achieve anything. [...] The people of our country from the past to the present have only studied [hanmun] – if we do not learn other new things, then our country will [remain] dark, unable to break away from our weaknesses and before long, the land and homes of our ancestors as well as our very own bodies and our progeny will find themselves in the hands of another nation. Perhaps it will become food for them to consume?’¹²¹

Chu Sang-ho, “Paejae Haktang Hagwon Chu Sangho ssi Kungmullon (Chǒnho Yǒnsok) (배지 학당 학원 주상호 씨 국문론(전호 연속),” *Tongnip Sinmun*, vol. 48, 1897.

‘또한 數千年前 固有에 光輝긔치 歐米를 凌駕ᄃᆞᆫ 境遇에 回復ᄃᆞᆫ 이 可ᄃᆞᆫ지. 今에 亞洲全局을 統算ᄃᆞᆫ에 渺渺漠漠ᄃᆞᆫ 四千六百年에 國國이 萎凋廢絶ᄃᆞᆫ야 南北西部는 임의 歐人 銅鐵鎖에 入ᄃᆞᆫ고 다만 朝鮮 日本 支那(淸國) 波斯(베틀루샤) 暹羅(사이암) 五國이 독립ᄃᆞᆫ얏스ᄃᆞᆫ ᄃᆞᆫᄃᆞᆫ 文明 妙味에 竝進치 못ᄃᆞᆫ니 其 源由는 漢文象字를 信用ᄃᆞᆫ고 自國國文을 賤히 너기야 尊古卑今에 弊習으로 宗教束縛을 不脫ᄃᆞᆫ는 一點에 不外ᄃᆞᆫ도다.’

‘Is a revival for us possible, surpassing that of Europe and the US which have been bright for thousands of years? North, South and Western Asia have already been enchained by the Europeans; it is only the five countries of Chosŏn, Japan, China (Qing), Persia and Siam who have maintained independence, but we have not been able to advance together to savour the mysterious flavours of civilisation. The reason for this is that we use pictographic Sinographs and have looked disparagingly on our own writing; we have venerated the old and disparaged the new. This evil habit has meant that we have been unable to cast off the shackles of religion.’¹²²

Shin Hae-yŏng, “Hanmunjawa Kungmunjaüi Son’ik Yōha (漢文字와 國文字의 損益如何),” *Taejosŏn Tongnip Hyŏphoe Hoebo* (大朝鮮獨立協會會報), vol. 15, June 30, 1897.

¹²¹ Cf. Chu Sang-ho, “Paejae Haktang Hagwon Chu Sangho ssi Kungmullon (Chǒnho Yǒnsok)” *Tongnip Sinmun*, vol. 48, 1897.

¹²² Cf. Shin Hae-yŏng, “Hanmunjawa Kungmunjaüi Son’ik Yōha,” *Taejosŏn Tongnip Hyŏp’oe Hoebo*, vol. 15, June 30, 1897.

‘然이느 文字의 煩疊함과 語尾의 無變함으로 今日 新 學術을 明瞭히 記出키 難하니 此는 卽 漢字의 一大弊端이오 兼하야 我國의 固有한 文字가 아님으로 不便不利함이 不遑枚述이라. 然이느 我國文은 邦人의 固有한 思想을 記出 하기 爲하야 自然한 理勢로 發見된 文字니 [...] 此로 因하야 比較하면 文字의 國家의 關係가 尋常티 아니함을 可知하리로다. [...] 余의 論辯이 비록 庸柄하느 誠心으로 勸告하노니 我國內同胞는 今日 二十世紀의 優勝劣敗하느 形影을 猛察하고 四十年來로 日詩日賦하던 習慣을 翻然改悟하야 自此以往으론 弊痼沈塞한 漢學腦髓에 新鮮한 空氣를 注入하야 [...] 歐米新學問을 研究하야 世界上 第一等文明國 되기를 心香으로 勞祝하고 葵誠으로 熱望하노라.’

‘Due to [its] convolutedness and the lack of changes in word endings, today it is difficult to articulate new scholarship in writing. This is the most significant evil of Sinographs. These are not the native characters of our country; I have no time to enumerate all the facts of their inconvenience [and] lack of benefit one by one. Nevertheless, our written language *kungmun* is comprised of letters that manifest logically and naturally for the purpose of recording the innate ideas of our people... [...] In this, we can ascertain that the relationship between the written word and nation is critical. [...] Though my discussion here may not seem like much, I sincerely advise you, all compatriots in our country, today you must seriously correct your form to ‘survival of the fittest’ of the twentieth century and in forty years time, once and for all regret the practice of reciting poetry (詩) and rhapsodies (賦) [of China] and from now on allow a fresh air to enter your *hanmunhak* (漢文學) brain comprised of deep-seated evils. [...] Quickly research on European and American new learning. I truly hope and pray that we will become the most civilised nation of the world.’¹²³

Han Hŭnggyo, “Kungmun'gwa Hanmunŭi Kwan'gye (國文과 漢文의 關係),” *Taehan Yuhaksaenghoe Hakpo* (大韓留學生會學報), vol. 1, March 3, 1907.

‘我韓이 不幸與支那接近하야 [...] 稱爲小華나 然今六洲列邦에 其人之不識字者 卽 惟我韓이 最多하고 而支那爲次焉하니 何也오. 天下之至難學者 卽 漢文이 是己라. 人自童幼至白紛하야 盡其死力이라도 而得以成名者 卽 其亦尠矣라. [...] 且 支那之人이 驕傲自大하야 從古己然하야 凡諸史籍에 必以東夷로 待我韓하야 使讀其書者로

¹²³ Cf. Han Hŭnggyo, “Kungmun'gwa Hanmunŭi Kwan'gye,” *Taehan Yuhaksaenghoe Hakpo*, vol. 1, March 3, 1907.

自少習見^하야 以爲固當^하야 止知有支那^오 不知有我韓^하야
遂失其祖國精神^하야 竟墮於今日悲慘^하니 其由之來 | 亦已久矣로다.’

‘Unfortunately, due to a close relationship with our neighbor [...] we Koreans came to be called “Little China (efflorescence)” (小華); of all countries across six continents today, of those that are illiterate, it is uniquely our Korea with the most illiterate, while China following behind. So, what of this fact? Under heaven, that which is the most difficult to learn is none other than hanmun. There are some people who from a young age to when their hair is spotted with grey, may strive until exhausted to death, yet they still rarely achieve a name for themselves. [...] The people of China are arrogant; they have been like that since ancient times so in all historical records there is *dongyi* (東夷) written for us. This makes those of us who read these books develop a lowly attitude towards ourselves and take it as a certain fact. We have come to know of only the existence of China and do not know the existence of our Korea. Finally, we lose the spirit of our fatherland, leading to the situation we have today; this has been happening for a long time already.’¹²⁴

Yi Ki, “Ilbu pyökp'a (一斧劈破),” *Honam Hakpo* (湖南學報), vol. 1, June 1908, 17.

‘歐洲學者^는 國家의 三大 要素가 土地, 人民, 法律이라 云^하나 余^는
以爲^호디 國家의 要素가 土地, 人民, 法律에만 止^호스아니라 此外에도
國家와 相互 關係가 有^하야 須^호 難分^호 三要素가 又有^하니 國語, 宗教,
歷史 | 라...’

‘A European scholar once said that the three greatest elements of a country are the land, the people and the law. I think that the greatest elements do not just cease at the land, people and law. Beyond these, there are three [further] elements that share a mutual relation with the nation that cannot be separated – a national language, religion and history...’¹²⁵

Pak T'aesö, “Kugö Yujiron (國語維持論)” *Yaroe* (夜雷), vol. 1, February 5, 1907.

¹²⁴ Cf. Yi Ki, “Ilbu pyökp'a,” *Honam Hakpo*, vol. 1, June 1908, 17.

¹²⁵ Cf. Pak T'aesö, “Kugö yujiron” *Yaroe*, vol. 1, February 5, 1907.

‘泰西文明之邦이 各有自國文章 言語之典範하야 使國民으로 趨向有方에 團合其心者,良有以也라.我韓民心之不能團合이,未嘗不由於文章言語之異軌 殊轍일세[...]以是而教導國民하면,言語焉文章焉不歧不貳하야,收其放而合其 散하야 驅衆心於一團之中이 必有其日하리니...’

‘Western civilized countries each have their own criteria of written and spoken language, making their people run towards the same direction; this is the very reason as to why their hearts are united. The disunity of the heart of us, the Korean people, is truly due to the different wheel and different track of our written and spoken language [...] In this, instruct and lead the people, then written and spoken language will not be divided and not be as two; If we gather up what has dissipated, and unite together what has been scattered, then quickly many hearts [of the people] will unite as one...’¹²⁶

Yi Sang-jae’s preface to the *Taehan Munjŏn* (大韓文典), 1909.

The above extracts are just a few representative pieces taken from a number of publications from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that explore the topic of language, literature and the Sino/Han’gŭl debate. What is immediately noticeable about these extracts is the diverse range of written styles. In the above, we see authors writing in ‘pure’ literary Sinitic or *hanmun* (한문 漢文), mixed-scripted styles such as *kukhanmun* (국한문 國漢文) and *hanmun hyŏnt’och’e* (한문 현토체 漢文懸吐體) and finally also ‘pure’ vernacular Korean, or *kungmun* (국문 國文).¹²⁷ From the 1880s to the 1910s, these extracts demonstrate the palpable shift in attitudes towards literary Sinitic, but they also provide evidence of how attitudes often contradicted with practice and the need to reach a variety of audiences. What we see above is that while each extract is presented in a chronological order, we do not see a

¹²⁶ Cf. Yi Sang-jae’s preface in, Yu Kil-chun, *Taehan Munjŏn* (Seoul: Tongmungwan, 1909).

¹²⁷ Pae Su-ch’an raises a very important point that in Korean research, from *hanmun* to *kungmun*, that which existed in-between has long been summarized as *kukhanmun* but while Korean scholarship often describes this transitional orthographic style as only *one* style, ‘actually that which is often called ‘kukhanmun style’ is *not* one united orthographic style.’ It is a diverse spectrum ‘from *hanmun hyŏnt’och’e* to ‘de-facto kungmunch’e’ (사실상의 국문체) and Korean scholarship has not paid attention to these subtle differences.’ Cf. *Kŭndaejŏk Kŭlssŭgiŭi Hyŏngsŏng Kwajŏng Yŏn’gu - Nonsŏlmunŭi Sŏllip Hwan’gyŏnggwa Munjang Moderŭl Chungsimŭro* (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch’ulpansa, 2009): 93.

sliding scale whereby earlier extracts are all in literary Sinitic and later ones all in vernacular. We in fact see a variety of choices being made regardless of time. Despite this, the message remains the same – there is an evident negation of literary Sinitic, even in works being *written* in that language.¹²⁸

These examples are also fascinating in the strength of their critical content. There are clear comparisons being made with European languages that use alphabets. While the Koreans have long had their own, these ‘worthy letters’ were considered base and unrefined by the elites that instead always looked to China. Vernacular Korean writing, or *ŏnmun* (언문 諺文) has come to be seen as a favour of kindness made for them, while *hancha* (한자 漢字) or Sinographs were regarded as harmful and evil. The Korean alphabet is made comparable to the Latin alphabet. Unlike Europe, Korea has rejected such a useful tool and ‘thrown it away.’ Using Sinographs has come to be seen as an ‘evil habit’ that ‘venerated the old and disparaged the new’ and it was strongly dismissed as a ‘cancer’ that needed to be excised from the body of Korea in order to survive.¹²⁹

The reliance on literary Sinitic, or on the most basic level, Sinographs, is now seen as hindrance in the pursuit of civilization. In an era of survival of the fittest, the title of ‘Little China’ has come to be seen as entirely negative. True compatriots of contemporary Chosŏn must rid themselves of the ‘deep-seated evils’ instilled through years of toadyism and instead quickly tune themselves to ‘European and American learning’ to survive. These attitudes

¹²⁸ While a variety of conclusions may be drawn as to why there is such diverse choices in medium of written language, one can clearly state that the above highlights the difficulty in shifting from one medium to another in a short period of time. In this regard, we come to see that the ‘end’ of Sino-literary language was not a smooth process easily championed by the progressive new-intellectual class. Instead, we see these individuals themselves demonstrating the ease in which they still could wield literary Sinitic as a tool for *Korean* enlightenment progress.

¹²⁹ Ross King, “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The Questione della lingua in Precolonial Korea,” in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, edited by Hyung Il Pai, Timothy R. Tangherlini (United States: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998): 61.

presented above are a few of many, characterising late nineteenth century and early twentieth century print media as a site shaped by anti-hanmun rhetoric.¹³⁰

As has been reiterated, by the late nineteenth century consensus among new-intellectuals that literary Sinitic was indeed outdated had become overwhelming but differing from early *Sirhak* scholars discussions, the debate that plays out in the publications above was now beginning to take a far more nationalist and patriotic tone in comparison. Through exploring such examples of early print media, we can argue that for the first time in its history, vernacular Korean was fast becoming codified with uniquely *symbolic* meaning. As Yi Ki's 1908 article above stresses, the people of Chosŏn had come to only know of China's existence. The result of which was the cultural loss of the Korean spirit for their own fatherland. Han'gŭl, the pure Korean writing system of vernacular language, thus embodied a Korean patriotic spirit and reflected the zeitgeist of the times. It was finally beginning to triumph over hundreds of years of antiquated and elitist Chinese literary language and break free from hundreds of years of debasement by Chosŏn elites who favoured Sinitic cultural and literary practices.

3. Ascertaining Attitudes towards Hanmun – The Intellectual Weight of Twentieth Century Literary and Linguistic Theorists:

As is ascertainable above, into the 1910s a consistent and fairly unified narrative that sought to highlight the ills that had plagued Chosŏn culture, society and politics came to dominate

¹³⁰ For the purpose of balance, examples of positive attitudes towards the continuation of hanmun must be mentioned. As Namgung Wŏn states, there were those that still held their firm convictions regarding traditional reading and writing. 'For the sŏnbi that rejected enlightenment and rallied for *wijŏng ch'ŏksa*, literary Sinitic or *chinsŏ* (眞書) "true writing" really was just that, the legitimate style [to them].' Cf. "Kaehwagi Hanmun mit Hanmun Kyoyuge Taehan Insik Ilgo," *Han'guk Kojŏn Yŏn'gu* 13, (2006): 347-373. It is important to note that these print articles in favour of continued Sino-Korean literary practices, however, are strikingly minimal in comparison with articles that favour vernacular written language.

print media spaces.¹³¹ In addition to the strong stance against literary Sinitic that we have seen above, a number of well-known names also contributed significantly to discussions on literary and linguistic culture and the shaping of cultural capital of the twentieth century. It can be argued that due to their prominence, these figures and their comments have had great sway on the public discourse surrounding the definitions of ‘modern’ Korean literature. The most prominent being defining literary and nationalist figures such as Sin Ch’ae-ho, Yi Kwang-su, Im Hwa as well as pioneers of early Korean linguistics, Yu Kil-chun and Chu Si-gyöng.

In 1916, novelist, activist and literary theorist Yi Kwang-su (이광수 李光洙 1892–1950) published arguably one of the most important texts in Korea’s modern theoretical canon, his seminal piece *Munhak Iran Hao* (文學이란 何오) “What is Literature?” In this defining text that lays the foundations of modern Korean literary theory, Yi takes significant aim at Korea’s long historic relationship with Sino-Korean language and literary production that was once so highly favoured by the previous elites of the Chosön dynasty:

‘Though I may be going off on a tangent, the majority of Chosön scholars’ time and energy has been wasted studying this difficult Chinese script. If such time and energy were to have been applied to other pursuits, [our] culture would have greatly flourished. Even if it were just in regard to literature, if they had disposed of *hanmun* and adopted *kungmun*, they would have produced many superb works of Korean literature. In recent years, those using *hanmun* have decreased but still many remain...’¹³²

As enlightenment era new intellectual thought went hand in hand with the dawn of media publishing, older ways of thinking and the way in which their doxa shaped the field came to an

¹³¹ “In an era when no other media could rival the power of newspapers and journals, the writers who controlled them dominated public discourse about the nation and world, enabling them to offer visions of Korea that positioned themselves as enlightened leaders while shunting aside alternatives that might contest the assumptions of their nationalist reform project.” Cf. Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 24. It is important to highlight that Mittler’s work questions whether the media in Qing dynasty China was as powerful as is often thought. Cf. Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?*, 409-425.

¹³² Yi Kwang su, “Munhak Iran Hao” in *Han'guk Hyöndaeh Munhak Pip'yöngsa* (1), ed. Kwon Yong-min (Seoul: Tандаech'ulp'anbu): 37-50.

end and were replaced with a new order and new doxa to the field of enlightenment era Korea. Changes in attitudes towards literary Sinitic during the enlightenment and beyond is verifiable. At the turn of the century, we can see how the idea that literary Sinitic was incompatible with Korea became *doxic*, as a new society that stressed the value of the vernacular became the most powerful voice and has since shaped the narrative of Korea's modern literary history today.

Yi Kwang-su's negative assessment of literary Sinitic ultimately seeks to challenge and shame literary figures of past generations and their prioritization of such a 'difficult Chinese script' in favour of vernacular *kungmun* (國文). Such a choice was presented openly as an unforgivable betrayal. Yi's words also reflect the bitterness felt by the new literary man, particularly in regards to the 'many superb works of Korean literature' that could have been written if proper attention had been paid to the Korean alphabet: 'is it not natural that the preservation and development of our vernacular be a duty of our people?'¹³³ Yi Kwang-su concludes that 'the root of patriotic spirit can be found in our history and our vernacular language' while firmly rejecting 'Chinese' literary practices. In a new era of change, *kungmun* must rightfully take its place as Korea's cultural and linguistic legacy while also representing the metaphorical essence of a nation's people. Hanmun, meanwhile, should now 'be learnt as one would learn a *foreign* language.'¹³⁴

Independence activist, historian and anarchist Sin Ch'ae-ho (신채호 申采浩 1880–1936) also took aim at literary Sinitic as a medium for Korean poetry writing. Although less scathing than Yi Kwang-su who wrote many critiques of the ills of literary Sinitic, a critical piece entitled the *Ch'önhidang Sihwa* (천희당시화 天喜堂詩話) or "Ch'önhidang's Poetry

¹³³ Yi Po-kyōng "Kungmun'gwa Hanmunüi Kwadosidae," *T'aegŭk Hakpo*, May 24, 1908, 16. Po-kyōng being one of Yi Kwang-su's pseudonyms.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18. Italics my own.

Talks” was published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (대한매일신보 大韓每日申報) newspaper in 1909.¹³⁵ Published from November to December across seventeen instalments, in this piece Sin outlines an early piece of literary criticism that finds itself in the same camp as Yi Kwang-su’s attitudes that see literary Sinitic as a stumbling block in the path of creative progress.

Throughout *Ch’önhidang Sihwa*, Sin praises vernacular poetry and puts forth his stance that negates Sino-Korean poetic production’s possibility of merit. In one installment, Sin laments how for hundreds of years, learned men of Korea ‘only piled up hansil on their desks’ with Chinese poems the basis of early study for children. He also points to this adherence as ‘yet another cause for the decline and deterioration of the essence of [our] nation.’¹³⁶ Days later in another installment, Sin further hones his critique of Sino-Korean poetry. Since the tradition came to Korea, many Korean scholars have produced ‘worthless’ works that mirror the works of Li Bai, Du Fu, Han Yu and Su Shi and ‘encourage only *sadaejui* (사대주의 事大主義).’¹³⁷ Shin goes further, continuing to lament the fact that, in his mind, there are none that demonstrate a Korean spirit:

‘How strong the power of a foreign language to bewitch the soul of our nation in this way! [...] [The fact that] Koreans can list off Chinese poets causes me to lament endlessly. For more than one thousand years, hansil poets’ brains have rotted and they have coughed up their own blood. [Though] they may have worked hard at their studies living a lonely life, after death, if those who [had hoped their names would be] passed down were to hear of this now in the spiritual realm, perhaps more than a few would surely grind their teeth and wail.’¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Although the piece was published anonymously, the written style of the work has been analysed to be the work of Shin and is routinely attributed to him in academic scholarship. Cf. Cho Tong-il, *Han’guk Munhak T’ongsa 4* (Seoul: Chisiksanöpsa, 2005): 220. For more on Sin as the potential author of the *sihwa*, also see Kim Chu-hyön, “Kungmun Ch’angje Yoüisörül T’onghan Ch’önhüidangsihwaüi Chöja Kyumyöng” *Ömunhak* 87 (2005): 487-518.

¹³⁶ Cf. “Ch’önhüidangsihwa,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, November 11, 1909 in Kim Chu-hyön, “Ch’önhüidangsihwaüi Sönggyökkwa Wisang” *Ömunhak* 91 (2006): 390.

¹³⁷ “其後에 許多 詩學士가 輩出호엿스나 皆 李杜韓蘇의 睡餘를 拾호야 戰事를 悲觀호고 苟安을 謳歌호야 事大主義만 鼓吹호 썬이오.” (1909.11.13), reprinted in Kim Chu-hyön, “Ch’önhüidangsihwaüi Sönggyökkwa Wisang,” *Ibid.*, 390.

¹³⁸ Cf. “Ch’önhüidangsihwa,” November 13, 1909 in *ibid.*, 390.

On the sixteenth day of the same month in another installment, Sin continues to refine his take down on of Sino-Korean literary language in the realms of poetry writing. To Sin, poetry and song function as a vessel for human emotion and its transmission to a people is better aided through the use of a national alphabet. He especially critiques the lingering presence of Sino-Korean vocabulary in new songs being learnt in schools:

‘These days, when listening to songs used in schools, there are so many instances where *hancha* [words] are mixed in [with Korean] that school children do not understand the meanings. Those passing by who hear them also do not know the meaning. What value does this [practice] have? One can say that this is a mistake in the world of education.’¹³⁹

What we see presented in the above extract is a straightforward admission on what he believed to be the core function of poetic expression of the enlightenment era. The curriculum for a ‘modern’ Korean nation must swiftly remove that which is foreign and degrades the Korean culture and people. One must replace past *sadaejui* or ‘toadyism’ with a strong national consciousness that fosters support and reverence for Korean poets that chose to write in the vernacular. ‘Worthless ideas’ of poets from China are now no longer revered and should not be copied. Sin also casts criticism on the over-reliance on Sino-Korean vocabulary in songs for children at school. It was this view on literature that is presented in *Ch’ŏnhŭidang Sihwa* that became universalised. We find a marked change presented in Sin’s work through a new message – one that contributed to a revolution, particularly in the Korean poetic world. ‘The basic thesis [of *Ch’ŏnhŭidang Sihwa*] was to criticize *hansi* and develop national poetry (국문시가 國文詩歌) to awaken the spirit of the Korean ethno-nation.’¹⁴⁰

Cho Tong-il highlights that in Sin’s view, literature composed entirely in literary Sinitic was an import, with Korean literary figures simply following Chinese norms that only

¹³⁹ Cf. “Ch’ŏnhŭidangsihwa”, November 16, 1909 in *ibid.*, 400.

¹⁴⁰ Cho Tong-il, “Singu Munhaggwanŭi Taeripkwa Kyoch’e,” *Tongyanghak* 15 (1985): 79-80.

served to strengthen a spirit of toadyism in lieu of a more progressive spirit. In actively choosing this genre, poets were ‘stealing the national soul’ through their adherence to a foreign language and foreign literature.¹⁴¹ In this adherence, they were actively denying women and children of the chance for personal growth.¹⁴² At the time of publication of articles like those in the *tongnip sinmun* at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, through to early literary criticism by figures like Yi Kwang-su and Sin Ch’ae-ho in the 1910s, we see those from the new-intellectual camp fighting for a piece of the national identity pie in uncertain and changing times. In an era of survival of the fittest, to the likes to Sin Ch’ae-ho and Yi Kwang-su, Korean cultural survival was paramount. These publications reflect how academics, literary and national figures sought to legitimise *the Korean* in a global context of jostling domination and subordination.

Naturally at a time when discussions on national language and literature were fervent topics among intellectuals, the development of Korean orthography, grammar and linguistics also took root at this time. In addition to the prominent literary figures, two of the defining figures of early modern Korean linguistics, Yu Kil-chun (유길준 兪吉濬 1856 - 1914) and Chu Si-gyŏng (주시경 周時經 1876 - 1914) also wrote on the topic of literary Sinitic vis-à-vis vernacular Korean in the early twentieth century.

Ross King makes reference to Yu Kil-chun who authored Korea’s first grammar publication, the *Taehan Munjŏn* (대한문전 大韓文典) which he began as early as 1895 before publication in 1909. In his research that explores the building blocks of Korea’s

¹⁴¹ ‘He [Shin] said that only if one writes in the Eastern [Korean] language, Eastern [Korean] literature and Eastern [Korean] sounds (東國語, 東國文, 東國音) it can be Eastern [Korean] poetry (東國詩). Citing both content and aspects of language, he said that *hanmunhak* is not *kungmunhak*; only literature written in *kungmun* can be Korean literature, but this argument was not seen before and he became [one of] the first to bolster support greatly for *kungmun munhak*.’ Ibid., 80.

¹⁴² ‘He prescribed that poetry is the “essence of the people’s language” (국민언어의 정화) and thus from the beginning the possibility of hansil’s inclusion was rejected. In him saying “if poetry flourishes, then the nation flourishes, if poetry withers, then so too does the nation” we can say that traditional pragmatism is being passed down but the poetry that he is strictly limited to is vernacular poetry.’ Ibid., 80.

linguistic history, King highlights the significance of Yu Kil-chun's plight to bolster the uptake of national language in early children's education; Yu describes this as a defining factor in augmenting a national spirit vital for young minds going into a new era. King quotes Yu's opening of the *Taehan Munjŏn* as follows:

“Read! Read my Taehan Munjŏn! Fellow Koreans! As the spiritual descendants of Tan’gun, we the Korean people possess our own language and our own indigenous script. These enunciate thought and meaning by means of spoken sounds and transmit them by means of writing; the spirit of “Unity in Speech and Writing” (ŏmun ilch’i) reaches back more than four thousand years [...] A trend to worship hanmun has swept across the entire country, and foreign scripts brought in from Western lands are chasing out our Korean people’s Chŏngŭm (correct sounds)”¹⁴³

Yu Kil-chun was evidently a spirited patriot at a time when both public and intellectual discourse surrounding the dichotomy of hanmun vs han’gŭl was at a peak. Here, Yu evokes *Tan’gun*, the spiritual progenitor shared by all of Korean blood. He highlights Korea’s unity and unique history, culture and language, which has been tainted by what he refers to as ‘the trend of hanmun worship.’ Through Yu’s words, we see the ‘correct sounds’ of the Korean people as the victim of attack from cultural forces from without, and thus it must be protected from within as a tool for cultural survival.

In his role in shaping the linguistic hegemony of the vernacular, Yu felt strongly that for too long, the Korean people had over-relied on Sinographs to their own detriment, describing this phenomenon as being akin to opiate addiction. He would thus galvanize the separation of ‘the cultural forms originating in the continent and those rooted in the peninsula, despite centuries of exchange, appropriation and interaction.’¹⁴⁴ Yu thus joins the ranks of other

¹⁴³ Translation by Ross King, Cf. “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea: The Questione della lingua in Precolonial Korea,” in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. Hyung Il Pai, Timothy R. Tangherlini (United States: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998): 38.

¹⁴⁴ He “lamented that [...] Koreans had become addicted to Chinese characters as though they were opiates” Cf. Yu Kilchun, *Taehan Munhŏn* in Yu Kilchun Chŏnsŏ, ed. Yu Kilchun Chŏnsŏ P’yŏnch’an Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1996): 3:2 quoted in Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 64. As Schmid further adds, “the myriad traditions, practices, and symbols inherited from their predecessors could be winnowed out; the cultural forms

leading voices of the early twentieth century that sought out modern publishing as a tool to engage with the enlightenment project born out of new-intellectualism while also simultaneously contributing to the uplifting of vernacular writing and the delegitimization of the assigned value of literary Sinitic as valued cultural capital.

For Chu Si-gyŏng, the Korean vernacular writing system was one “truly full of beauty and wisdom” that was a *gift* to Korean people.¹⁴⁵ While Yu Kil-chun draws upon the father of the Korean people, Tan’gun, to illustrate his zeal as a patriotic Korean thinker, Chu makes reference to the benevolence of the father of han’gŭl himself, King Sejong the Great (1397 – 1450). Although at the time of han’gŭl’s creation, attitudes were negative and uptake was mainly popular among women, children and the lower classes, Chu sees the efforts of King Sejong as wisdom and benevolence towards the Korean people and in leaning on the irrationality of the Sinitic language instead of embracing such a beneficial gift has dealt great damage to the Korean people.

Most importantly, just as Yu Kil-chun equates a shared history and tradition unique to Korea from the time of Tan’gun, Chu Si-gyŏng also injects his declaration with a patriotic and nationalistic tone: he sees the Korean alphabet as a ‘foundation stone’ of Korean independence.¹⁴⁶ In this, the value of han’gŭl transforms from mere letters, to a powerful tool imbued with history and traditions unique to Korea that can be used to combat a past order of Sinitic exceptionalism. In the words of Yu and Chu, we see an impassioned call, to put down

newly identified as a Chinese separated and cast aside so as to reveal an obscured but ever present Korean essence.” Ibid., 64-5.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. King, “Nationalism and Language Reform in Korea,” 43.

¹⁴⁶ ‘To despise and discard such an excellent, elegant script, and to struggle instead to learn those difficult, irrational pictures, is not only to forget His wisdom and beneficence, but to do great harm to our country and to ourselves. [...] let us not waste vital, precious time like this to learn isolated pictures; the script created for us by the Great sage is both easy to learn and easy to write. Let us record all our written affairs with it, so that all might gain more time in their youth, strive after knowledge useful for practical enterprises... [...] and thus become the pillars and foundation stones for Korea’s independence.’ Cf. Chu, “Kungmunnon,” *Tongnip Sinmun* April 22 and 24, 1897. Translation by King in *ibid.*, 43-4.

the brushes of a feudal past and instead pick up newspapers and magazines, embracing the new while turning backs on the literature of a defunct age.

4. Conclusion:

The above sources have been explored for three reasons. Be it the great influence that print media had at the turn of the century, the sway of the likes of defining public literary figures such Yi Kwang-su and Sin Ch'ae-ho, as well as the overwhelming importance of the development of Korean linguistics through the work of Yu Kil-chun and Chu Si-gyŏng, this thesis argues the importance that all these elements had in the “decentering” of hanmun and hansil's relevance from the latter years of the enlightenment era.¹⁴⁷

But what was the sacrifice of this great change? As Korea embraced this new change and the old elite fell away, what became of the successes and achievements of their past order? Did their achievements continue to be venerated and appreciated in any degree or were they harshly rejected and potentially misrepresented? A fundamental aim of this thesis is to go beyond straightforward explorations of the highly transitional nature of this moment in cultural and intellectual history; this work seeks to explore the greater implications that this shift had on Korean literary discourse throughout the twentieth century and up until the present. In this regard, this thesis highlights that although Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus is of use for exploring the socio-historical context of the times, we need to go a step further in understanding the greater implications of this sociocultural shift that occurred in the enlightenment era within the greater gambit of shaping a new nationalist and patriotic history. This paper thus seeks to

¹⁴⁷ This decentering “was more than a political readjustment. The impulse in nationalist thought to articulate a unique identity for the nation led to a reappraisal of centuries of Sino-Korean cultural interaction in ways that reflected Korea's growing participation in the modern ideologies of the capitalist world system.” Cf. Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 55.

highlight one oversight that continues to be perpetuated in the historiography of Korean literature. The oversight that I refer to is linked to the anomaly of Sino-Korean poetic production during the enlightenment era and beyond. We are thus forced to ask the question: what consequence has this overwhelming change in intellectual rhetoric had on the historiography of Korean language and literature beyond this period?

In the following chapter, we will explore the consequences of all the published pieces within the grand scheme of twentieth-century Korean literary and intellectual history. More specifically, the following will look at what this work sees as the continued lingering negative effects that this early period of negation of hanmun ultimately had on the formation of a Korean canon. The following chapter will focus more specifically on how, despite Sino-Korean poetry's continued presence in the twentieth century, analysis, understanding and appreciation of this genre has not materialised in the same way as vernacular genres or indeed Sino-Korean poetry from past dynastic eras. In this, I aim to explore the potential lasting effects of the words of Sin Ch'ae-ho and others in the shaping of intellectual discourse against literary Sinitic and how this has shaped literature as an academic field and the canonisation process of 'modern' Korean literature.

4. The Endurance of Negative Capital:

Reevaluating the Historiography of Korean Literature Throughout the Twentieth Century

1. Introduction:

In the previous sections, this thesis explored Korea's enlightenment era power shifts through the lens of Bourdieu's theories, while also examining how print media was used as a tool by a new generation of intellectuals for galvanizing social and cultural change and recalibrating the doxa of the intellectual field. In short, the exploration of early print media sources paints a picture of the fervent drive of enlightenment era new-intellectuals, as they utilised a newly established print media and vernacular language to effectively launch an attack on the old order, establishing the new rules of the intellectual field in line with their cultural tastes.

This new era of progress and new-intellectualism had a dramatic effect on the classifications of what is regarded as *valued* social and cultural capital in the habitus of the Korean intellectual of the early decades of the twentieth century. Ascertainable through the extracts explored previously, the once highly prized cultural capital of the Chosŏn elite, literary Sinitic, came to develop highly negative connotations; its status as a valued cultural symbol came to be frequently challenged, negated and silenced throughout this transitional era.

In the following section, the greater ramifications and enduring legacies of such a significant shift in cultural attitudes will be explored *beyond* the enlightenment. We will examine further into the early era of academism and university research of the colonial era from 1910 onwards, where early studies and theories on Korean culture, history and literature began to appear. This chapter explores the fact that the negation of Sino-Korean language and literary practices was by no means unique to enlightenment era new-intellectualism. In fact, this negation *matures* and transcends enlightenment era debates. We come to see more

nuanced developments in the discussion of Korean literature and language and the scope of national literature's definitions further into the 1920s and 1930s, as a new era of cultural nationalism and academic enquiry develops.

Despite the challenges and hardships of Japanese colonial rule, in the aftermath of the March First Movement in 1919, there was a relaxation of Japanese control through their 'cultural policy' that paradoxically gave way to a pronounced Korean cultural nationalism.¹⁴⁸ It is in this context that patriotic academic enquiry into Korean literary history became an important development in the shaping of Korea's cultural identity in the face of colonial realities. The 1920s and 1930s in particular saw development and discussions surrounding a new branch of academic enquiry, dubbed the *chōsonhak undong* (조선학 운동 朝鮮學運動) "Chosŏn Studies Movement" of which literature became a significant focus. The movement began in the early 1930s, led by key figures such as An Chae-hong (안재홍 安在鴻 1891 - 1965), Chōng In-bo (정인보 鄭寅普 1893-1950) and Mun Il-p'yōng (문일평 文一平 1888-1939) and was a reaction to Japanese colonial ideology and its constructed narrative of Korean history and culture. It was an early cultural nationalist movement that looked as far back as the *sirhak* movement for inspiration.¹⁴⁹

Chosŏn Studies saw attempts to investigate unique aspects of Korean culture, history and traditions for the benefit of the nation. The pursuit of 'Chosŏn things' (朝鮮적인 것)

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Franklin Rausch, "Nationalist movements before 1945" in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (New York: Routledge, 2016): 161. Rausch also draws on Chulwoo Lee, "Modernity, Legality, and Power in Korea under Japanese Rule," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, eds. G. Shin and M. Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) and Yong-jick Kim, "Politics of Communication and the Colonial Public Sphere," in *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea*, eds. Hong Yung Lee, Yong-Chool Ha, and Clark W. Sorensen (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁹ "Although *sirhak* thought did not result in modernity nor democracy in Korean history, even a relatively small degree of change was significant in late Chosŏn, in a situation where even the potential for change was difficult to identify. Furthermore, critical thinking on existing societies and the search for alternatives espoused by late Joseon *sirhak* thinkers undoubtedly impacted the developmental process of Korean." Cf. Kim Kyeong-il, "Over Contested Terrain: Currents and Issues of Korean Studies," *The Review of Korean Studies* 6, No. 2 (2003): 158

developed into a distinct intellectual focus, laying the ideological foundations for Korean cultural nationalism and the beginnings of Korea as a modern nation-state.¹⁵⁰ The movement was not only interested in vernacular writings. In the face of colonial policy, there was a need to treasure a wide variety of writings from Korea's past and present; this also included works in literary Sinitic. In fact, Ch'oe Nam-sön's *Chosön Kwangmunhoe* (조선광문회 朝鮮光文會) was at the forefront of bringing old books back into public consciousness, with a particular focus on texts written in literary Sinitic. Nevertheless, such a choice was a patriotic and nationalist act mainly for preservation and *posterity*. These works were published as relics of Korea's past, to protect, look back on and remember (not necessarily to emulate).

This chapter will explore how this era of budding cultural-nationalist academic enquiry into literature generally conditioned a more robust nationalist narrative and historiography that strengthens the Korean *minjok chöngsin* (민족정신 民族精神) or “ethno-national consciousness” in twentieth century literary history. As a consequence, we see a continuation of the trend that seeks to negate literary Sinitic culture in the present. In this climate of cultural nationalism and the Chosön Studies movement, the development of a distinct literary history that *elevates* indigenous elements of language and literature while *negating* the ‘foreign’ elements (or relegating Sinitic literary works to the past) became a significant characteristic of 1930s academism. This, arguably, has continued to shape attitudes and academic discourse on the historically fraught relationship between Sino-Korean and vernacular literature until the present.

¹⁵⁰ For an in-depth exploration, Cf. Kim Pyöng-gu, “Kojönbuhüngüi Kihoeckwa Chosönjögin Kött'üi Hyöngsöng,” in *Chosönjögin Kössä Hyöngsönggwa Kündae munhwa Tamnon*, ed. Cho Hyön-il et al. (Seoul: Somyöngch'ulp'an, 2012): 13-39.

2. Colonial Era Cultural Nationalism: Exacerbating Divisions in the Sino/Vernacular Literary Historical Debate:

As Rausch highlights, the cultural nationalism that manifested itself in the aftermath of Japan's relaxation of policy after the March First Movement gave way to changes that would greatly shape Korean academia. The most important was the push for the establishment of a 'modern' university in order to shape and train minds of a new generation.¹⁵¹ Kyōngsōng Imperial University (경성제국대학교 京城帝國大學校) was established in 1924 where Chosŏn literature was taught formally for the first time at the Department of Law and Letters (법문과 法文科).

In an era that sought to locate the *Korean* at the centre of academic pursuits, some of the earliest and most influential literary histories were to be published. An Hwak's *Chosŏn Munhaksa* (조선문학사 朝鮮文學史) "A History of Chosŏn Literature" (1922), Kim T'ae-jun's *Chosŏn Hanmunhaksa* (조선한문학사 朝鮮漢文學史) "A History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature" (1931), Yi Myōng-sŏn's *Chosŏn Munhaksa* (조선문학사 朝鮮文學史) "Chosŏn Literary History" (1948) and Cho Yun-je's *Kungmunhaksa* (국문학사 國文學史) "Korean Literary History" (1949) are some of the most prominent of this era.¹⁵²

By the 1920s, the passionate distaste for literary Sinitic and discussions of its permanent dissolution are neither as frequent nor as visible as previously seen in the print publications from late 1890s and into the 1910s. Instead, for the purpose of defining and exploring the perimeters of Chosŏn Studies, a more nuanced approach comes to the fore in

¹⁵¹ Franklin Rausch, "Nationalist movements before 1945," *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (New York: Routledge, 2016): 161

¹⁵² Later followed other influential publications, a notable mention being Yi Pyōng-gi and Paek Ch'ŏl's jointly published post-war era *kungmunhakchŏnsa* (국문학전사 國文學全史) in 1957. A defining post-war contribution to scholarship on literary history.

early academic writing of this subsequent era. In these early literary histories, Sino-Korean literature is not ignored, shunned or perfunctorily explored. In fact, significant effort has been undertaken to appropriately categorise and narrativise Korea's literary traditions, both Sino and vernacular Korean works. However, many of these early histories such as An Hwak, Kim T'ae-jun and others situate their discussions on Sino-Korean literature within their cultural milieu and moment at the time of writing, whereby attitudes regarding what is valued cultural capital has shifted and remained so. This shift left Sino-Korean literature on the *periphery* of and excluded from their definition of 'Chosŏn' literature.

As Ryu Chŏng-sŏn highlights, the most pressing of issues for the narrative process of Korean literary historiography in the 1930s by scholars at Kyŏngsŏng Imperial University working as part of the Chosŏn Studies Movement was the establishment of the unique characteristics and identity of Chosŏn within their literary world and the penning of a uniquely *Korean* literature. He makes reference to *chaguk munhak* (자국문학 自國文學) or more directly, 'our national literature' that he considered to have been distorted during the Japanese colonial era:

'Korea's classical literature needed to be newly established; [in this] hanmun literature, which had formed the foundation [of classical literature], was excluded from the scope of national literature that centered on literature written in 'the national writing' (국문문자 國文文字). Additionally, after the march 1st movement, modern literature developed into the New-Literature (신문학 新文學) movement; the process of creating New-Literature was a process of 'casting away hanmun literature' which gave way to the realisation of *minjok munhak* (민족문학 民族文學).'¹⁵³

Ryu's observations highlight how the colonial literary space become imbued with the strong sentiments explored previously. First and foremost, indigenous elements of Korea are the

¹⁵³ Ryu Chŏng-sŏn, "Kŭndae Hanil Chaguk Munhaksawa Hanmunhak Insik - Haga Yaich'iwa Kimt'aejunŭl Chungsimŭro," *Ilbonhak Yŏn'gu* 55 (2018): 272

most imperative focus with Korean academics at the helm. The birth of a ‘new’ literature could only come to fruition through actively shaping hanmun literature into a *discarded literature*.

In this, *chaguk munhak* and *minjok munhak* (民族文學) as expressions for vernacular Korean literature came to carry ideological and patriotic weight. In this, academic scholarship of this ‘post-enlightenment’ era roots literary production and literary scholarship within the concepts of ‘the Korean people’ (민족 民族) and ‘our country’ (자국 自國). This created further distance from the external and the ‘foreignness’ of past Sinographic literary traditions. This led to the ‘process of casting away hanmun literature’ (脫한문학의 과정) towards the ‘realisation of *minjok* literature’ (민족문학의 실현) that Ryu Chŏng-sŏn mentions. This further complicates the potential study, research and canonisation of works produced in literary Sinitic beyond the Chosŏn dynasty and the status of these works in the broader definitions of ‘modern’ Korean literature as their creative roots are not sources of pride within the context of cultural nationalism.

By the 1930s, the ‘new-intellectuals’ of 1900-1910 who once strove for ‘civilization and enlightenment’ progress, had now given way to ‘Chosŏn Studies intellectuals.’ The previous fight against dynastic feudalism and Confucianism was replaced by a new fight for cultural definition, appreciation and survival in the colonial era. In this battle, the preservation of Korean language and culture was the main focus. In other words, although these literary histories do indeed explore Sino-Korean literature, and even devote whole books to this past literary tradition, we begin to see significant discussions and standpoints that no longer see Korean literature written in literary ‘Chinese’ as ‘Korean’ at all.

An important early figure to contribute to Chosŏn Studies was Chasan (자산 自山), An Hwak (안확 安廓 1886-1946), whose name is synonymous with the beginnings of literary

historiography. An's earliest contribution to the study of literature was through his work *Chosŏnŭi Munhak* (朝鮮의文學) 'Chosŏn Literature' published in *Hakchigwang* (학지광 學之光) *Lux Scientiae* Magazine in 1915. However, it was his career defining work and in-depth enquiry, *Chosŏn Munhaksa* (조선문학사 朝鮮文學史) 'A History of Chosŏn Literature' published in 1922 that was the first attempt at writing the history of Korean literature in its entirety up until that point. Both of An's publications provide significant insight in regard to early attitudes and academic attempts to narrativise Korea's literary history and its many genres; An also discusses the lingering issue of Sino-Korean literature within the discussions of Chosŏn literature.

As Sŏ Hyŏng-pŏm highlights, differing from enlightenment era intellectuals who sought to enlighten the public and bring about 'modern' social change through their publications, work of later intellectuals like An Hwak who came to the fore in the 1920s demonstrate a methodology that 'recognizes the independent character of literature itself and takes a step further and examines the changing patterns of a society through research on literature.'¹⁵⁴ In *A History of Chosŏn Literature*, An writes that 'because it expresses all [our] emotional phenomena in the most quick and curious of ways, there is nothing greater than literature if one intends to understand a people's true development and change.'¹⁵⁵ In his work, he compartmentalises the literary history of the Korean people into a set of distinct brackets of time that are further comprised of a variety of diverse literary genres. His final chapter of his literary history explores contemporary times, referred to as *ch'oegŭn munhak* (최근문학 最近文學) or 'recent literature.' An categorizes 'recent' literature into the following genres:

¹⁵⁴ Sŏ Hyŏng-pŏm, "1910-20 Nyŏndae Chasan Anhwagŭi Kukhak Yŏn'gurŭl T'onghae Pon Kŭndae Chisiginŭi Chuch'ejŏk Chagi Ihae," *Ōmunhak Yŏn'gu* 38, vol. 3 (2010): 262

¹⁵⁵ An Hwak, *Chosŏn Munhaksa* 2-3 in Ch'oe Ho-yŏng, "Chasan Anhwagŭi Naejŏk Kaejoron'gwa Chosŏnjŏk Munhwajuŭi Kihŏek," *Han'guk Minjok Munhwa* 64 (2007): 133.

new novels (신소설 新小說), *new poetry* (신시 新詩), *old novels* (구소설 舊小說), *contemporary novels* (현대소설 現代小說) and *drama* (극 劇).¹⁵⁶

An's earlier *Chosŏnŭi Munhak* shares similarities with Yi Kwang-su's *Munhak Iran Hao* (文學이란 何오) which was published in 1916. As Kim Tong-sik highlights, these two works of early attempts at defining a 'Korean' literature share an important connection through the way they both emphasise the ills of Confucianism on Korean cultural and social progress. Kim states that in the eyes of An Hwak, 'Confucianism is the fundamental reason for putting Chosŏn under colonial rule and making it a backward society that is inferior to modern culture' and ultimately it was 'this historical perception has a great influence on defining Chosŏn literature.'¹⁵⁷ Like Yi Kwang-su, An Hwak's *Chosŏnŭi Munhak* also highlights how literary Sinitic has caused problems, with An feeling very strongly that 'our Korean people have been *infected* with hanmun and Confucianism, but [only now] finally [we have] started to cast out these evils; is this not terribly pitiful?'¹⁵⁸

Kim Tong-sik clarifies An Hwak's rationale, highlighting that in *Chosŏnŭi Munhak*, he provides two chapters where he sets forth an exploration of the development process of Chosŏn literature. In this he writes of a process that has led to the damage of national sentiment through the existence and popularity of Sino-Korean literature. Both Confucianism and Sino-Korean literature are 'historical obstacles that distorted the Korean people's mind and suppressed natural growth' in An's critical writing, with an marked emphasis on elevating *new-literature* (신문학 新文學) with Sino-Korean literature has to be used 'as a historical seal' of

¹⁵⁶ Interestingly, an exploration of contemporary Sino-Korean poetic works does not feature despite their presence in print in the latter years of enlightenment era and also to an extent into the colonial era.

¹⁵⁷ Kim Tong-sik, "Han'guk Munhak Kaenyŏm Kyujŏngŭi Yŏksajŏk Pyŏnch'ŏne Kwanhayŏ," *Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhak Yŏn'gu* 30 (2010): 12

¹⁵⁸ An Hwak, "Chosŏnŭi Munhak," *Han'guk Hyŏndaemunhak Pip'yŏngsa* 1, ed Kwŏn Yŏng-min (Seoul: Tanae Ch'ulp'anbu, 1981): 34. Italics my own.

a new era. In this, literature itself becomes symbolically evocative of a revolutionary break in history:

‘He put a seal on Sino-Korean literature on the historical level, whereby he negates ‘old literature’ (구문학 舊文學)¹⁵⁹ in the sharp contrast between old and new [...] The era of new literature establishes itself as a possibility of the times through historical severance or exclusion of the era of old literature. New-Literature, as referred to by An, refers to literature that displays the characteristics of the Korean people while harmoniously synthesizing Eastern and Western ideas.’¹⁶⁰

An Hwak was a defining figure in the early historiography of literature and one can argue that his words highlight a purposely and strictly constructed divide becoming narrativized. That which may be considered ‘new’ was to be deeply connected to the Korean people. Said ideas had great sway on the development of discussions on literature within the greater Chosŏn Studies movement that came to the fore of Korean intellectual circles from the 1930s and indeed beyond.

In Sŏ Chun-sŏp’s academic enquiries into An Hwak’s *A History of Chosŏn Literature*, he acknowledges An’s significant contribution to how Korean literary history was to be shaped *beyond* his initial efforts, stating that An ‘wrote his literary history from the viewpoint of emphasizing subjectivity through the transformation process of the national spirit (ideology), seeing literature as a reflection of the national spirit’ while emphasizing that ‘he sees Korean literature as a reflection of the national spirit and national ideology, and writes an ideological and psychological literary history based on the evolution of ideology, thus becoming an example of the history of literature for later generations.’¹⁶¹ As has been seen in the above exploration of An Hwak, his methodology explores Sino-Korean literary history for the purpose of highlighting the historical *break* between a literature of the past with a new literature;

¹⁵⁹ Referring to hanmun literature in this context.

¹⁶⁰ Kim Tong-sik, “Han’guk Munhak Kaenyŏm Kyujŏngŭi Yŏksajŏk Pyŏnch’ŏne Kwanhayŏ,” 12-13

¹⁶¹ Sŏ Chun-sŏp, “Anjasan Chosŏn Munhakaek Taehayŏ,” *Kugŏ Kyoyuk* 35 (1979): 21-24.

An Hwak ultimately sees this break as a moment that greatly benefits the present and the future. While he still sees its place in Korea's long history and evident traditions, ultimately as the first literary history book for a future Korean people, the negative capital status that came to afflict literary Sinitic in the twentieth century is ultimately reinforced and passed down in a different way through the medium of historiography on literature.

This historiographic practice in academic writing on literary history, whereby Sino-Korean literature is explored for the purpose of highlighting the importance of its own end that ultimately allows Koreans to move forward to a 'pure' Korean literature, becomes compounded and further explored into the 1930s. Kim T'ae-jun (김태준 金台俊 1905 - 1949) has been anthologized in the academic discipline of Korean literary studies through his defining work *Chosŏn Hanmunhaksa* (조선한문학사 朝鮮漢文學史) "A History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature" which was published in 1931. Alongside An Hwak's *A History of Chosŏn Literature*, Kim T'ae-jun's book was the first publication to fully explore Sino-Korean literature's long history in the twentieth century and as a result, it is still looked upon as a defining volume that has greatly shaped Sino-Korean literary studies as a discipline within the realms of *kungmunhak* (국문학 國文學) as an academic field today.

Kim T'ae-jun's publication follows a similar style of period classification as An Hwak's, with the final chapter being devoted to "current Sino-Korean literature" (近世의 漢文學) whereby he explores the poetry of Kang Wi, Hwang Hyŏn and Kim T'aeg-yŏng, of which An's work does not explore.¹⁶² Despite the significance of the publication as the first on the history of Korean literary works composed in literary Sinitic, his exploration of Sino-Korean literature does not extend to publications produced from 1900 onwards. Through

¹⁶² As mentioned previously, together with Yi Kŏn-ch'ang, they are jointly referred to as the "Four Masters" who, supposedly, mark the end of Sino-Korean poetic history.

concluding his exploration of current literary trends without exploring contemporary Sino-Korean poetry in print media, he thus does not touch upon the possibilities of a *hanmunhak* for a new era.¹⁶³ The introduction to Kim T'ae-jun's publication begins with a prologue written by Kim Chae-hyök, who sees literary Sinitic as causing 'harm' to Korea but nevertheless harm not being its sole characteristic:

'Whether we look at hanmun literature as Chinese literature that has been developed within the territory of Chosön, or whether we see hanmun literature as part of Chosön literature itself [...] we cannot completely exclude it from the expansive field of Chosön literature. Even so, today, theories on the *restriction of hancha* have emerged, as too have theories on the *abolition of hancha* emerged in China, the country of Chinese characters;¹⁶⁴ [...] At this time, if there is nobody to gather the anthologies of the deceased and research hanmun literature of the past, then it could be difficult to examine what had once been read for so long on the Korean peninsula. [...] I am not saying that we should revive hanmun literature, [I am saying this] only because I feel the need to bring to an end this special literature of the past.'¹⁶⁵

Kim Chae-hyök's prologue to Kim T'ae-jun's work provides significant insight into attitudes of intellectuals of the time. Interestingly for a prologue, while highlighting its historical significance and contribution to literary historiography, he also supports and welcomes the publication equally to mark the *end* of Sino-Korean literary history. In his words, 'the golden age of Chinese literature has surely passed, and now it is facing a period of suffering' to the extent that intellectuals in China are even it is now time to put an end to Sinographs.¹⁶⁶ He sees the volume as a work for *posterity* and a reminder of Korea's past place in the Sinographic sphere.

¹⁶³ As Ch'oe indeed highlights, 'his *History of Sino-Chosön Literature* does not have a perfect system of surveying all genres of Sino-Korean Literature.' Cf. Ch'oe Yöngsöng, "Kim'taejunüi Haksul Yön'guwa Kukko Chöngni Chagöpp - Chosön Hanmun Haksa Sösurül Chungsimüro," *Hanminjogömunhak* 46 vol. 46 (2005): 200.

¹⁶⁴ Rendered as *hancha chehallon* (한자체한론) and *hancha ch'ölp'yeron* (한자철폐론), respectfully.

¹⁶⁵ Due to difficulty obtaining a copy of the original, a digital copy has been used. Cf. Kim T'ae-jun, *Chosön Hanmunhaksa* (Seoul: Storyclass, 2016): n.p.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Although Kim T'ae-jun's *History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature* is an important document in Korean literary history for understanding early historiographic methodology of Sino-Korean literature in the post-enlightenment era, Kim himself was naturally greatly shaped by the zeitgeist of the twentieth-century intellectual field and had strong opinions on the status of literary Sinitic in Korean history, culture and literature.¹⁶⁷ Having grown up in the era of new-intellectualism and now a leading figure in the age of cultural nationalism as a response to colonialism and imperialism, 'Kim T'ae-jun thought that Sino-Korean literature had become an *antique of history* (역사의 골동품) and would rather fulfill his historical role by settling and dissolving' Sino-Korean literary practices.¹⁶⁸ In other words, through his academic scholarship into the history of Sino-Korean literature, Kim could both leave his mark on literary studies as an important figure in an era of Chosŏn Studies, while also helping close the chapter on Sino-Korean literature for the *good* of the nation – allowing *Chosŏn Munhak*, i.e. literature written in the language of Chosŏn, to flourish and be the *only* literature of the future. This sentiment is evident in his own words in the closing chapter of the book, as he calls from the people of Korea to 'strive to clear away the outdated and antiquated and learn new things for building new culture! This is the shouting slogan of *A History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature*.'¹⁶⁹

Kim Tong-sik highlights that 'just as hanmun literature's historic mission ended even in China (the home of Sinitic literature), it was Kim T'ae-jun's belief that Sino-Korean literature had no choice but to play the opposing role of 'antithesis' in the development process

¹⁶⁷ As Ch'oe also mentions, 'in a *History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature*, rather than discussing only hanmun literature, [Kim] instead attempted to explore the entire culture of the time that enveloped hanmun literature in both a general and broad sense. For this reason, it is true that [the work contains] some disappointing elements, such as his analysis of literary works or additionally, [the fact that] while he may indeed provide critique on writers and their works, it is done through his numerous quotes from works by his predecessors; it is a fact that his own insights [as a consequence] are lacking. However, this may be understandable to some extent considering the academic position of the author, who was in his late twenties at the time.' Cf. "Kimt'aejunŭi Haksul Yŏn'guwa Kukko Chŏngni Chagŏp Chosŏn Hanmun Haksa Sŏsurŭl Chungsimŭro," 200.

¹⁶⁸ Kim Tong-sik, "Han'guk Munhak Kaenyŏm Kyujŏngŭi Yŏksajŏk Pyŏnch'ŏne Kwanhayŏ," 22-23

¹⁶⁹ Kim T'ae-jun, *Chosŏn Hanmunhaksa* (Seoul: Chosŏn Ŏmunhak'oe, 1931): 191.

of Chosŏn literature.’¹⁷⁰ To Kim T’ae-jun, ‘therefore, it is clear that *A History of Sino-Chosŏn Literature* was also written as a part of its description within the scope of the Chosŏn Literature History. However, the history of Korean Literature in Chosŏn regards works in Korean as the only works of Korean literature, so it is necessary to consider whether or not there is a change in stance on this. However, considering that the exclusion of hanmun literature from the category of Korean literature was the dominant atmosphere of the 1930s, it may be said that it may be an important change of position.’¹⁷¹ Ultimately, we can conclude that alongside An Hwak, Kim T’ae-jun’s contribution to Korean literary studies is also significant. To him however, it is clear that his book was an attempt to wholeheartedly record history solely for posterity. Kim wanted to effectively publish this work as a symbolic line in the sand, so Korea could move forward towards of a future of a *chaguk, minjŏk*, Chosŏn literature written in han’gŭl.

In many ways, the debate that ‘Chosŏn literature’ only refers to literary works written in vernacular Korean became somewhat universalised in the 1930s. This entered public discourse through published work by literary coteries. At this time, we see the rise of the *Korea Artista Proleta Federatio* (KAPF) (조선 프롤레타리아 예술가 동맹 [카프]) leftist literary group from roughly 1925 to 1935. With interests in proletarian literature that sought to rouse class consciousness rather than focus on ‘art for art’ literary works, one of the most active writers and film makers of the early twentieth century, Im Hwa (임화 林和 1908 – 1953) came to the fore. For literary figures such as Im Hwa, maintaining and fostering a strong national language was paramount to the proletarian cause and as a literary figure, he took interest in how one should define Korean literature in such uncertain times.

¹⁷⁰ Kim Tong-sik, “Han’guk Munhak Kaenyŏm Kyujŏngŭi Yŏksajŏk Pyŏnch’ŏne Kwanhayŏ,” 24.

¹⁷¹ Ch’oe Yŏng-sŏng, “Kimt’aejunŭi Haksul Yŏn’guwa Kukko Chŏngni Chagŏp Chosŏn Hanmun Haksa Sŏsurŭl Chungshimŭro,” 201-2.

Im Hwa discussed the value of Sino-Korean literature (particularly in regard to the novel) with other prominent literary figures. This coincided with the publication of a well-known discussion piece entitled *Chosŏnmunhaküi Chŏngüi Irök'e Kyujŏngharyŏ Handa!* (『朝鮮文學』의 定義 이러케 規定하러 한다!) “Defining the Definitions of Chosŏn Literature!” in *Samchŏlli* (삼천리 三千里) magazine in 1936. As Kim Ch’öl mentions, during the colonial era, for Korean writers, writing novels in *Chosŏn’ŏ* (조선어 朝鮮語) in a pure han’gŭl style became very quickly normalised.¹⁷² The article is a discussion piece, where, one by one, twelve leading names each set out their theories on the definition of Chosŏn literature. Its publication became a watershed moment in tune with Kim T’ae-jun’s vision of a future literature; some of Korea’s most well-known names, Yi Kwang-su, Yŏm Sang-sŏp, Kim Ŏk, Yi T’ae-jun and Pak Chong-hwa contribute. This publication starts in the following manner:

‘If we follow generally established theory, for something to be completely ‘Chosŏn munhak’ then it must invariably be either A – written in the writing of Chosŏn, B – written by a person from Chosŏn or C – be written for the purpose of ‘being read by’ Chosŏn people. But let us examine a number of paradoxes:

A – Works such as Pak Yŏn-am’s *Yŏlha Ilgi* (熱河日記) and Il Ryŏn’s *Samguk Yusa* (三國遺事) were written in hanmun, so are these works not Chosŏn literature? Tagore of India’s works such as *Crescent Moon* and *Gitanjali* were published in English, as were the works of Singh, Gregory and Yeats; although their works are composed in English, Tagore’s work is seen as Indian and Yeats’ as Irish literature. In this, how should the rules governing literature and written language be correctly established?

¹⁷² ‘Though it may not have quite been the case for other areas, the domination of pure han’gŭl style within the genre of novels was established early. Thus the equation of ‘pure han’gŭl = Korean (Chosŏn language) = Korean (Chosŏn) Novels’ in light of the short history of novel writing [in Korea] in rapid pace fixed itself without being questioned whatsoever.’ Cf. Kim Ch’öl, “Han’gugŏüi T’ansaeng,” *Saegugŏ Saenghwal* 17 vol. 1 (2007): 144.

B – if the writer should be limited to that of someone who is from Chosŏn, then works such as those by Nakanishi Inosuke (中西伊之助) amongst others, works that were written based on the thoughts and feelings of Chosŏn people... is it right to simply do away with these types of literary works without nothing more to consider?

C – if they must be written for the purpose of ‘being read by’ Chosŏn people, then the literary works repeatedly presented by Chang Hyŏk-ju in Tokyo’s literary circles and works such as Kang Yong-hŭl’s *Ch’ogajip* (초가집) written with the principle aim of being read by British and Americans... are all of these not Chosŏn literature?’¹⁷³

The late 1930s became a turning point of Japanese imperial policy that saw the implementation of *naesŏn ilch’e* (내선일체 内鮮一体) ideology. The Korean language was removed from studies with Korean language publications forced to cease by the early 1940s. As such, ‘writing in the Chosŏn language was facing a crisis. *Samchŏlli*’s featured article reflects the first degree of that critical situation. For Chosŏn literature as an autonomous domain, its existence was soon to be threatened, creating a situation whereby writers were forced to write in Japanese.’¹⁷⁴

In this, we see how the post-enlightenment colonial academic space of the 1930s came to see vernacular literary production as a highly codified practice, more specifically for the means of cultural survival and colonial resistance. The opening of the feature sets the scene for an in-depth discussion on the boundaries of Korean literature in the face of this growing imperialist threat to their sovereignty, culture and linguistic identity. This debate was of great importance to these men as they literary world and language was to face a highly uncertain future.

¹⁷³ “Chosŏnmunhakŭi Chŏngŭi Irŏk’e Kyujŏngharyŏ Handa!,” *Samchŏlli* 8 vol. 8, 1 august 1936.

¹⁷⁴ Kim Ch’ŏl, “Han’gugŏŭi T’ansaeng,” 145.

Although a number of early twentieth-century Korea's most famous names from the literary scene contributed to this special feature, Im Hwa's contribution to the discussion is of particular note. We see him challenge the past intellectual elite's bourgeois practice of writing in literary Sinitic. To Im Hwa, if Chosŏn literature is to provide value to their people, then it must be written in the language of Chosŏn, since one's language is what may bring the ideology of a people to proper fruition.¹⁷⁵ As Hwang Jae-moon highlights, we cannot overlook the fact that in Im Hwa's definition, work written in literary Sinitic does not necessarily fall beyond the boundaries of the scope of what he considers to be *Chosŏn Munhak*. Nevertheless 'it can be evaluated that he saw the value and status of Sino-Korean literary works as *subordinate* to works of *kungmun* literature of more native origins such as *sijo* as well as works of the common folk, such oral literature genres of *sŏlhwa* (설화 說話) and *kayo* (가요 歌謠).'¹⁷⁶ This conclusion is seemingly supported by Cho Tong-il. Cho writes that during this period, he sees the rise of famous novelists and theorists as shaping a 'deformed, colonial-modern literature' (기형적이며 식민지적인 근대문학) that purposely overlooked valuable 'medieval' traditions, styles and genres.¹⁷⁷ Decades later in his *Han'guk Munhak T'ongsa*, he goes into more specifics, writing that:

'The premise that *Chosŏn munhak* only has a future and not a past seeks to emphasize the significance of pioneers, but this also carries the risk of severing the relationship that exists between the succession of tradition and the creation of the new. The argument that unilaterally stresses the significance of 'pioneering' [literature] that creates 'something' (有) from 'nothing' (無) while undervaluing the literature of the past stemmed from not understanding the varied circumstances in which creative efforts aiming

¹⁷⁵ 'Regarding works such as the *Yŏlha Ilgi* and the *Samguk Yusa*, it is difficult to regard them as being true to the meaning of Chosŏn literature or as literary works in the strictest sense. [...] In general, I see this type of literary production as comparably inferior with that of even *sijo*, oral tales and songs...' Cf. "Chosŏnmunhakŭi Chŏngŭi Irŏk'e Kyujŏngharyŏ Handa!" *Samchŏlli* 8 vol. 8, 1 August 1936.

¹⁷⁶ Hwang Jae-moon, "Munhangnon Munjangnon Munhaksaronesŏui Chŏnt'ongŭi Munje - Igwangsu It'aejun Imhwarŭl Chungsimŭro," *Han'guk Munhak Nonjip Keimyung University Journal* 43, 2011: 28.

¹⁷⁷ Cho Tong-il, "Chŏnt'ongŭi T'oehwawa Kyesŭngŭi Panghyang," (1966) republished in *Cho Tong-il P'yŏngnon Sŏnjip* (Seoul: Chisikŭl Mandŭnŭn Chisik, 2015): 44.

towards a modern literature came about. [...] Tradition was regarded as purely *outmoded convention* (因習) and [they] made it so that all would be rejected. [...] They said “*now we live in a free world and nobody has to be afraid: we must import, translate and assimilate literature from all countries of the West as well as Japan and establish a foundation for our literature that forcefully demonstrates ethno-national character* (민족성).” If we take this on face value, new literature (신문학) can only be [seen as] *transplanted literature* (이식문학).¹⁷⁸

This is an important assessment of the status of tradition (of which Sino-Korean literary works were a part of) within the minds of intellectuals of the times and Im Hwa’s assessments are demonstrative of the beliefs of many of his contemporaries.¹⁷⁹ Namely, as we have also seen in An Hwak and Kim T’ae-jun’s histories, it was difficult for them to completely *deny* any merit of Sino-Korean literary production. They acknowledge the need for it to be remembered and understood for posterity. But due to its very nature of being Sinitic and its history and stylistic development being shaped from without rather than from within, its position within the strata of *Chosŏn* literary genres was always low.

Another monumental figure in the recording of literary history was To-nam (도남 陶南) Cho Yun-je (조윤제 趙潤濟 1904 -1976). A pioneer of Korean Literary studies and research, he enlisted at the prep school (예과 豫科) of the newly established Kyŏngsŏng University in 1924, later enrolling as a student in the Department of Law and Letters in 1926. ‘He was the only student who supported a Chosŏn Language and Literature department. Unlike other students, he did not aspire to departments of law or medicine which guaranteed success, but instead chose the lonely and arduous road of researching the *language and literature of a*

¹⁷⁸ Cho, T’ongsa vol. 4, 235-6 and 237-8. Italics my own.

¹⁷⁹ Additionally, as a literary figure of the leftist movement of the 1920s, Im Hwa saw the value in the roots of native tradition that came from ordinary people. This is why he makes mention of oral literature which is a purely native Korean literary practice.

ruined country (亡國).¹⁸⁰ In this Sim Chae-wan and Kim Myōng-ho highlight that for his time, Cho Yun-je was not ‘just a mere scholar, but a practical intellectual who was devoted to national liberation and unification’¹⁸¹ despite the precarious colonial situation that the Korean people were subjected. According to Yi U-sōng, ‘during the colonial era, Kim T’ae-jun and Cho Yun-je [...] were drawn to an ideology of *minjŏk purity* (민족 순수성) and came to hold an intolerable stance towards the legacy of *hanmunhak*.’¹⁸²

Cho’s publication *Kungmunhaksa* (국문학사 國文學史) “Korean Literary History” published in 1949 was one of the earliest works on literary history to be published after the end of the colonial era. It continues to reflect similar cultural nationalist attitudes as we have seen in publications of the 1920s and 1930s. In the introduction, Cho specifically seeks to locate his scholarship in the *present*, stating that his book was not published for a Korean literature of a past age:

‘We must not forget that it exists for the purpose of Korean literature of the present. The present is about building the future. For a great future [...] an understanding of the present is paramount yet [still] this present comes from the past. Therefore, in order to understand the present, we must search the history of the past; [if we] do not investigate into [it], then the developments of that which comes after it cannot happen.’¹⁸³

Although his words are somewhat self-evident, Ryu Chun-p’il highlights that the methodology or historical perspective that underpins Cho Yun-je’s literary history is simple – it is the premise that the ‘life’ of literature, of which is an expression of the lifestyle of the people is [in

¹⁸⁰ Sim Chae-wan, “Tonam Choyunje Paksauī Hoego,” *Munhak Han ’gŭl* 6 (1992): 143 quoted in Kim Myōng-ho, “Tonamūi Saengaewa Hangmun-Minjoge Salgo Minjoge Chukta,” *Kojŏn Munhak Yŏn ’gu* 27 (2005): 28.

¹⁸¹ Kim Myōng-ho, “Tonamūi Saengaewa Hangmun-Minjoge Salgo Minjoge Chukta,” 23.

¹⁸² Yi U-sōng, “Han’guk’anmunhak Yŏn’guūi Hoegowa Chŏnmang,” *Han ’guk Hanmunhak Yŏn ’gu* 8 (1985): 285-9 quoted in Kim Chin-gyun, “Hanmunhak Yŏn’guwa 20segi Munhwa Kwŏllyŏk,” *Hanmunhak Nonjip* 51 (2018): 39.

¹⁸³ Cho Yun-je, *Kungmunhaksa* (Seoul: Tonggukmunhwasa, 1948): 2-3 quoted in Ryu Chun-p’il, “Tonam Kungmunhaksauī Kūndaemunhak Sŏsulgwa Kūndaeinsik,” *Kojŏn Munhak Yŏn ’gu* 27, (2005): 168.

a state of] continuation'¹⁸⁴ towards a complete 'Korean' moment on the horizon. He adds that 'for To-nam, *minjök chǒngsin* is the ideology of his literary history. This *minjök chǒngsin* is the core of life.'¹⁸⁵ We see Cho's introduction expressing his means of demonstrating his respect for past literary successes, but as a tool to understanding the steppingstones in which Korea's literary history has followed. In this, he sees not the journey as the important element of Korea's literary history, but the final destination as the focus. At the end of his history, Cho Yun-je further elucidates his personal attitudes toward Sino-Korean literature. In this new age, they have come to wholeheartedly support *ǒnmun ilch'i* (언문일치 言文一致) or "the unity of spoken and written language" toward the establishment of a new era of literary production.¹⁸⁶

In the Korean context, 'modernity is of epoch-making significance through its relationship with the insolvency of hanmun literature. For To-nam, who found the basis of his Korean literary history being in the mutual relationship shared by hanmun and kungmun literature, this is highly evident. Entering this era, Korean literature was able to return to an era that existed *before* the arrival of hanmun literature. This manifested as *ǒnmun ilch'i* and the autonomy of a Korean, national literature.'¹⁸⁷ The ideas of *independence*, *autonomy* and *restoration* define Cho Yun-je's words and we see the cultural weight that he attaches to vernacular Korean as a medium for literary production. Synonymous with 'independence' and 'autonomy' through the new-intellectuals of the enlightenment era, towards the Chosǒn Studies

¹⁸⁴ Ryu Chun-p'il, "Tonam Kungmunhaksaii Kundaemunhak Sǒsulgwa Kundaes Insik," 171.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 172.

¹⁸⁶ 'Since hanmun literature came to our country, the literary world here has always maintained [until now] an interrelated relationship that is confrontational with hanmun literature. [But now] all of those connections have been severed and we have been able to restore the form that is independent and autonomous. In other words, hanmun literature has been entirely pushed out of our literary circle and we have restored and returned our literature to how it once was before. Therefore, we can say that later Korean literature has since entered the era of restoration.' Cf. Cho Yun-je, *Kungmunhaksa*, (Seoul: Tongguk Munhwasa, 1948): 483-4 quoted in Ryu Chun-p'il, "Tonam Kungmunhaksaii Kundaemunhak Sǒsulgwa Kundaes Insik," *Kojǒn Munhak Yǒn'gu* 27, (2005): 174.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 494 in Ryu Chun-p'il, "Tonam Kungmunhaksaii Kundaemunhak Sǒsulgwa Kundaes Insik," 174.

scholars of literature into the colonial era and beyond, Cho personally concludes his study on the point that Korean literature has gone full circle, returning back to a time where foreign elements are no longer the defining element of their literary landscape.

It is important to note that Cho Yun-je was clear in the fact that unlike some of the other opinions explored, despite being written in Sinographs, he saw Sino-Korean literature as a *part* of Korean literature in some form that needed recognition. In this regard, he refers to this as *k'ŭn han'guk munhak* (큰 한국문학) or “*Greater* Korean literature.”¹⁸⁸ In other words, ‘in light of an ideological stance of the ethno-national self’s innate purity, in Cho Yun-je’s *Korean Literary History*, literature itself also wants to only deal with a pure Korean literature. Yet since one cannot avoid Sino-Korean literature written by the hands of Korean people, he professes the logic that is must form part of the scope of a ‘greater’ Korean literature. [...] Regarding Sino-Korean literature, he is expressing that Korean literary history is a ‘history of struggle’ between national and Sino literature’ [...] difficult to throw away yet difficult to embrace, it has become an object of love and hatred. Because the premise of this love and hate is so great, a ‘Greater Korean Literature’ category has been established in order to accept a Sino-Korean literature’¹⁸⁹ thus giving a new space whereby it is neither totally peripheral, nor totally central in patriotic modern literary critique.

3. Sino-Korean Literature and Language Today: The Problems of Korea’s Classical/Modern Dichotomy and its Greater Consequences:

¹⁸⁸ ‘Namely, if one says that Korean literature in Korean is the indigenous literature of Korea and is thus ‘pure’ Korean literature (순 한국문학), then hanmun literature is a Korean literature that is not ‘pure’ but still unites with it and becomes ‘greater’ Korean literature.’ Cf. Cho Yun-je, *Han'guk Munhaksǎ*, (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1987): 17 quoted in Kim Chin-gyun, “Hanhakkwa Han'guk'anmunhagŭi sai, Kŭndae Hanmunhak,” *Kukcheŏmun* 51 (2011): 147. As Kim mentions, this quote itself is from a 1987 edition, which is a rework and reprint of Cho’s *Kungmunhasa* from 1948 also followed by another version in 1963 under the title of *Han'guk Munhaksǎ*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 147-8.

This thesis has put forth a series of theoretical structures that have broadly shaped the trajectory of this enquiry into Sino-Korean poetry. Bourdieu's theories can shed new light on the seismic shifts in intellectual power and how this dramatically changed the cultural tastes of Korea as it transitioned into the twentieth century. This would have significant consequences: new-intellectualism and the call for *munmyōng kaehwa* or "enlightenment and civilisation" supposedly lead to a rejection of dynastic Chosŏn's highly valued cultural and social capital, namely literary Sinitic and all the social prestige attached to it.

This rejection was exacerbated by the rise of a new print media culture. This further muddied the waters of Sino-Korean literary production, as the dichotomy of 'Sino' as foreign, backward and irrelevant and han'gŭl as native, progressive and vital for the future came to be strengthened. Beyond into the colonial era throughout the 1920s to 1940s, we explored the further maturation of this dichotomy through the beginnings of academia, university research and the start of literary history publications as a means of fostering Korean identity and culture in the face of colonial threats. This era saw the fracturing of Sino-Korean literary practices coming full circle, to the extent that works of dynastic times by Koreans even coming to be questioned as to whether they are 'Korean' literary works at all. Rejected as a periphery literature that is neither Chinese nor Korean, academics, theories and publishers of this time understood the need to acknowledge its presence and relevance for the sake of posterity but ultimately as a steppingstone to move forward.

Even today, the way the course of Korea's vast literary history is narrativised remains a complicated element of literary studies. Over the decades a wide variety of literary history books have been published and through these publications, we can see diverging attempts at the way broad eras, periods and time frames of Korean literary history are categorised and periodised. Nevertheless, in general discourse, the literary history of Korea is often cursorily

divided into two overly broad categories of *classical, traditional or premodern literature* (고전문학 古典文學) and *modern literature* (현대문학 現代文學) for the sake of ease and a significant number of literary histories focus solely on one area.¹⁹⁰ Through this approach, Korea's literary history comes to exist as binary opposites. Although they may have broad and varied interests, students majoring in Korean literature at university departments of Korean Language and Literature must pick a specialism, be it either modern literature or classical literature.¹⁹¹

But what are the problems with this dichotomy of viewing a whole history of literature in such a way? In the case of Korea, how may the narrative of literary history shaped by this polarity exacerbate issues regarding the exploration of literature of the enlightenment era as a highly transitional moment that can be said to manifest *between* these binaries, both in regards of actual time as well as in terms of literary styles, genres and choices of written language? What effect may this polarising phenomenon have on the creation of a truly reflective literary canon? In order to understand how Korea's twentieth-century canon can be opened up and the genre of Sino-Korean poetry redefined to fit into that canon, it is important to first explore how academics in contemporary scholarship have come to challenge this binary and raise questions about the problems of the classical/modern narrative.

Debates on the modern/classical issue were particularly fervent up until the 1980s and 1990s. Despite this, however, the debate, to some extent, still remains open-ended. A leading figure in Korean literary studies, Kim Hunggyu, argues that this simplification is

¹⁹⁰ As Kim Hunggyu also states, the dichotomy between these two broad categorizations is “not based on a detailed study of the history of Korean literature, but on common perceptions of the difference” and further adds that “this distinction is widely accepted for convenience in research on Korean literature.” Cf. Kim, Hunggyu. Fouser, Robert J. (trans). *Understanding Korean Literature*. New York: M. E. Sharp. 1997. p. 193.

¹⁹¹ In another publication by Kim Hunggyu, he writes about the possibility of a push towards combining the specialisms: Cf. Kim Hunggyu, “Kojŏnmunhak Hyŏndaemunhagŭi T'onghapkwa Saeroun Kyoyuk Kwajŏng,” *Han'gugŏwa Munhwa* 1 (2007): 99-106. This stance is to avoid issues of overly narrowly one's scope of study at university level.

highly problematic in the case of nations like Korea, “the danger of dividing Korean literature into traditional and modern is that it reflects the colonial view of Korean history which denied the significance of historical continuity through the value of traditional Korean culture [...] traditional and modern literature are viewed as oil and water in the same bowl.”¹⁹²

In this, Kim Hunggyu highlights the critical issue of *historical continuity*. What Kim is highlighting is how ‘premodern’ literature has indeed shaped ‘modern’ writing in ways that are not often acknowledged. For example, the incorporation of *p’ansori* style speech into character dialogue, drawing upon folk legends and myths for thematic content and, as is most important to this thesis, the continued use of, and further developments of ‘traditional’ genres of poetry, such as *sijo*, *kasa* and *hansi*. The classical/modern dichotomy thus proves unhelpful as it downplays aspects of continuity that indeed exist in Korea’s literary history.

In Kwŏn Yŏng-min’s *History of Modern Korean Literature*, he explores clear examples of continuity regarding older poetic genres into the twentieth century. He highlights the important shift from music and song to writing and reading as a decisive moment of change taking place among vernacular genres originally of far older origins. Kwŏn evinces that vernacular poetry like *sijo* and *kasa*, although long possessing the old ‘characteristics of songs to be sung’ (and thus technically excluded them we may call literature) would be seen in a new light come the enlightenment era. The manner in which such popular genres were enjoyed changed as they made it into the pages of print media: ‘except for the *ch’angga* genre, [all] poetry from the enlightenment era [onwards] was not sung. Due to the separation of poetry and music, be it in the form of *sijo* or *kasa*, the form of poetry of the enlightenment era were all read or recited through *writing*.’¹⁹³

¹⁹² Kim Hunggyu, *Understanding Korean Literature*, 194-5.

¹⁹³ Kwŏn Yŏng-min, *Han’guk Hyŏndae Munhaksa 1* (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2002): 149-50.

In other words, there is need for greater acknowledgement of the fact that Korean literary history does demonstrate elements of continuity from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries but the narrativisation process of a forced binary continues to foster *discontinuity*. Interestingly enough, in the same discussion, Kwŏn Yŏng-min also states that ‘the most important change that can be ascertained in the literature of the enlightenment era is the decline in the traditions of Sino-Korean literature and poetry.’¹⁹⁴ This further highlights the need for more discussion on Sino-Korean literature’s own subtle elements of continuity into the twentieth century alongside its vernacular counterparts that Kwŏn’s research more readily explores.

The issue of historical discontinuity in contemporary scholarship is further exacerbated by the fact that, generally speaking, the majority of Korean literature until the twentieth century was written in literary Sinitic. As explored, this came to be considered a relic of the past, inappropriate for a new era by the turn of the century. Seen in previous chapters, the result is that *modern* Korean literature became intrinsically linked to the medium of *vernacular* Korean language. Hanmun’s status as foreign and dated language is a self-fulfilling prophecy that facilitated its own discontinuation from the literary narrative of modernity.

In essence, through severing the historical continuity of literary history, Sino-Korean literature is more easily consigned to a bygone era; any continued presence that it may have becomes untenable in comparison to other genres in the vernacular. Within the context of literary history, twentieth-century Korea is supposed to be an era *free* from its past as a subordinate member of the Sinographic sphere.¹⁹⁵ Thus, in finding a place for Sino-Korean

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 149.

¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile Hong pinpoints the enlightenment era as the source of this contention: ‘classical literary history and new literary history has been strictly separated and described and it is difficult to not see the starting point [of this separation] as being the enlightenment era. It is true that the overall teaching of Korean literature was changing greatly during this period, but there are many difficulties in establishing perspectives of old literature

poetry of the twentieth century within the canon of ‘modern’ Korean literary works, the image of a new era of ethno-national literature (*minjok munhak*) in the vernacular Korean language and the importance of that achievement (despite such difficulties as colonialism and war) comes to lose some of its luster. In an era where terminology such as *minjok munhak*, *chaguk munhak* and *Chosŏn munhak* rule academic literary discourse, this is not an option.

It is issues such as these that shaped the polarising discourse of literary study in Korea throughout the twentieth century (and continue to do so). Such a trajectory also ultimately sustains a power dynamic that maintains Sino-Korean poetry’s liminality in twentieth-century literary history. Kim Hunggyu further adds that “the inclusion of literature written in Classical Chinese within the body of Korean literature has been a controversial cultural issue, because Classical Chinese represents a foreign language”:

“Those who argue against the inclusion of this literature base their arguments on the non-Korean origin of Chinese characters: Korean literature is vernacular literature written in han’gŭl that deals with the experiences, sensibilities, and thoughts of the Korean people; therefore, literature that makes use of Chinese characters and Chinese literary forms cannot be considered Korean literature. This argument first appeared in the second decade of the twentieth century and was firmly established as orthodoxy by the end of 1920s.”¹⁹⁶

Kim Hunggyu touches upon the academic timeline that this thesis has explored from the enlightenment discourse of early print media spaces, through to early literary theory and finally the beginnings of Korean literary studies as a discipline. As this work has traced this

and new literature. For example, there is the view that New Literature is literature that has been established through the transplantation of Western culture, and it is this that forms the fundamental criterion for classifying literature by era. This is the basis for the chronic ills of Korean literary history’s division into eras.’ Hong Ki-sam, “Han’guk Munhaksa Sidae Kubyŏllon,” *Han’guk Munhak Yŏn’gu* 12 (1989): 156.

¹⁹⁶ Kim Hunggyu, *Understanding Korean Literature*, 9.

timeline, so too can one see how Sino-Korean literary production developed into a ‘controversial culture issue’ as a representation of a ‘foreign language.’¹⁹⁷

Literary historian Cho Tong-il has written about this extensively from as early as the 1960s. In a very early piece of literary criticism by Cho from 1966, he sees the issue of Korea’s historical discontinuity as being exacerbated by the reliance on Western literary standards to divide and compartmentalise time periods. As he criticizes, ‘taking Western literature as the standard for our own literature was an irresponsible measure. What is also irresponsible is crying out for a whole-hearted affirmation of [our] traditions without actually establishing a future image of [modern] Korean literature *as a continuation* of literature [that existed] in the Chosŏn dynasty.’¹⁹⁸

In a later work from 1985, Cho continues to describe such a polarity as a ‘decisive obstacle’ in understanding the true shape of Korean literature. In this work he underlines that although the polarity of new and old literature ‘continues to this day’ there remains the possibility that in ‘combining work on both sides of literary history and also theoretical inquiry, we should be able to refine our thinking about what literature is and how it should be created to resolve many controversies. We waste our time by not doing this. The scope of the field’s awareness is limited and the trend of misrepresenting assertions by being obsessed with false prejudices and unable to self-criticize has not been dispelled.’¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ “The rush towards economic development in the Third Republic (1962-1979), as exemplified by the phrase ‘modernization of the homeland’ emphasized rapid industrial development, exacerbating negative views on traditional values and culture.” *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁹⁸ Cho Tong-il, “Chŏnt’ongŭi T’oehwawa Kyesŭngŭi Panghyang,” (1966) republished in *Cho Tong-il P’yŏngnon Sŏnjip* (Seoul: Chisikŭl Mandŭnŭn Chisik, 2015):19. In a much later work of his in English, Cho writes again that the “defects are plain of see” of such a popular periodization of literary history: “as a Eurocentric conception, it may distort the histories of other civilizations, and, as it is cultivated and promoted in social history, it neglects the autonomy of literary history. [...] The periodization of ancient, medieval, and modern ages explains only a specific aspect of world history, and without any convincing results.” Cf. Cho, *Interrelated issues in Korean, East Asian and World Literature* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006): 67-8.

¹⁹⁹ Cho Tong-il, “Sin’gu Munhakkwanŭi Taeripkwa Kyoch’e,” *Tongyanghak* 15 (1985): 94

In English language scholarship, literary historian Peter H. Lee also contributes to this debate in regard to its greater effects on forming a representative canon. Writing during the 1990s, Lee points out that by that time, the field had long reached “a powerful literary-historical consensus” that “Korean literature should accord priority to the vernacular literature that constitutes a distinct tradition”:

“Distinct, some argue, because it is a repository of native beliefs and values that speaks for the common people, as contrasted to elite literature in Chinese devoid of popular concerns. [...] The ideology of a new canon and new history is not always so simplistically presented, but there is an inherent danger of conceiving it as an ideological project from a universal standpoint. The historian’s task is to evaluate not only native (and popular) works neglected in the past but also to examine works in Chinese once considered canonical but now neglected.”²⁰⁰

In other words, Peter Lee raises questions regarding how Korean literary history has been canonized. In his own words, Lee highlights that those who have power over the process have given *priority* to “vernacular literature that constitutes a distinct tradition” – this tradition ultimately meaning one born of a purely Korean writing tradition in the vernacular and not of a Chinese one. We will later see how this has been greatly influenced by nationalist thinking.²⁰¹

It is through the polarity of Korean literary history research and its prioritisation of the vernacular in early scholarship and its neglect of Sino-Korean works (as a result of

²⁰⁰ Peter H. Lee, *Explorations in Korean Literary History* (Seoul: Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, 1998): 19.

²⁰¹ “‘Modern Korean literature’ needs to be deconstructed in order for us to better understand the meaning of modern. What students and researchers refer to as modern Korean literature in fact retains many remnants of the premodern. This period witnessed the expression of a strong desire to overthrow cultural traditions of the past but it also saw the impossibility of doing so. Elements of the past [...] were still effective and were incorporated into a literary culture that would become dominant in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The process whereby cultural residues become effective needs to be examined in order to understand the ‘newness’ associated with modern Korean literature. Second, modern Korean literature is ambiguous because scholarly discussions on the subject have brushed aside writing and reading practices, which were hugely influential by modern print-media and transnational literary forces at the time, it is futile to discuss the ‘modern-ness’ of Korean literature.” Jooyeon Rhee. *The Novel in Transition: Gender and Literature in Early Colonial Korea* (United States: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2019): 2-3.

changes seen through a Bourdieusian lens) that Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century is able to get lost in the middle of the binary. Sino-Korean poetry written during the enlightenment era and beyond is *not* premodern, classical literature. Though it may be written in literary Sinitic, a literary medium so inherently linked to Korea's past, it remained a genre of choice and, albeit less present within the cultural and literary landscape, it maintained continued relevance into the twentieth century.

However, this thesis argues that the negation of literary Sinitic as once valued cultural capital was so intense during the twentieth century as a result of the tumultuous nature of Korea's history of colonialism, war and division, that as a matter of necessity a national identity had to be strengthened. This has meant that the genre has faced exclusion from 'modern' literary discourse as a cultural element that sits beyond the realms of the twentieth century Korean ethno-nationalist self. As one of a few scholars contributing to 'modern Sino-Korean studies' Kim Chin-gyun points out that 'as Korea transitioned into a period of enlightenment, we see a shift in outlook leading to the loss of premodern civilisation's cultural heritage' but while intellectuals and scholars for a long time may have 'missed the opportunity to think seriously about the positive elements and heritage of old civilization [...] it seems to have come to a point in time where *modern hanmunhak* can be newly recognized, saved from the violence of modernity.'²⁰²

In other words, while Sino-Korean literature *in general* has gone from the highest level of prestige to decline and liminality and finally through to 'peripheral' Korean literature back to the present moment of acceptance, Sino-Korean poetry *of the twentieth century* cannot follow this same pattern. Namely, in acknowledging Sino-Korean poetry also as a *modern* genre that existed and maintained visible presence from 1900 through to the 1940s, it disrupts

²⁰² Kim Chin-gyun, "Hanhakkwa Han'guk'anmunhagüi Sai, Kündae Hanmunhak," *Kukche Ömun* 51 (2011): 162-3.

the established narrative that twentieth-century Korean literature is a seemingly proud monolith of ethno-national vernacular writing – by the *minjok*, for the *minjok*, written in *minjogŏ* (민족어 民族語) or “the language of the *minjok*.” Thus, the phenomenon of modern Sino-Korean literature comes to the fore as one of the last pieces in Korea’s modern history puzzle to be properly placed.

4. Conclusion:

This three-part theoretical exploration has broadly investigated a period of history from the latter Chosŏn period, through to the post-colonial/pre-war era of the late 1940s. Through an application of Bourdieu’s sociological theories, one can attain new understanding of a highly transitional era, as well as the greater ramifications of cultural upheavals from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century as Korea transitioned to a patriotic twentieth century that stressed national culture and language. Furthermore, this final section has been brought to a close looking at more contemporary issues related to said ramifications, with a focus on issues today that continue to affect the study and teaching of Korean literary history and language such as dichotomous pre/modern literary histories.

As the Neo-Confucian Chosŏn elites’ cultural and social dominance was to be lost upon the rise of the new-intellectual class, literary production in literary Sinitic would become a casualty in this rupture in Korea’s cultural fabric. Once the shining example of esteemed Chosŏn cultural capital, literary Sinitic was to no longer be looked to as valuable, interesting or worthwhile. More strongly, it came to be viewed in a *negative* light, a ‘relic’ of a past that enlightenment intellectuals were ashamed of, with these attitudes coming to be shared and read across the peninsula through a variety of published articles that vilified Sino-Korean language

and literature. These strong attitudes would continue to be endorsed into the twentieth century, which would prove to be a century of great difficulty. In the face of colonialism, war, division and dictatorship, the twentieth century would be a time whereby ‘native’ and ‘indigenous’ aspects of culture had to be protected, supported and prioritised as a means of national self-strengthening in times of threat.

Based on the wide variety of sources explored, a distinct critique of writing in literary Sinitic is evident. In early literary histories, Sino-Korean literature, once highly valued, became peripheral in favour of works in the vernacular. Sino-Korean literary production, an unavoidable reminder of Korea’s past relationship with China, has come to be seen as ‘a cancer’ that must be removed for native creativity to flourish. In this cultural climate whereby the habitus of twentieth-century intellectuals have changed the rules of the field, it would be understandable to assume that the production of literary works in literary Sinitic would disappear quickly and remain an element of Korea’s past to be *studied* but not repeated or overly celebrated.

To an extent, it is not an exaggeration to say that this was the case. Due to the seismic changes brought about through contact and exchange with neighbours near and far, new-learning and all that it provides would strike the Achilles heel of stagnating and insular Chosŏn and the cultural practices of the Sinographic cosmopolis. Sino-Korean literature was emblematic of said order and it would never be viewed as ‘valued’ cultural capital in Korea from then onwards. Despite this evidence, however, there is one intriguing anomaly that disrupts such an assessment. Upon reading the very same print media works that openly lambasted literary Sinitic and fostered the buds of cultural nationalism and vernacular literary production in its demise, Sino-Korean poetry or *hansi* continue to appear with frequency. The genre continued to attract interest and praise, despite literary ‘Chinese’ practices being so

heavily negated. The continued allure of Sino-Korean poetry is a significant inconsistency with the intellectual discourse of the time.

This inconsistency is all the more intriguing when one considers the fact that the majority of those who were both intellectually and financially invested in print media developments were the younger, progressive class, the majority who were students of new-learning and had had experiences abroad and interests in foreign languages, literatures and ideas. The majority who worked closely with magazines and newspapers at the time were not the aging, insular literati of Chosŏn's faded years attempting to spread their love of a Sinitic literary tradition. What we thus come to see is that into the twentieth century, Sino-Korean poetry continued to attract interest, for whatever reason, among this new-intellectual class and they seemingly took an active interest in reading, writing and sharing their own poetic works in literary Sinitic as well as newer vernacular genres. This is all in spite of the negative attitudes that has begun taint Sino-Korean language and literature.

During the early years of the twentieth century when publishing began to boom, Sino-Korean poetry's presence across the pages of newspapers and magazines is marked by high frequency. The genre in particular appeared frequently in publications put out by students. These works often appeared in outlets that were also at the forefront of attacking literary Sinitic. Despite the visibility of the genre in the print culture of early twentieth-century Korea, this genre is underexplored or overlooked by scholars. Literary Sinitic as a subject was still present in a new school system and an era of new textbooks. As W. Scott Wells' research into textbooks and Sinitic literature as part of the curriculum of the early twentieth century shows, the language was still begrudgingly included in the curriculum, at first as a means to please the wishes of parents. Contrary to conventional understanding, the study of literary Sinitic was interestingly still "treated by most as a living, dynamic tradition and a core component of Korean inscriptional practice that would allow not only for continued access to the knowledge

and customs of Korea's past but would be capable of expressing new ideas and patriotic sentiments."²⁰³

As explored in the previous sections through print media excerpts, this thesis argues that han'gŭl and vernacular literary production became a defining symbol of native culture's triumph into the early twentieth century. This complicated and highly transitional era created a cultural situation that has contributed to the overshadowing of hansi as a *twentieth century genre*. Its continued existence as a poetic genre in print until the 1940s ultimately greatly effects a maintained historic narrative of underdog fighting hard against foreign outsiders and despite all the hardships, triumphing through the hard work of academics in the colonial era and beyond. It may be claimed that the literary history of twentieth century Korea is a narrative intrinsically characterized by the 'death' of literary Sinitic. Although open to debate, one may argue that *hyöndaee munhaksa* (현대문학사 現代文學史) or modern literary history often presents the end of literary Sinitic in a simplified manner, with said decline being seemingly swift and definitive. Its past value now obsolete, this dated tradition would be resigned to the past, with a new future to be written in vernacular Korean.

It is no exaggeration to say that even among those who have been through the Korean school system (including those who continued to study literature to degree level), few are aware of just how long Sino-Korean poetry continued on as a genre of choice among intellectual circles into the twentieth century to the end of the colonial era. In sum, this genre did not come

²⁰³ "Korean parents—who still equated facility in LS [Literary Sinitic] with education itself—demanded that their children continue to receive training in LS literacy. Thus, as the missionaries had done twenty years previously, both state and private schools acquiesced to parents' demands by including LS instruction within their curricula. However, condensing LS instruction [...] into a single course within a multi-subject curriculum required substantial departures from the traditional content, methods, and aims of instruction. [...] This new classroom subject, *Hanmunkwa* (漢文科), required educators within the modern schools to develop new methods and materials to teach LS, publishing new *Hanmunkwa* textbooks whose contents and pedagogical methods departed in significant ways from those of traditional LS primers and texts. [...] Second only to math/arithmetic textbooks in the numbers published, *Hanmunkwa* textbooks were a core constituent of the publication boom." W. Scott Wells, "Literary Sinitic and Korea's Hierarchy of Inscriptional Practice," in *Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in the World of Wen* 文, ed. Ross King (Netherlands: Brill, 2023): 344.

to be discarded in the same way as Sino-Korean prose fiction. While literary Sinitic was vilified in the media, poetry in this style was somehow able to continue on, providing the worldly and travelled new-intellectuals yet another outlet for self-expression until the 1940s.²⁰⁴ This phenomenon is in need of further exploration. While modern *sijo* (근대시조) and modern *kasa* (근대가사) (both of which are poetic genres of far earlier origins) have their own established place in ‘modern’ literary history, Sino-Korean poetry of the modern era (모던한시) or *kūndae hansī* (근대한시 近代漢詩)²⁰⁵ remains an almost unacknowledged genre.

How does the revelation that Koreans continued writing Sino-Korean poetry change our discussion of the definition of twentieth-century Korean literature? Why is it that, despite evidence of enlightenment era new-intellectuals engaging in Sino-Korean poetic production until the 1940s, the genre does not feature in scholarship on ‘modern’ poetry or ‘modern’ literary genres? Hereupon, this study takes the theoretical standpoint that the current literary-historical narrative is in need of reevaluation and that Sino-Korean poetry is a missing piece of Korea’s literary puzzle in need of greater attention in order to fully understand the broader manifestations and literary explorations of Korean patriotism and twentieth-century Korean thought. This thesis’ ultimate aim is to readdress this imbalance and draw greater awareness to Sino-Korean poetry’s existence and maintained popularity beyond the nineteenth century.

The following chapters seek to explore Sino-Korean poetry across a variety of print media from roughly 1900 to 1910. This thesis will challenge the peripheral position that Sino-Korean literary works developed in twentieth-century literary history, instead attempting to

²⁰⁴ “*Hansi* generally have a well-delineated space within the artistic and cultural discourses presented by the Korean vernacular periodicals in which they appear. They are printed in easy to identify places in the newspaper or on their own pages in monthly magazines. Often they appear near other literary works or where one might expect to find articles about artistic or cultural issues. Given that these works were an obvious part of mid-colonial-period publications, that they have not attracted more scholarly attention suggests again how definitions of modern Korean poetry that only include vernacular texts have limited our understanding of what was presented as poetry during this period.” De Fremery, “How Poetry Mattered in 1920s Korea,” 27.

²⁰⁵ Such terms are extremely rare in literary scholarship in comparison to ‘modern’ *sijo* and *kasa*.

find a middle ground, whereby a genre criticized for being ‘an antique’ came to reflect Korean culture, ideas and thoughts into the twentieth century. In the following chapters, through an exploration of how contemporary themes can transform our conventional understanding of the Sino-Korean genre, this thesis seeks to highlight how Sino-Korean poetic works, while still rooted in an old tradition, can be used to explore issues pertaining to Korea into the twentieth century. In this we come to see how hansil can be seen as genre of ‘modern’ literary relevance alongside better understood vernacular genres of the same era.

5. A New World through Their Eyes: Poeticised Experiences Abroad in Sino-Korean Poetry of the Enlightenment Era

1. Introduction:

As has been highlighted throughout previous chapters, after the signing of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1876, interactions with the West steadily increased and forward-thinking intellectuals saw this time as a new opportunity to galvanise Chosŏn's advancement internationally. As the tides of global power had shifted and brought about a new era of internationalism and exchange, the once dominant player in East Asia, Qing dynasty China, would fall in the race of survival of the fittest as the dawn of imperialism began. The Qing's demise coincided with Meiji era Japan's rise – an epoch which would bring an end to the Sinitic world's cultural dominance through the adoption of new learning.

While the equilibrium of power and influence shifted from China to Japan, Korea would also have to seek out a new direction for itself during the last decades of the Chosŏn era. A new style of education, one that looked away from the Sinographic cosmopolis and one that was more egalitarian and progressive would characterise this time. This new learning, a 'modern' education that looked to Western learning as the foundation, would greatly shape the culture of this era. A new-intellectual field was to be born, with new learning and ideas from beyond the borders of Korea seen to be vital for the future. If Chosŏn was to continue to follow the path of Qing dynasty China, then it would be bound to follow the same trajectory of humiliation.

Thus to facilitate its goals, Korea began to draw up plans to send its first batch of students for study abroad in the 1880s.²⁰⁶ During the final decades of the Chosŏn dynasty, the first generation of student dispatches to study abroad for the purpose of the pursuit of new-learning came to be fraught with significant difficulties. The contentious socio-political situation of the era ultimately leading to a series of suspensions and recommencements of a number of dispatches. Either as *Susinsa* (수신사 修信使) “diplomatic representatives” or [part of] *the Sinsa Yuramdan* (신사유람단 紳士遊覽團) “investigatory team”, individuals were first sent abroad starting in 1881. Differing from Japanese and Chinese dispatches, whereby the West was a popular destination, the Korean dispatches went mainly to Japan. But as Yi Kyehyŏng highlights, following the events of the Imo Incident (임오군란 壬午軍亂 1882) as well as later the Kapsin Coup (갑신정변 甲申政變 1884), the Korean dispatches to Japan faced interruptions. However, following the implementation of the Kabo Reforms in 1895, ‘the dispatches of students recommenced due to the needs of the government. This was followed by yet another suspension of dispatches following the *Agwan P'ach'ŏn* (아관파천 俄館播遷) “Korean Royal Refuge at the Russian Legation” Incident in 1896–1897. After the start of the Kwangmu reforms, students were dispatched once again to Japan but the dispatches were further disrupted again in 1903 due to funding issues.’²⁰⁷

Bearing witness to the Russo-Japanese War situation, it was King Kojong who finally stabilised the dispatches, of which would remain stable. The sending of students abroad for study backed by the government as *kwanbi yuhaksaeng* (관비유학생 官費留學生) or “government sponsored students” resumed from 1904 onwards. King Kojong understood the

²⁰⁶ In comparison with their neighbours, the Japanese sent students abroad to Europe and America from 1871 to 1873, while the Chinese sent 120 boys in their teens in four stages from 1872 to 1875 to America as government sponsored students. Cf. Yi Kyehyŏng, “1904-1910nyŏn Taehanjegyuk Kwanbi Ilbonyuhaksaengŭi Sŏnggyŏk Pyŏnhwa,” *Han'guk Tongnip Undongsa Yŏn'gu* 31 (2008): 190

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

gravity of the geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia and with foresight, he wanted a group of young, talented intellectual Koreans to serve the nation and indeed protect it when the time came through modernisation and technological developments stemming from what they learnt while abroad. Aged between fifteen and twenty-five, Kojong's government sponsored students differed from the previous dispatches that went to Japan in that by the early 1900s, their purpose was more focused – they were to observe, learn, adapt and put their knowledge into practice for the benefit of the motherland.²⁰⁸

Sending students abroad for study, particularly Kojong's cohort and those that followed, was to produce a seismic shift in Korean intellectual history; this development was to bring dramatic change to the worldview of younger Korean students finding their feet in a new world that existed far beyond the borders of the Sinographic cosmopolis that had long dominated the status-quo of Korea's intellectual circles. As Tikhonov highlights, Japan's school enrolment statistics for boys was impressive, reaching 70% by 1891.²⁰⁹ 'The visible importance of Japan's elite schools and universities for the dreamed attainment of 'strength and power' attracted a growing number of Koreans and Chinese, especially after China's military defeat by Japan in 1895.'²¹⁰ This development would normalise cultural exchange and Western learning as a tool for enlightenment progress on the Korean peninsula.

This chapter focuses on the writings of this later generation of Korean students abroad. The first generation of Korean students who were sent abroad to study from the 1880s differ greatly from the second generation that followed. The second generation from the 1900s had a different experience – due to more stability both financially and politically, they formed a larger

²⁰⁸ Yi T'ae-hun, "Taehanjegukki Ilbon Yuhaksaengdŭrŭi Yuhaksaenghwalgwa Yuhagŭisik -1900nyŏndae Ilbon Yuhaksaengdŭrŭi Ilbolloŭl Chungsimŭro," *Yŏksawashirhak* 57 (2015): 165-6

²⁰⁹ "There was universal admiration in East Asia for Japan's educational achievements, and a widespread belief that these achievements were most essential factoring Japan's rise to the rank of world power." Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 138.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

cohort of Koreans who would study a variety of disciplines in a variety of educational institutions. Due to more stability, they were ultimately able to stay in Japan for a longer period of study with less disruption and were thus able to get a better foothold into life in the country.

A recurring element throughout this thesis is the instrumental rise of print media and its effects on twentieth-century cultural developments. This moment in history naturally coincided with greater developments in printing and the circulation of texts such as newspapers and coterie publications for reading and discussion. At this point, the chance to print one's words was now theoretically easier than ever before. As Yi Hŭi-mok points out, while abroad, these students 'directly witnessed a variety of matters relating to Japan and they put it down in writing in order to pass on and let their homeland know – this is a well understood and important responsibility of these students.'²¹¹

The first generation of student dispatches were plagued by financial issues and discontinuations which ultimately meant printing and sharing of ideas was less viable. As Yi T'ae-hun's research highlights, when examining the writings available of earlier groups of students who went abroad from the 1880s onwards – their writings often only provide (arguably) more cursory explanations of Japan and Japanese society. There is less analysis due to what could be highlighted as a less profound engagement with the neighbouring nation.²¹² Pak Ch'an-sŭng's research into early student dispatches further clarifies that these earlier dispatches were not abroad for long enough to significantly probe into the country on a deeper cultural level, further contributing to a lack of engaging analysis.²¹³ Most notably was the

²¹¹ Yi Hŭi-mok, "Aegukkyemonggi Chaeil Yuhaksaeng Hansi Yŏn'gu," *Tongyang Hanmunhak Yŏn'gu* 18 (2003): 160

²¹² 'The 1895 students were virtually all students to first come to Japan. They were amazed by and admired [Japan's] trains, buildings and the like but really, any observations beyond this was difficult.' Cf. Yi T'ae-hun, *Taehanjegukki Ilbon Yuhaksaengdŭrŭi Yuhaksaenghwalgwa Yuhagŭisik*, 165.

²¹³ Be that as it may, the first generation were instrumental in the development of forming Korean student associations. As Pak also touches upon, the first group of Korean students who arrived in Tokyo in 1895 established the *Taejosŏn Yuhaksaeng Ch'inmokhoe* (대조선유학생친목회 大朝鮮留學生親睦會) which 'holds significance as the first of its kind of a multitude of Korean student groups that would follow.' Cf. Pak Ch'ansŭng,

dispatches of 1895, who were some of the earliest to write up what they saw in Japan in their *Ch'inmokhoe Hoebo* (친목회회보 親睦會會報) bulletin. In this publication, their findings mainly consisted of articles on topics such as the military, railroads, commerce, industry and education. These writings, however, were 'mainly published extracts taken from newspapers and magazines written by the Japanese' and they were simply republished as a means of presenting to Korean readers what types of discussions the Japanese were having amongst themselves.²¹⁴

Due to the second generations' abilities to engage more with print media than their predecessors, they were better adapted to sharing and discussing their experiences away and their published writings focused on more in-depth analysis of what they were experiencing as foreigners in a different country. This was an important catalyst for driving socio-cultural debate back in Korea while still being abroad; their writings and experiences were shared widely, both in print and through word of mouth among peers.

The students of the 1900s approached their time away somewhat differently, instead they 'sought to analyse Japan through *their* own eyes' in an attempt to truly understand the Japanese and study their thinking.²¹⁵ They focused on more diverse areas of academic discussion such as history, culture, politics, thought, economics, the concept of *minzoku* (民族) and international relations. These in-depth explorations gave way to *ilbollon* (일본론 日本論) or "theories on Japan" that explored Japan's early successes in adapting and embracing Western thought and technology, and elements of Japanese culture that may underpin that success. As a consequence, they came to develop a deeper interest in the history of Japan, its

"1890nyöndae Huban Toil Yuhaksaengüi Hyönsil Insik Yuhaksaeng Ch'inmokhoerül Chungsimüro," *Yöksawa Hyönsil* 31 (1999): 120

²¹⁴ Yi T'ae-hun, *ibid.*, 164.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Italics my own.

culture, thought, economy and the specific mechanisms behind its successful modernisation process.

As will be explored, many of these young Koreans actively chose literary Sinitic as the written medium for their poetic writing in a way that may be seen as unorthodox given the culture of the time that was wholeheartedly embracing ‘native’ vernacular literary language. Specifically, in this chapter, in drawing upon their experiences abroad, we also see Koreans raising questions about Korea’s place in a new world *through* their engagement with different countries, cultures, systems and ideas. To young Koreans abroad for the first time, Japan’s early strive to westernise was of significant interest. The vast majority of these students went to countries different from their own, and through many of their poems, scenes of Japan and their experiences there feature significantly in a number of publications by Korean student associations in Japan, including influential magazines such as the *Taehan Haksaeng Hakpo* (대한유학생학보 大韓留學生學報), the *T’aegŭk hakpo* (태극학보 太極學報) and the *Taehan Hakhoe Wŏlbo* (대한학회월보 大韓學會月報). Produced by Korean students, the aforementioned publications were at the vanguard of new-intellectual culture. These works were places where creativity and literary expression found a home. They also developed into vital outlets for young intellectuals to publish new theories and ideas. This was not just for the benefit of themselves and their community abroad but these publications also made their way back to the peninsula and with them, new ideas and experiences were shared widely.

One of the most remarkable points regarding these young intellectuals is the fact that they were part of a class and time that became highly critical of Chosŏn’s past relationship to China and Chinese culture. A lack of reliance on literary Sinitic and a more widespread support for vernacular writing also came to be seen as a reason for Japan’s successful modernisation.²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Due to the common employment of pseudonyms in poetry writing among young intellectuals at the time, it is not easy to corroborate published poets with other published critical pieces that explore the topic of *hanmun*

Despite this though, as we have seen, Sino-Korean poetry still remained an important style of creative writing among Korean students who looks so highly towards new learning and enlightenment progress.

Through their poetry we see a variety of attitudes expressed: some praise Japan as a nation to follow while others explore Japan from a more critical distance – looking at the nation vis-à-vis Korea. In these examples, they discuss Japan and elements of Japanese culture merely as a means to reflect on their great love for Korea as they pine for their nation while away. There are also other poetic works that demonstrate a distaste for things Japanese. Evidently, in the minds of the students, Japan held a position of speculation – ‘it was the only country in East Asia to successfully embrace modernity and act as model for modernity, but on the other hand it was an imperialistic country that invaded and occupied Korea. [Understanding] these two contradictory aspects [...] was not an easy thing.’²¹⁷

This chapter specifically seeks to explore how poetry featuring experiences and scenes of life in Japan also highlight the potential of Sino-Korean poetry as a genre of contemporary importance: a tool for communicating enlightenment sentiment in the grand scheme of Korea’s journey through twentieth-century culture and society.²¹⁸ Drawing upon the publications of second-generation students, we can understand how Sino-Korean poetry would be gripped and shaped by a new cultural and intellectual zeitgeist. Consequently, the following works do not celebrate past traditions, themes and ideas, nor do they lament the loss of the golden age of the Sinitic sphere. Rather, twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry would be infused with

p'yejiron (한문폐지론 漢文廢止論) or “Theories on the Abolition of Literary Chinese.” Nevertheless, we can highlight more visible names of intellectual and literary history like Yi Kwang-su that were part of the young intellectual student class, who also wrote critically about literary Sinitic usage in Korea. We can thus draw convincing conclusions that these students, despite engaging in Sino-Korean poetic production, were also engaged in critical debate on the discontinuation of literary Sinitic as an influential written language in Korea.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 161.

²¹⁸ It is important to stress that this chapter does not seek to explore elements of pro-Japanese thought from a historical or ideological perspective. Instead, through the following poetic works, this section aims to bring to light and examine the symbolic elements and a thematic thread that reflects the poetic potential of literary Sinitic poetic language into the twentieth century.

contemporary images, experiences and ideas: cherry blossom viewing parties and parks, train stations and bustling cities of industrial development as well as deep musings on living life as a Korean student in a now much wider world. Through the poems, we see Korea’s relationship with its new neighbour (and international community) flourishing.

2. Sino-Korean Poetry of Korean Students in Japan:

The following poem, *Palmin* (撥憫) “Casting Away Worries” written under the pseudonym of Yōngbinsaeng (潁濱生)²¹⁹ presents the reader with an interesting take on one student’s experiences in Japan. In this piece, we see an expanding worldview unfolding, as a Korean conveys their difficulties abroad and their reservations over their ever encroaching neighbour. Yōngbinsaeng’s piece is in some ways an example of cathartic writing, as he uses his poetry to rid himself of some of the difficulties that he has found while away from his homeland, sharing them with likeminded students and readers:

撥憫

Casting Away Worries

和姬二八歲

A Japanese girl of sixteen
years.

不解惜芳春

[Yet] I do not know how
to appreciate her youthful
beauty.

朦朧不醉人

leaving me tipsy [but] not
quite drunk.

²¹⁹ The meaning of this pen name is unclear. *Yōng* (潁) is the name given the river Ying in Anhui province. The alias literally translates to “A Student on the Banks of the Ying river.”

和衣三四尺

Three or four lengths of
Japanese fabric,

長短不稱身

either too long or too
short, it never fits.

韓兒自有韓兒性

[Within themselves]
Chosŏn boys possess the
[unique] character of
Chosŏn boys.

莫把時粧謾效噯²²⁰

[They] must not blindly
follow others.²²¹

In the opening lines, a Korean youth reflects on the appearance of a Japanese girl. Despite her beauty, the narrator is not taken by her looks. As the poem progresses, he mentions the fine Japanese alcohol that he has been able to try. Although it leaves him tipsy, it is not strong enough to bring him to a state of drunkenness. Although high in quality and design, the Japanese clothing that he has been wearing while abroad never quite seems suitable. The author of the poem finishes the piece by breaking stylistic conventions, shifting from five-character pentasyllabic to seven-character heptasyllabic style in lines three and four. Bringing the poem to its conclusion, he is providing a caution. The boys of Chosŏn possess something innate within themselves that make them uniquely Korean; he warns his readers not to idly follow the example of others.

In his work on Sino-Korean poetry, Yi Hŭi-mok sees this poem as more than a mere musing on what one sees and hears as a student. He interprets this work as an exploration of

²²⁰ “Palmin,” *Taehan Yuhaksaenghoe Hoebo*, vol. 2, April 7, 1907, 74.

²²¹ Translation of the final line is speculative and in part has been informed by Yi’s own fluid translation into Korean. As one of only a handful of twentieth century Sino-Korean poetic works to ever been translated, Yi renders the final line: ‘한때의 유행으로 부질없이 쩡그림을 본받지 말게나’ – or literally ‘[they] must not idly follow the example of a frown [of others] that was once popular [to do].’ Cf. Yi Hŭi-mok, *Aegukkyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sŏnggyun’gwan Daehakkyo Taedong Munhwa Yŏn’guwŏn, 2004): 21.

maintaining identity at a time of great change as Korea and Koreans meet with the trials of twentieth-century globalism and exchange. As Yi rightly mentions, in this piece's final line in the original literary Sinitic it makes mention of a frown. The 'frown' is metaphorical, signifying the unsightly aspects of another nation: 'considering the extent that Koreans have such long-lasting history and traditions, there is no need to purposely do away with the positive aspects [of our own culture] and instead take on the negatives of others.' He further adds that the student's message here is 'an important point saying that one must maintain the identity of one's own people.'²²²

Examining this piece further, we can also draw broader conclusions regarding the author's stance on Japan and Korea's relationship with its neighbors in a changing era. While 'Japan' is rendered throughout the poem through material or figurative imagery – youthful beauty, expensive alcohol, fancy garments – this imagery is sharply juxtaposed with what the poet hints are the more valuable nature or character of one's own people, culture and land. This marked antithesis brings the poem to its conclusion and leaves young Korean readers with a message to remember and to take heed of in their life. In this, the poem is both a cathartic and cautionary work. Published for not just for the author to 'cast away' some of his feelings of displacement regarding his life in Japan, the poem also functions as a reminder for young and easily swayed youths. *Casting Away Worries* thus serves as a reminder not to be so easily accepting of all that Japan seems to provide, and to remind students where their hearts lie and the reason for their time in Japan.

Written by a student under the pseudonym of Song-nam (松南), Ch'un Mong-in (春夢人)²²³ *Yu Sangya Kongwŏn* (遊上野公園) "Going to Ueno Park" is another representative example of heptasyllabic Sino-Korean poetry written by a second generation

²²² Ibid., 21.

²²³ Literally 'Southern Pine' and 'Spring Dreamer.'

Korean student in Japan. Mentioned previously, Korean students of the second generation put more emphasis on the exploration of and engagement with the history, culture and people of Japan through longer stays and greater social engagement. In the manner similar to a travel diary, we see an anonymous student describing the scenery that appears before him as he walks through Ueno Park in central Tokyo:

遊上野公園

Going to Ueno Park

綠樹芳陰路四分

A sweet scent of green
trees along a shaded
crossroad.

臨天高樹²²⁴衙園²²⁵云

I look up at the sky [and
see] tall buildings of the
Imperial Palace Garden
[surrounded by] clouds.²²⁶

古今產物輸成海

That of the past and the
present converge and
gather at this place.²²⁷

內外遊人集似雲

Visitors from home and
abroad all gather here like
clouds.

隆盛²²⁸遺臺碑有感

When I see the statue of
Saigo Takamori, I am
emotionally moved.

²²⁴ *Kosa* (高樹), literally tall structures, typically made of wood. Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian, Second Edition* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2019): 1682.

²²⁵ *Hamwōn* (衙園) evokes the Tokyo Imperial Palace Gardens (皇居東御苑) or “Kōkyō Higashi Gyoen.”

²²⁶ The translation of *un* (云) here to represent clouds is tentative considering clouds (雲) also appear in line four.

²²⁷ Rendered as “becoming like a ocean” (成海) in the original text.

²²⁸ Well-known as being one of the last samurais, Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛 1828–1877) became a prominent figure of Meiji era Japanese history.

徳川²²⁹畫壘²³⁰鼓相聞

[And I can also] hear the
sound of drums at
Tokugawa Ieyasu's
monument.

奇觀²³¹未了因扶病

But seized by [a sense of]
malaise, I was unable to
see all the marvelous
sights.

歸路電車帶日曛²³²

So I turn back, the tram
home bathed in the glow
of sunset.

The writer of this piece employs elements of antithesis to paint a vibrant picture of the famous park's scenery while simultaneously offering subtle musings on life in Tokyo during the early twentieth century. Ueno Park is among Japan's first public parks and while long known as an area of natural beauty, it is also a space illustrative of Japanese development since its inception as a public space. A variety of museums have been located in the park since the mid-nineteenth century with grand industrial exhibitions also taking place, showcasing Japan's 'modern' technological developments. In this poetic exploration of Ueno, we see the park as a space of tradition and beauty, but more importantly as a location strongly associated with post-Meiji development and internationalism.

The narrator describes what he sees strolling through the park with a sense of excitement and intrigue. It is likely to be his first time visiting the park and it is evident that

²²⁹ Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康 1543-1616) Shōgun of Japan and figure who established the Tokugawa Shogunate that ruled from 1600 until 1868.

²³⁰ The meaning of *hwaru* (畫壘) here remains unclear. While *hwa* typically refers to paintings, *ru* can be translated into English as 'bastion' – literally a sturdy structure, typically build from stone. Thus, in this regard, I render *hwaru* as some kind of monument – a reflection or embodiment of him and his image (*hwa*) that has been rendered in strong stone (*ru*).

²³¹ *Kigwan* (奇觀). Namely, an unusual or impressive sight.

²³² "Yus angya kongwōn," *T'aegük Hakpo*, vol. 22, June 24, 1908, 56. In the original, the tram is described as being literary 'decorated' (帶) by the light of the setting sun.

many people have come to visit. A place where nature greatly contrasts with the sprawling city that surrounds it, the poet makes mention of ‘things past and present’ – we can see that he is potentially hinting at the fact that at this time, Japan was a place where history and traditional culture and art could sit side by side with contemporary developments, inventions and creation.

This ambiance is further emphasised through his mentioning of ‘visitors from home and abroad.’ The reference of ‘home and abroad’ offers a noteworthy parallel to ‘past and present’ which further demonstrates the poet’s prowess at not only creating a scene of diverse contrasts but also a potential reference to the early stages of tourism. Not only have people from all over Japan travelled to see this park, but others have potentially come from all over the world. He thus uses the first quatrain to set the scene of a turn-of-the-century cosmopolitanism, where people of different countries and regions of Japan rub shoulders while engaging in Japanese cultural festivities in the middle of an urban, capitalist space of growing global importance.

As the piece develops further in the second stanza, we see the narrator shift away from the scenes of flânerie taking place throughout the park and instead he focuses on the craftsmanship of statues and shrines dedicated to well-known Japanese historic figures. The young student is filled with wonder at what he sees and hears. Yet in line three, we are presented with the poetic twist of a sudden and palpable malaise. Although this could be interpreted on face value, one can argue that more profound confusion of emotions is the cause of his malady.

At its heart, *Going to Ueno Park* is a poem that seeks to highlight and contextualise contemporary global changes to a younger Korean audience who are beginning to get to grips with sudden shifts in global power as the nineteenth century came to an end. In this regard, it is likely that one can interpret the final lines as a representation of the writer’s uneasiness of the *future* that leaves him feeling unwell. His feeling of sickness alludes to a subtextual

rhetorical question – what is Korea’s place in this changing world, and where do I fit in? It also raises questions regarding respect for Japan’s modernisation progress. Through this, we see a subtle exploration of the self taking place. In this context, the exploration of this existential moment for a young intellectual to be presented to readers in the format of Sino-Korean poetic writing is poignant. This is not a poem that necessarily functions to sing Japan’s praises in of itself, but it is, on deeper inspection, a unique piece of internal confusion.

Due to not only its status as an important landmark of Tokyo past and present, but also its suitability for poetic writing as a park of diverse natural imagery, Ueno Park features with some frequency in the poetic writing of Korean students studying abroad in Japan at the turn of the century. In the following poem, *Sangya Kwan’aeng* (上野觀櫻) “Cherry Blossom Viewing at Ueno,” a student under the name of Yǒngbin (穎濱), Pyōn Yǒng-chu (卞永周) writes a piece about his experiences visiting the park to view cherry blossoms

上野觀櫻

Cherry Blossom Viewing
at Ueno

四月觀櫻池上苑

In April, [they] go to view
the cherry blossoms [by]
the pond at the Imperial
Gardens.

靚粧士女鬪²³³清新

Women gather here,
dressed up and their
make-up on, [they look]
fresh and new.²³⁴

²³³ *T’u* (鬪) read here as ‘to gather together.’ Cf. example eight, *Hanhan Taesajǒn – Vol. 15*, 727.

²³⁴ Although *sanyǒ* (士女) can mean ‘young men and women’ or ‘sǒnbi and their wives,’ due to the descriptions of them being made up (粧) as a potentially more specific reference to the application of make-up, in the English I have rendered the expression as simply ‘women.’ The *Hanhan Taesajǒn* (漢韓大辭典) provides the example whereby *sanyǒ* may refer specifically to upper-class women. Cf. example three. We also see *sanyǒ* described as being synonymous with ‘the people’ in a general sense (百姓) Cf. example two. *Hanhan Taesajǒn – Vol. 3* (Seoul: Institute of Oriental Studies [Tongyang Yǒn’guso], Dankook University, 2000): 278.

儘美江山非我土

[Although] incredibly
beautiful, this is not my
hometown.

可憐花柳是誰春

These pitiful flowers and
willows... of whose spring
[do they] belong?

流俗浮談²³⁵空有血

Common customs and
truthless sayings are void
of courageous spirit.

異鄉佳絕最傷神

The beauty of another
country can cause great
pain to one's spirit.

絕東²³⁶歌舞今如此

[Having witnessed] the
wonderful songs and
dances of the Far East,

能念遼河²³⁷暴²³⁸骨人²³⁹

can you [still] remember
those from far-off rivers
who are [now long] dead?

Synonymous with Japan and Japanese culture, Pyŏn's piece is just one of a number of Sino-Korean works by students that draws on the popular activity of cherry blossom viewing as the focus for poeticizing their experiences of life away. Also drawing on scenes of life in Ueno Park, the poem's tone is similar to that of the previous example through the juxtaposing explorations of vivid beauty and lingering concern. In this piece, we see the poet present to the reader an intense and human reaction to witnessing the developments and realities of life in another country.

²³⁵ Common customs (流俗) referring to customs passed down hereditarily. While truthless sayings (浮談) is taken from the reading of *pu* (浮) as meaning 'lacking in truth' or 'baseless.' Cf. example five, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn* (Seoul: Tonga Ch'ulp'anbu, 1982): 988.

²³⁶ Although there are times where *tong* (東) refers to Korea, here it be interpreted as a more specific reference to Japan.

²³⁷ *Ryoha* (遼河), literally 'rivers that are far away' – evocative of Korea while the poet in writing from Japan.

²³⁸ *P'ok* (暴) indicated the deaths were due to violence.

²³⁹ "Sangya gwan'aeng," *Taehan Yuhaksaenghoe Hoebo*, vol. 3, May 25, 1907, 51.

In a similar way to Chun Mong-in's piece, in *Cherry Blossom Viewing*, we also hear the voice of a Korean who is showing admiration for what Japan has to offer. The poetic voice of the piece speaks highly of Japan's beauty but as we can see, from line three of the first quatrain, the dramatic turn in the focus of the piece comes to expose a reality that exists side-by-side the beauty of Japan. Namely, the narrator is ill at ease by his own admiration.

Although the poetic voice of *Cherry Blossom Viewing* acknowledges the fact that he is impressed by Japan's culture, through his writing, he can open up his heart to the reader and he bears his soul in regard to his deeper concerns: Japan may be beautiful, but it is not Korea, his home and the place where he belongs. He gives a subtle warning that one must not be overly deceived by what one sees. As he highlights, common sayings are void of courageous spirit. In other words, he is expressing a distaste for this overly complimentary language and he aims to highlight its meaninglessness.

In this the narrator of the piece seeks to focus the reader on what must truly matter, making reference to Korean people of the past who sacrificed themselves for the future of the nation. One can argue that the somber conclusion to this piece is an attempt to highlight that while admiration is acceptable and there are indeed important lessons to be learnt from one's neighbours who have successfully adopted new things from the West, one must still be vigilant to never allow one's culture and long-maintained traditions to so easily be forgotten, overshadowed or destroyed.

Written by a student under the pseudonym of Hye-bōm (惠帆),²⁴⁰ the poetic voice of *Uŏm* (偶吟) or "Singing of My Companion" expresses a poet's happiness at having a likeminded friend with which he can discuss ideas of Korean enlightenment and socio-cultural development:

²⁴⁰ Literary meaning 'Kind Sail.'

偶唸

Singing of My
Companion

幸逢知己細論文²⁴¹

[I am] fortunate to have
already met a friend [with
whom I can] discuss all
aspects of culture.

江戶繁華自昔聞

I heard [from him] that
since the olden days,
Tokyo has been a bustling
[city].

西土平和長日月

[While] peace and
stability has been long
lived in the West,

東洲大勢換風雲

the situation in Asia
changes like the wind and
clouds.

身隨現代暫殊服

[Since my] body follows
the modern, [I] have been
wearing different clothes.

俗尚²⁴²時人爲着裙

Men who once revered
traditional custom, [used
to be] dressed in
hanbok.²⁴³

早晚國家無限事

From morning to evening,
the country (Korea) has
endless matters [to deal
with.]

欲言未了日將曛²⁴⁴

[So] I want [us] to discuss
all that which has yet to

²⁴¹ Literarily to discuss culture *in detail* or *thoroughly* (細). Culture here (文) can also be more specific, i.e. Referring to literature.

²⁴² *Sang* (尙) here read as the verb ‘to revere’ or ‘to be proud of’ something.

²⁴³ Referred to as literally a ‘skirt’ (裙) in the original.

²⁴⁴ “Uüm,” *T'aegŭk Hakpo*, vol. 25, October 24, 1908, 62.

be said, before the sun
sets.

Hye-bŏm's piece is an illustrative example of the passionate sentiments of young Koreans intellectuals at the turn of century studying abroad and their drive to expand their knowledge about the world. These students took their role seriously; they were not in Japan to have fun, but they were there as ambassadors to Korea for the main purpose of absorbing all they saw to take what they had learnt and apply that knowledge as a source of good for the development of Korea in a new era.

As has been mentioned, early students coming into contact with new ways of thinking through their studies were at the forefront of Korea's movement towards enlightenment and modernization and these students took particular interest in a number of social theories from the West such as Social Darwinism – persuasive sociological theories at the turn of the century. Social Darwinism in particular struck a chord with progressive thinkers in Korea, as the model could be easily applied to the current shifts in power in East Asia. As Chŏn Pok-hŭi states, 'the majority of enlightenment era campaigners accepted the main tenets of theories of social evolution such as survival of the fittest. They understood the global situation that was in a state of constant competition; in order to be an adapter that survives without being consumed by the aggressor, there was an urgent demand for the mobilisation and awakening of the national spirit or *minjok*.'²⁴⁵

Differing in tone from the poem previously examined, in *Singing of My Companion* we see the poet pen an enthusiastic piece on friendship. Hye-bŏm sketches a scene where two Koreans, united in their nostalgia and separation from their home, discuss current issues while away in Japan. The narrator mentions that Tokyo has been a developed and vibrant city for a

²⁴⁵ Chŏn Pokhŭi, *Sahoejinhwaron'gwa Kukkasasang* (Seoul: Hanurak'ademi, 1996): 140-183 quoted in Kim Chin-gyun, "20segi Ch'obanŭi Kyemong Tamnon'gwa Hanmun," *Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'gu* 31, vol. 4 (2008): 277-8.

significant period of time. Though we also see that he is not necessarily dwelling on Japan's successes. The narrator emphasises the fact that the whole of Asia is going through a period of great transition. Following the zeitgeist of the times, he hints at his belief in Korea's own developmental potential. This potential for development is addressed in the first line of the second quatrain, we see the narrator mention the fact that he is now wearing different clothes. In this we see his decision to move away from a traditional clothing of the past to adopt western attire. This assertion demonstrates that he no longer aligns himself with traditional values and beliefs of his previous generation.

The poetic voice finally comes to the most significant point of contention. This poem is not necessarily about Japan's bustling cities, nor about his qualms on choices of clothing at all. Instead, it is all about his personal belief in and determination for Korea's future into the twentieth century. The poem draws to a close with a sense of palpable urgency as the poet stresses that Korea has a lot of work to do – it has not fully broken away from its past and Chosŏn traditions continue to linger. This young student, finding a likeminded friend in which he can share his thoughts and feelings, is excited to discuss everything before nightfall. His urgency to exchange ideas about Korea's new path of enlightenment is framed by the broader conversations of Darwinian Theory which as Chŏn mentions were so prevalent at the time among young thinkers.

The following piece is one of the more interesting poems that was written in literary Sinitic by Korean student publications in the early twentieth century in its break from Tokyo as the main environment of their writing – *Pak Changgi Hang* (泊長崎港) “A Sojourn in Nagasaki Harbour” by a student who refers to themselves as Pak Chŏng-su (朴廷秀). In his research on Korean students abroad in Japan, Yi T'ae-hun highlights the fact that as guests

studying abroad in a foreign country, it was naturally very difficult for Koreans to be openly critical of Japan.²⁴⁶ But in this piece, we see Sino-Korean poetry being used in a different way:

泊長崎港

A Sojourn in Nagasaki
Harbour

湖中巨舶絲茶溢

In the middle of the bay, a
large boat overflows with
silk and tea.

湖山名園卉木濃

In the [surrounding]
mountains, a famous
garden with flowers and
trees growing in
abundance.

鄰家產業君知否

Do you know that all this
is the fortunes of [their]
neighbors?

獨倚天涯²⁴⁷淚眼紅²⁴⁸

Alone in [this] far-off
foreign country, [my]
tears fall and [my] eyes
redden.

Differing from other publications of the time where added commentary is sporadic, all published Sino-Korean poetry that featured in the *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo* (대한협회회보 大韓協會會報) also have a *p'yōng* (評 評) – ‘commentary’ or ‘comments’ appearing after the poem. In reference to Pak Chōng-su’s poem, an anonymous commenter added the following after reading his poem:

²⁴⁶ Yi T’ae-hun, *ibid.*, 161.

²⁴⁷ Here, synonymous with *t’ahyang* (他鄉).

²⁴⁸ “Pak changgi hang,” *Taehan hyōphoe hoebo*, vol. 12, March 25, 1909, 40.

評曰：伐柯伐柯 其側不遠

The critic of the piece has taken this quotation directly from the *Shijing* (詩經) *Book of Odes* chapter *Fa Ke* (伐柯) “Cutting the Tree to make the Axe’s Handle” which features the following tetrasyllabic four-character line poem:

伐柯如何	In hewing [the wood for]
匪斧不克	an axe-handle, how do
取妻如何	you proceed?
匪媒不得	Without [another] axe it
	cannot be done.
	In taking a wife, how do
	you proceed?
	Without a go-between it
	cannot be done.
伐柯伐柯	In hewing an axe-handle,
其則不遠	in hewing an axe-handle,
我觀之子	The pattern is not far off.
籩豆有踐 ²⁴⁹	I see the lady, and
	forthwith the vessels are
	arranged in rows.

The nameless critic has read Pak’s poem and this famous excerpt from the *Book of Odes* has come to mind. This excerpt gives us insight into how the poet’s contemporaries interpreted this piece. As mentioned, open criticism of the Japanese was not easily achievable by visiting students. This would have threatened their studies and opportunities as both passive observers and active participants in Japanese society at the time. This piece, however, is significant

²⁴⁹ Translation by James Legge. Cf. “The first Part of the She-King; or the Lessons from the States; and the Prolegomena” in *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes* (Hong Kong: Selbstverl., 1871): 240.

among many poems written by students in Japan in that an arguably more candid criticism of the Japanese is present through the use of poetic writing in literary Sinitic.

The poet takes us on a fleeting tour of the scenes that surround Nagasaki's harbour. In line one of the first couplet, the poet paints a picture of Japan's modern industrial development, with Nagasaki now a bustling global port where foreign products of tea and silk are brought in to be traded. This scene of trade and commerce is complimented by more natural imagery presented in line two, with a description of a famous garden brimming with life.

Although it cannot be ascertained for certain, the garden that the poet is alluding to is likely to be Glover Garden (グラバマー園), a famous site built for Thomas Blake Glover in 1863.²⁵⁰ In it stands the *Glover Residence*, the oldest Western style house surviving in Japan and Nagasaki's foremost tourist attraction that overlooks the ocean from the surrounding hills. The impressive gardens have long been a feature of Nagasaki and are symbolic of Japan's shift in focus towards international relations and adoption of western technology and learning.²⁵¹

In the first couplet, the poem thus reflects the spirit of the times – a period of change, economic development and cultural exchange situating Japan on the world stage. The final two lines of the piece, however, provide readers an interesting twist in Pak's poetic tone. The poem suddenly becomes quite melancholic with a final rhetorical question – is the listener aware that 'all these are the fortunes of their neighbor?' Through the subtleties of his poetic diction, Pak is trying to highlight that all that which has seemingly made Japan good or special, and all that has contributed to shaping its culture on a global stage, such as painting and architecture, religious practices and the tea they drink, are not of native origin. They have come from

²⁵⁰ Originally from Scotland, Glover was a key figure in Japan's road to modernization through his work across a variety of industries. For a recent biography on Glover, Cf. Alexander McKay, *Scottish Samurai: Thomas Blake Glover 1839-1911* (United Kingdom: Canongate, 2012).

²⁵¹ As Burke-Gaffney highlights, "after completion, it stood on the Minamiyamate hillside like a new generation castle symbolising the importance of commercial wealth and international exchange as Japan emerged from the shadow of feudal isolation." Cf. *Nagasaki – The British Experience 1854-1945* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009): 37-8.

elsewhere. As the song from *the Book of Odes* highlights – in hewing [the wood for] an axe-handle, how do you proceed? Without [another] axe it cannot be done.

Thus, Japan’s successes are not strictly *Japanese* born – they are thanks to its closest neighbours, one being Korea, for acting as a *bridge* of cultural and economic exchange through Japan’s history that has brought the nation to its very moment in time. Pak Chŏng-su’s recount of his stay in Nagasaki provides the reader with an important hidden message of critique that is tinged with a sense of bitterness. This veiled criticism did not go unnoticed by the commenter, who found this perfect parallel from the *Book of Odes* to describe similar sentiment that Japan’s successes should not be taken on face value and that Korea’s role in Japan’s present cannot be easily overlooked.

Im T'aep'yŏngyang Chak (臨太平洋作) “Written Looking Out at the Pacific Ocean” was published under the name of Ugoaeng (友古生)²⁵² Ch'oe Rin (崔麟). This piece highlights the subtle nature of Sino-Korean poetry of this era and its attempts to explore the profound existential state that many young Korean intellectuals found themselves in while studying abroad in Japan at the turn of the century:

臨太平洋作

Written Looking Out at
the Pacific Ocean

萬里東來地盡頭

[I have] come east 10,000
li, [where] the earth
reaches its end.

太平洋濶客無愁

[Facing] the vastness of
the Pacific Ocean, this
wayfarer is at ease.

²⁵² Such a name can be potentially translated as ‘one [that treats things of] old as friends’ or ‘a lover of things of old.’

乾坤漠漠波聲咽

The heavens and the earth
are so vast, the sounds of
the waves ring out.

唯有中間白日流²⁵³

It is only in between that
the white light of the sun
shines forth.

Ch'oe Rin's exploration of the sea is of particular note for the times. As Peter Lee highlights in his critique of Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's famed poem that gave way to the *sinch'esi* (신체시 新體詩) "new-poetry" genre, the employment of imagery relating to the sea was an unusual choice because the ocean rarely featured in classical East Asian poetry.²⁵⁴ As was the case in Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's *Haegesŏ Sonyŏnege* (海에 게서 少年에 게) "From the Sea to the Boy" published in 1908, the vastness of the ocean becomes the focus of poetic exploration in the above single quatrain poem published in 1907.

The poetic persona, likely to be the poet himself, is a Korean studying abroad in Japan. This student has not only made a journey to see the Pacific Ocean, his '10,000 li' journey is also evocative of the far longer distances that Koreans have travelled to come all the way to Japan to study. Where the earth meets the sea, he looks out at the unfaltering vastness of the ocean, yet he is unfazed by what he sees. At the end of the earth, he is at the place where the horizon meets with the sky. He sees the rays of the sun, evocative of sunrise and new beginnings. In *Written Looking Out at the Pacific Ocean*, the poet uses the imagery of the rising sun symbolically. Even though difficulties are present – the vastness of what is ahead and the waves of the ocean, the persona of the piece is not deterred. The shining sun, appearing between heaven and earth is like a beacon, shining for him to follow towards his future.

²⁵³ "Im t'aep'yŏngyang chak," *Taehan Yuhaksaenghoe Hoebo*, vol. 1, March 3, 1907, 63.

²⁵⁴ Peter Lee, *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 340-1.

In this, the reader can extrapolate that the persona of this piece has made a long journey to see the sun rise from the east over the earth. Both the sun's bright white light and the wayfarer's dreams, wants and desires also lie on the far horizon where the sun shows itself to him. It is here where one's purpose in life manifests itself physically in nature. He has come to Japan for a purpose – to learn, and it is through his knowledge that he will refine his plans for Korea and help shape the future of his nation for the better. In this, the profundity of Korea's road to modernity and development is represented by the symbiotic relationship between the wayfarer and the sunrise.

We see the poet uses Japan as a stage in his attempt to paint a scene of resolute passion for the future. He seeks an awakening among his readers and contemporaries. The wayfarer is without concern because he is resolute in his faith in Korea and the Korean people. Though the road to enlightenment is arduous, like the perilous swells of the raging waves of the Pacific Ocean, one's goal is set and it can be achieved. In this we see similarities between both poem's by Ch'oe Rin and Ch'oe Nam-sŏn. Although written in different mediums, we see how the ocean came to symbolically represent the future and possibility in a changing time.

Like the poet himself, his readers need the same degree of resolve and must strive on their journey to the ends of the earth for the benefit of the nation. As Pak Ŭl-su mentions, in this regard we see how Sino-Korean poetry 'also rises to the task as *literature of participation in reality* (현실참여문학), together with *kasa* and *sijo*.'²⁵⁵ In this we can see the youth's call to attention for the benefit of the nation as it sets off on its difficult journey infused with a sense of didactic enthusiasm and patriotic zeal.

In *Sinnyŏn Kisŏ* (新年寄書) "Sending Letters at New Year," we see the male poet take on a female persona. Under the pseudonym of 'a wife whose husband has been sent abroad'

²⁵⁵ Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chŏhang Shigaron* (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 2001): 318

(海外送郎婦), we hear the voice of a wife at New Year revealing her emotions regarding her husband's time abroad. While not an uncommon trend in past times, this style of male poets actively using the female voice to write poetry of a more 'feminine' perspective is rare in the Sino-Korean poetry published in print media in the early decades of the twentieth century:

海外送郎婦

Sending Letters at New
Year

海島數千里

[To] those islands in the
sea, [stretching over] 1000
li

送郎歲又新

[we] send [our] young
men, once again.

遙憐江戶月²⁵⁶

Far away neighbour,
[under] Tokyo's moon.

虛送²⁵⁷洛陽春

He idles away his time,
with *Luoyang's Spring*.²⁵⁸

聞道開明世

[I] hear the road to
learning is the start of a
bright era.

登庸博學人

[It leads to] the
appointment of learned
people.

丈夫當此日

When [my] husband
meets this day,

²⁵⁶ Edo (江戸) referencing Tokyo.

²⁵⁷ *Hōsong* (虛送), literally spending time, time passing in vain. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajōn*, 1602.

²⁵⁸ Although this reference is difficult to ascertain, in a Korean context Nakyangch'un (洛陽春) may refer to a type of alcohol from China as well a type of music, also of Chinese origin. Cf. <https://hanja.dict.naver.com/#/entry/ccko/8142d31aa8be491695dc4163a05b4821>.

This pentasyllabic piece differs significantly from others explored in this chapter in that it was written by a Korean abroad in Japan *through* the voice of his wife at home. Likely taking his own wife for poetic inspiration, we see how the act of studying abroad was part of the social and cultural consciousness of all Koreans of the time. The significance of studying abroad was far reaching and had implications for many – including woman at home for whom the possibility of studying abroad would have been a distant dream. The wife’s voice in *Sending Letters at New Year* transcends her own, echoing the voices of many in her position. Wherever their husbands go, there is little difference in their plights – these women all share the same sentiments of both melancholy and hope.

Despite the pain she feels through her separation from her husband and having to send letters to enquire about their lives and studies while far away from Korea, the tone of the piece shifts as the poem transitions into lines three and four. In this poetic shift in tone, we come to understand that despite her isolation and loneliness, she understands the significance of studying abroad and the place that her husband and other young intellectual men occupy in the dynamic social and cultural shift in which Korea has found itself. The ‘bright future’ that awaits Korea through the adoption of new learning and technological developments through the efforts of students abroad will ultimately lead to the ‘appointment of learned men’ upon their return. The poet, using his wife’s voice, concludes the piece highlighting that his journey to learned status in the wider world through his time abroad is what will make him a true man

²⁵⁹ “Sinnyŏn Kisŏ,” *T’aegŭk Hakpo*, vol. 6, January 24, 1907, 45.

that his wife, his country and the Korean people can be truly proud of. The sacrifices of distance, time and separation ultimately being worth the pain on both sides for the benefit of Korea.

We finish this chapter by looking at *Kyŏn Tongmurwŏn Kirin Yugam* (見動物園麒麟有感) or “Feelings Looking at Giraffes in the Zoo” published under the name of Ch’unp’o (春圃)²⁶⁰ Ryu Chong-su (柳種洙). This piece is particularly striking in its content. Zoos and giraffes are highly unorthodox images to appear in poetry of the times, let alone in works of the Sino-Korean genre. Not only this, but the emotional depth of the affinity shared between man and animal is also of note:

見動物園麒麟有感

Feelings Looking at
Giraffes in the Zoo

行過園裡見麒麟

Passing by the zoo, inside
I see [some] giraffes.

縈柵鎖門寄此身

Their bodies reside,
surrounded by fences,
chains and gates.

性心不是猶凡物

[Their] character and
hearts are different to
common animals,

出處元非爲聖人

They left their homes, yet
they have not become
great beings.

殊方日月愁中老

While spending time
away in a foreign country,
[I] am caught up in my
worries as I grow older.

²⁶⁰ Translates as ‘Spring Vegetable Garden.’

故國風光²⁶¹夢底新

In my dreams, [I see] new
scenes of my homeland,
Korea.

將得何年還贖路

In the future, will I be
able to return home,
redeemed.

好遊獨立帝王春²⁶²

And have fun in
springtime, in our
independently governed
country?

Ryu's poem stands out as an interesting example that explores a Korean's perspective of a changing world and their place within. The poem stands out in the way that the reader is presented with the poeticised doubts and anxieties of Koreans of the era. In this piece, there are strong emotive parallels that can be drawn between Korean students themselves and the giraffes the poet catches a glimpse of while passing by the zoo.

The reader comes to understand that the giraffes are different from the other animals in this Japanese zoo; their unusual appearance makes them stand out all the more. As if personifying the giraffes, the poem makes it seem as if the animals were hopeful and expectant of their life in Japan – a new, successful country. Yet the reality is somewhat different to their expectations. Despite their 'character and hearts' being different from the common animals, they have not become the 'great beings' that they had previously assumed. Here, the poet draws parallels between himself and his Korean compatriots abroad with the giraffes in the zoo. Just as the animals have left their home country and struggled to fit in in their new environment in the zoo, so too are the young Koreans in Japan struggling with their identities as new-intellectuals who are supposed to usher forth great change while being away in a foreign

²⁶¹ *P'unggwang* (風光) – synonymous with *kyŏngch'i* (景致).

²⁶² "Kyŏn tongmurwŏn kirin yugam," *T'aegŭk Hakpo*, vol. 12, July 24, 1907, 47.

country. They do not see themselves as great men yet and as seen in line three, the poet is ‘caught up in [his] worries as [he] grows older.’

Yet the poem concludes with a sense of hope and optimism for the future to come. Despite the fact that the Korea-Japan Treaty was signed just a few years earlier in 1905, the poet sees a new Korea in his dreams. The signing of the treaty meant a significant blow to Korean sovereignty that would soon pave the way to full colonial domination in 1910. Written in 1907, the poetic voice of the piece has envisioned a new world for him and his people that will benefit all. Springtime is evocative of rebirth and new beginnings and this future Korea that manifests itself in his dreams is an independent nation, free from Japanese imperial grip. While the giraffes’ bodies are chained, one day the chains will be removed, and their freedom, knowledge and volition will help create a new world of possibility.

3. Conclusion:

Before the advent of full colonial annexation of the Korean peninsula, young Korean students were sent abroad through a series of dispatches that first began as learning missions and delegations as early as the 1880s. The purpose of these dispatches was to help strengthen Korea through investment in a new ‘modernised’ intellectual class that could help the country grow and reach a level of development that would protect it in a tumultuous time of expanding imperialism.

Thanks to developments in mass print media, these students were able to formulate their ideas and publish them. This led to a variety of student led magazines publishing significantly on enlightenment though and twentieth-century developments, drawing heavily of what they were learning while away in Japan. These publications were not just shared among

themselves, but they also made their way back to Korea, stimulating discussion and sociocultural change among progressive intellectuals. These publications were also a space for literary creativity and in particular, we see Sino-Korean poetry as a significant means by which these students communicated their innermost feelings and their experiences as Koreans as part of a now much wider world.

The experiences of these early Korean students in Japan are honest: we see through their eyes their first experiences of not only Japan, but a *wider world* that differed significantly from life in Korea at the time. While there are elements in the poems highlighted above that show these young students exhibiting admiration for Japan's developments, at their heart, these are examples of poetry by Koreans that are, deep down, quite patriotic. They often demonstrate great love for Korea, its culture and history as well as apprehension for its future on a global stage.

In the likes of *Casting Away My Worries*, we see that some Koreans used their poetic escape to remind their compatriots of their mission and to not be overly enamored by what Japan has to offer. And as explored in *Sending Letters at New Year*, we hear the voices of women who, despite their melancholy at their separation, ultimately understand the greater good of a young Korean student's mission abroad. There are also other poems such as *Going to Ueno Park* that highlight the malaise a Korean feels at their potential admiration for Japan. Finally, works such as *Singing of My Companion* are passionate examples of poetic works that highlight the youth's attempts at realizing 'modernity' and driving towards a new future. The above works reflect a deeper sense of care and passion for the development of one's own nation and all the complicated sentiments related to that development.

As mentioned, Sino-Korean poetry is often excluded from the narrative of what constitutes 'modern' Korean poetry despite the fact that Sino-Korean poetry continued to be written and published long after the end of the Chosŏn dynasty where Sino-Korean literary

production was the valued standard. While side-lining Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century, we see the acceptance of modern *minyo*, *kasa* and *sijo* – all well-established genres for generations that are all considered acceptable elements that contribute to twentieth-century Korean poetry and the development of an ethno-national literature. As Chŏn Ki-ch'ŏl mentions, this was due to the fact that ‘vernacular script (*kungmunch'e*) in its own way conveyed modern nationalism (*minjokchu'i*) and asserted its’ representativeness [of the modern concept of *minjok*] in the enlightenment era.’²⁶³ Thus, poetry written in this genre, by extension, stand at the forefront of twentieth-century Korean literary expression, whereby *han'gŭl* embodies the enlightened ‘modern’ man of letters.

What the above has highlighted, however, is that Sino-Korean poetry also demonstrates similar sentiments, albeit through a different medium. Although these poems were written in literary Sinitic, they are still capable of tackling Korean dilemmas of young enlightenment era intellectuals in the twentieth century. As Yi Hŭi-mok mentions, ‘as a result of recognizing the necessity to study them (the Japanese) if they wanted to restore national sovereignty from Japan, explorations of Japanese culture and history were [naturally] enthusiastic.’²⁶⁴ In these pieces, we can see early attempts by Koreans to understand their neighbour for the benefit of themselves.

While the narrative of literary history tends to exclude Sino-Korean works of the twentieth century from any discussion on ‘modern’ poetry due to being written in literary Sinitic, what we come to see in this chapter is the *versatility* of the genre and its contributions to the development of a twentieth-century Korean cultural identity. These young students saw continued value in literary Sinitic and these works provide us with a fascinating insight into

²⁶³ Chŏn Ki-ch'ŏl, *Han'guk Kŭndae Munhak Pip'yŏngŭi Kinŭng* (Seoul: Sallimt'ŏ, 1997): 32

²⁶⁴ Yi Hŭi-mok, “Aegukkyemonggi Chaeil Yuhaksaeng Hansi Yŏn'gu,” *Tongyang Hanmunhak Yŏn'gu* 18 (2003): 166

not only their experiences abroad at a time of great change, but also their open-mindedness in explore 'old' genres for the purpose of a 'new' time.

6. The Loss of a Nation and the Will of the People:
Tracing the Ups and Downs of the Imperial Age in Sino-Korean Poetry

1. Introduction:

As Larsen highlights, “the story of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Korea is, in many ways, a story of competing imperialisms”²⁶⁵ with the people of Korea caught up in the maelstrom of an era going through significant transition. As has been explored in the introduction, from the 1860s and particularly after the opening of the ports through the Kanghwa treaty, various powers were to stake their claim on the Korean peninsula. Through a series of clashes and subsequent unequal treaties with foreign powers, the doors of the so-called ‘hermit kingdom’ were to be opened. During this time, the country had to face the realities of this new and changing world of often unequal diplomacy, while also grappling with the means by which they may survive as a collective group, now untethered from the Chinese ‘Middle Kingdom’ going forward.

For many, this ever-growing web of connections that the country found itself was disquieting; there was naturally great concern regarding the colonial and imperial ambitions of surrounding nations. Korea’s abilities to remain sovereign in the face of their creeping power and influence came to be a topic of utmost importance for both progressive and conservative factions of Chosŏn’s intellectual and political landscape. Concurrently, however, it was equally also a time of potential, promise and growth – said connections and influences with the outside world take characterize the enlightenment era ushered forth an epoch of more complex cultural

²⁶⁵ Kirk Larsen, “Competing Imperialisms in Korea,” in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (New York: Routledge Press, 2016): 27.

and economic exchange that would ultimately begin to transform Chosŏn society, taking the Korean people along a new direction of future possibility.

Thus, in both a positive and negative sense, the dawn of the twentieth century came to be a “bewildering, disorienting time for Koreans” who had found themselves adrift from the past influence of the Sinitic cultural sphere.²⁶⁶ Following the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan’s influence came to trump its neighbours and it begin its focus on the Korean peninsula. Japan’s encroachment into Korea was steady and deliberate, and from the Kanghaiwa treaty to the Protectorate Treaty of 1905 following Japanese successes in the Russo-Japanese war, Koreans (in particular those of the now fast growing progressive new-intellectual persuasion) were a mix of despondent and hopeful at Japan’s interest and influence over their country. They had entered a new world order greatly shaped by aforementioned waves of imperialism, where the “moral perfection” of their past devotions to a Neo-Confucian order no longer held the same value in the Bourdieusian sense.²⁶⁷ In this new cultural, social, economic and political current, Korea would need to embrace the vicissitudes of the era.²⁶⁸

While this imperial age is often characterized by loss of sovereignty, unequal treaties and grave concern for the future, the Korean enlightenment era, especially as it progressed into its last decades at the dawn of the twentieth century, would also bring with it a new era of dynamic transformation and possibility, brought about (for better or worse) by the winds of this aforementioned geopolitical change. While greater powers that be were shaping the political and economic landscape of Northeast Asia, these changes would give way to more

²⁶⁶ E. Taylor Atkins, “Colonial Modernity,” in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (New York: Routledge Press, 2016): 124.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁶⁸ As Atkins further highlights, “the privileged few who constituted the ‘enlightenment’ (kaehwa) generation understood well what it meant to lose national sovereignty to Japan, accepted Social Darwinism as the merciless, ‘inviolable’ principle of international relations (Schmid 2002: 37– 38), had some notion of how industrial capitalism would affect material and social life, and grasped the monumentality of the Yi court’s failure to prevail against both domestic dissent and predatory foreign powers— but they were no less distressed or flummoxed than the less worldly majority...” Cf. Schmid, ‘Colonialism and the “Korea problem” in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article,’ *Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 59 no. 4 (2000): 951– 976 in *Ibid.*, 124.

‘grassroots’ cultural and societal changes that would greatly shape the socio-cultural, creative and artistic fabric of Chosŏn as it shifted away from a Sinocentric orbit with its values and tastes. This brought changes to the lives of people and triggered a more universal drive towards civilization, enlightenment and progress.

In particular, a positive of this time was the revolution of print, textual culture and vernacular writing. This would be the catalyst for significant changes regarding new education and new outlooks being disseminated more broadly among the population. It was a time of ignition for a uniquely homogenous, patriotic Korean spirit that would characterize the most prominent voice of a new print culture from the 1900s. Scholars like Atkins touch upon the newly emergent ‘modern’ literati that used han’gŭl rather than classical Sinitic as a tool to better architect uniquely Korean features from the bedrock of ‘modern’ civilization.²⁶⁹ While touching upon how the reverberations of the imperial age shaped vernacular song, prose and poetry, he overlooks the place of hanmun in this changing time and its potential as a tool in the metaphorical toolbox of the intellectual in this transitional era.

In the following, we will see how the new-intellectuals who actively engaged with print media to reach the masses and expand audiences in a way never seen before, would also continue to utilize the long-established poetic genre of Sino-Korean poetry. From the twentieth century, however, the genre arguably takes on a newer, more contemporary focus as the genre also grappled with the geopolitical realities of the imperial age of warfare and colonial modernity.

Once the most revered of all literary genres, rather than let it fade into obscurity and complete irrelevance as what was swiftly happening to Sinitic prose, Sino-Korean poetry would seek to transcend the limitations and negative cultural associations of its own

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 125.

‘Sino’graphic foundations to be actively utilized and weaponized for the contemporary intellectual age – imbued with relevance and contemporary importance in much the same way as we see regarding vernacular poetic genres that also survived into the twentieth century. In the following works, we will see the enlightenment era’s writers lay bare the complexity of such a time, with the lamentations of the loss of the nation often published side by side with celebrations of an exciting era of possibility and unpredictability.

2. Poeticising Imperial Currents – Exploring the Loss of the Nation:

Although the main focus of this thesis is the Sino-Korean poetic works that appeared in mass media publications such as newspapers, magazines and student publications during the latter years of what is typically described as the enlightenment era, I would be remiss when exploring the poeticized lamentations of the loss of national sovereignty, the dawn of imperial ambitions over the Korean peninsula and the intellectual’s frustrations at this situation without touching upon what is often considered one of the greatest of all the achievements of the so-called final ‘Four Masters’ of the Sino-Korean poetic tradition.

As has been touched upon previously, the ‘end’ of Sino-Korean poetry’s reign as the most valued literary pursuit of the Chosŏn dynasty is most often attributed to the later work of the Four Masters, who are most often characterised as the ‘final chapter of hanmunhak’ (漢文學의 終章) by scholars of Sino-Korean poetry. Out of the four – Kang Wi, Yi Konch’ang, Hwang Hyŏn and Kim T’aeg-yŏng, it is the following work by Hwang Hyŏn who is most often quoted as bringing the ‘tradition’ of Sino-Korean poetic production to a close with his last work, his *Chŏlmangsi* (절망시 絶望詩) or “Death Poem” written in 1910.

One of the most famous poetic works of the last days of a stagnating Chosŏn era, four poems, each four lines, stand out in Korea’s poetic history as a defining and representative

piece that painfully reflects on Chosŏn's collision with a new world and the tragedy of national loss due to the unfair diplomacy of the imperial age. His work shocked readers with a stark, critical engagement with the reality of Chosŏn's current situation, succinctly rendered through the medium of literary Sinitic:

亂離滾到白頭年

Hair turned white, after
years of strife.

幾合捐生²⁷⁰却未然

Many attempts to take
[my] life, but it was not to
be.

今日眞成無可奈

On this day, [this
decision] has truly
become inevitable.

輝輝風燭照蒼天

A faint, flickering candle
illuminates a blue sky.

妖氣掩翳²⁷¹帝星移

A wicked air has
enveloped [us], the royal
star has moved.

九闕²⁷²沈沈晝漏遲

The palace of heaven is
oh so silent, [as] days
flow by slowly.

詔勅²⁷³從今無復有

From now on, royal edicts
are forever no more.

²⁷⁰ *Yŏnsaeng* (捐生) being synonymous with *Yŏnmyŏng* (捐命).

²⁷¹ Literally a *wicked air* or spiritual energy (氣) that is malevolent (妖). While the idea of envelopment comes from *ŏm* (掩) literally 'conceal' or 'hide' and *ye* (翳) read as 'defeating' or 'bringing and end' to something.

²⁷² Literally 'nine palaces,' although a more specific translation could be inferred. Example one in the *Hanhan Taesajŏn* refers to the expression as more generally meaning 'the palace of heaven.' Cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn – Vol. 1*, 528.

²⁷³ *Choch'ik* (詔勅), synonymous with *chosŏ* (詔書).

琳琅一紙淚千絲

Jade-like tears, flow in
thousands of streams on
this paper.

鳥獸哀鳴海岳嘖

The birds and beasts
bitterly cry, while the
waters and lands grimace.

槿花世界已沈淪

Our 'hibiscus-flowered
world' has already been
overwhelmed and lost.

秋燈掩卷懷千古

Under a lamp in autumn, I
close [my] book and
contemplate [our] long
history;

難作人間識字人

how difficult it is, to make
the people understand a
learned man.

會無支廈半椽功

Previously, [I] did not
support our big house
with [even] the effort of
half a rafter.

只是成仁不是忠

[I] have only become
benevolent but not loyal.

止竟僅能追尹穀

[I] stop here finally,
barely able to follow
through like Yin Gu.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Considered a martyr, Yin Gu (尹穀) killing both himself and his family when the Southern Song succumbed to the Mongols.

當時愧不躡²⁷⁵陳東²⁷⁶

[I am] ashamed [I] am not
[able] to follow in Zhen
Dong's footsteps.²⁷⁷

After putting down his brush, Hwang Hyōn committed suicide in the *sarangch'ae* quarters at his residence, the *Taewōrhōn* (대월헌 待月軒). Leaving behind these poems as a final message upon taking his own life in 1910, his premeditated death was to stand as a testament to his pride and patriotism, his disgust at Japan's encroachment on Korea and his shame at the antiquated old Chosōn elites, whose lust for power (at the expense of the ordinary people) had allowed such a thing to happen. Although a man of 'old learning' like many of his generation, his work is nevertheless imbued with the poignant lament of an intellectual looking with uncertainty towards the future and engaged with the ever-changing present rather than seeking to shelter oneself in the security of Neo-Confucian tradition, as Korea – 'our hibiscus flowered world,' has already been overwhelmed by turbulent tides rather than strengthening itself from external threats.

As has been explored throughout this work, rather than seeing the likes of the Four Masters and indeed Hwang's death poetry as the final milestone that marks the end of Sino-Korean literary history, this thesis instead sees his poignant final work, in a sense, as demarcating *new* territory for the genre – one of contemporary relevance, biting sociocultural engagement and twentieth-century geopolitical critique. Hwang's work has long come to characterize the potential for Sino-Korean poetry to bear relevance to contemporary audiences

²⁷⁵ While typically read as the verb 'to step' or 'tread' upon, here *sōp* (섭 躡) is being read more specifically as 'to follow in footsteps of' Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajōn*, 1804.

²⁷⁶ Kwōn Kyōng-il, *Maech'ōn Chōnjip* – vol. 3 (Seoul: Han'guk Kojōn Pōnyōgwōn, 2010): 351-2.

²⁷⁷ Zhen Dong (陳東) was a literati figure of the earlier Northern Song. He sought the dismissal of disloyal retainers, but he was wrongly executed himself.

as he challenges the status-quo through his bitter critique of the contemporary situation that faces his country. His poetry, while connected to the past (we see this in references to Chinese figures) also attunes itself to a *new* sociocultural rhythm. He sets a new stage for possibility of the genre. His poetry, rather than being ‘the final chapter’ should actually be looked upon as a new beginning as he essentially weaponises the language of the Neo-Confucian, Sinitic elite against themselves.

Hwang’s suicide at the difficulty he faced in reconciling himself with the shame and pain of the loss of the nation that he loved continued on as a core thematic thread that would become representative of twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetic production, as the multitude of issues that characterize this transitional period of time could provide new ground for the poet of Sino-Korean literature. While Hwang’s may be the most representative work that laments the ills of the imperial age in literary Sinitic, we see new-intellectuals of this generation also use this theme (albeit not with the same tragic conclusions) in their works for mass media and a broader audience of twentieth century’s intellectual class.

An early successful example is *Ch’up’ung Haeng* (秋風行) “Song of the Autumnal Wind,” published anonymously without any name or pseudonym in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in 1905. Unrestrained by the structural obligations emphasized by past masters, the stylistic and structural idiosyncrasies of the following work is jarring yet exciting on the page of a daily newspaper. In this unique piece of varying line lengths (seven, nine, six and five) that also incorporates the *xi* (兮 兮) pause seen in Chu meter poetry, the poet takes the reader on a journey through a series of chaotic lines, unorthodox musicality, exclamation and repetition. We come to experience a chaotic land of shifting seasons, tempestuous waters and ferocious creatures. In this, the anonymous poet imbues his work with the sentiments of a scholar caught in the maelstrom of significant upheaval, reflecting a highly negative perspective on both Chosŏn’s relationship with its neighbours and indeed its own long-stagnated ruling class:

秋風行

Song of the
Autumnal Wind

秋風怒吹碧海立

An autumnal wind
blows fierce, the
blue oceans swell.

長鯨飲浪百人²⁷⁸泣

Gigantic whales
drink the flowing
tears of hundreds of
men.

可憐東南錦繡一原濕

How pitiful, the
beauty of the
Southeast, soaked by
a barrage of waves.

蔓²⁷⁹草年年哭群蟄

Among the weeds,
swarms of insects
[are beginning to]
stir as years have
passed by.

吁嗟此蟄幽埋三千年

Oh, such insects
have been hidden,
buried for three
thousand years.

幾閱周舒與秦急

They have seen the
developments of
Zhou and Qin.

虎狼十百戴冕居

Many tigers and
wolves live there,
wearing human hats.

驅策齊民膏血吸

They cast out and
whip ordinary folk;

²⁷⁸ Thought to be *in* (人). Cf. Yi Hūi-mok, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip*, 57.

²⁷⁹ Thought to be *man* (蔓). Cf. *Ibid.*

	they eat their fat and blood.
膏血吸民不給	<i>They eat their fat and blood and the people go hungry!</i>
愁雲覆原野	Dark clouds envelop the lands.
群龍紛擾襲	A pack of dragons, bringing trouble and disarray, launch their attack.
群龍兮群龍	<i>Dragons! Dragons!</i>
何情之太忍兮	<i>Why are they so cruel?</i>
坐視吾民困幽繫	I bear witness to my people, locked in captivity.
百卉將隨苦寒死	[They are like] a profusion of flowers, sure to perish in winter's bitter cold.
松柏不受冰霜折	[Yet] the pine and the cypress do not succumb to the frost; they shall not perish.
松柏兮松柏今非其時	<i>Oh, pines and cypress! Pines and Cypress! This is not their time!</i>
空逍遙乎清泉與白石 ²⁸⁰	Between a clear spring and white rocks, they remain at ease.

²⁸⁰ "Chu p'unghaeng," *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, November 1, 1905.

From its opening, the poet presents to the reader a stormy scene in autumn. While whales in the ocean drink solemnly from ‘a sea of tears,’ the insects of the land, living deep among the weeds, are stirring from a long, passive silence. As the poem progresses, we see wolves and tigers, seemingly masquerading as human beings – ‘wearing hats’ disguised as people, free to drain the country of resources and use ordinary folk for their own means. They cruelly sustain themselves through ‘the people’ while their loyal subjects are forced to starve.

Further exacerbating the misery of ordinary folk, the arrival of ‘dragons’ seemingly brings further tragedy and strife. Treated cruelly, they have now also become ‘imprisoned’ by the dragons – their domineering presence ushering forth a bitter winter that will soon lay waste to the beauty of their land. Despite such calamity, as the poem reaches its final act, the reader is met with two symbols of hope. Despite the sheer cold, the work concludes with the curious appearance of ‘pine and cypress’ trees, who are quietly enduring the trials of this bitter winter, poised for a spring that will surely come.

Song of the Autumnal Wind is of note, not just in how it highlights the way poets of the early twentieth century could bend the literary Sinitic to meet with the creative challenges of the new imperial age head on, but more specifically in how the genre could indeed be highly topical and speak to the masses. It could be used with equal success to explore the thoughts and sentiments of budding Korean patriots as they faced the challenges of a new global order that coincided with their age of enlightenment progress.

The poem appeared in print on the first of November, weeks before the official signing of the Korea-Japan protectorate treaty on the seventeenth of the same month. The treaty would officially lock Chosŏn into an unequal relationship with Japan and initiate the process towards full annexation and colonial rule five years later. In this piece, the pain and frustrations of the

Korean people come to fore, as the intellectual poet looks on, seemingly helpless in a changing time, as he ‘bear[s] witness to [his] people deep in captivity.’

The most vivid imagery of this poem is the contrast that plays out through the wolves and encroaching dragons. Through these juxtaposing images, the anonymous poet lambasts the established Chosŏn elites while also providing his critical observations of the encroaching Japanese – both presented as equally malevolent forces for the ordinary people of Korea. Through the wolves, the poem gives hints at his sentiments toward the stagnation of Chosŏn and the damage caused by the old elite’s grip on the conservative status-quo. Literally eating itself from within, the old yangban elite and court officials have ‘sucked the life out’ of the nation. They have presided over the decline of Chosŏn’s culture, society and political influence, hindering the nation’s progress and leaving it weak to attack.

To quote historian and philosopher Will Durrant, “a great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within”²⁸¹ and just as the poet touches on, the ordinary people of Chosŏn that live among the grass roots, have long heard stories and witnessed the rise and fall of nearby kingdoms (the Zhou and Qin coming and going in the past). The Chosŏn of today is being forewarned of a similar fate with parallels between past and present, compared and contrasted. Due to the greed and hubris of the yangban, ‘the people go hungry’ and are helpless and defenseless to outside forces.

As the piece develops, the defenselessness of the ordinary people of Chosŏn calling for change is also laid bare to the reader upon the arrival of dragons. Potentially alluding to the Japanese themselves, or indeed metaphorical representations of their colonial and imperial ambition, the arrival of the dragons brings a future of cruelty, tyranny and captivity and their presence on Korean soil ushers forth a bitter ‘winter’ that is soon to claim the lives of hundreds

²⁸¹ Will Durrant, *The Story of Civilization, vol. 3: Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and of Christianity from their Beginnings to AD 325* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944).

of flowers – the innocent people of Chosŏn. In this regard, *Autumnal Wind* stands out as a highly evocative poetic work that demonstrates the challenges of ordinary Korean people and their poeticized emotive responses of the early twentieth century through the critically ‘unkorean’ medium of literary Sinitic. Caught among imperial powers, and bearing witness to the destruction of their land, people and culture, the progressives like the poet must endure like the ‘pine and cypress’ trees, maintaining a sense of inner peace and stability for their position in society is one where critique must remain, and they must continue to challenge higher powers through their poetry and their creative and artistic engagement with the spirit of a new age.

Thus, in his work, we see the anonymous poet *elevate* literary Sinitic to a place of contemporary relevance for the patriotic Korean intellectual reader of print media. While the genres of *sijo* and *kasa* and the rise of new-poetry genres all find their feet through vernacular resistance to the foreign, the genre of anachronistic Sino-Korean poetry in its own way also rises to meet the expectations of an ever-expanding literary landscape and find its place as a genre of contemporary critique, satire and relevance.

Written in 1907, *Tok Wöllam Mangguksa Yugam* (讀越南亡國史有感) or “My Feelings Reading The Fall of Vietnam” is a piece where the anonymous poet takes the recent history of Vietnam as his poetic focus.²⁸² Published in the *Taehan Chaganghoe Wölbo* (대한자강회월보 大韓自強會月報), using the fall of the Vietnamese to the cruelty of the French imperial project and colonial ambition in Southeast Asia, the poet expresses his pain at the tragedy of great civilizations of Asia succumbing to the changing times of the imperial age:

²⁸² Under the pseudonym of ‘A Sagacious Elder Reciting Poetry’ (智山吟叟).

讀越南亡國史有感

My Feelings Reading The
Fall of Vietnam

交趾重譯址²⁸³

Ancient Vietnam called
Giao Chi, [so far from us
that] two rounds of
translation [was once
needed to communicate].

向來視秦瘠²⁸⁴

Until recently, it had
always been very far away
and an unrelated country
[to Korea].

今日觀遺史

[But] today I read The
Fall of Vietnam.

不啻悲親戚

It is as if I am [feeling]
sad about my [own]
relatives.

秕政²⁸⁵閱²⁸⁶百年

Rotten politics for
hundreds of years.

昏²⁸⁷奸已病國

[Thanks to] foolish
[rulers] and sly [elites],
[their] country wasted
away.

²⁸³ *Chungyŏk* (重譯) refers to past communication and translation practices. In the past, when translators were not so readily available due to little contact between countries, kingdoms and vast territories, it was often the case that a direct translation from one language into your own was not possible. A translation was thus made from one language, into a language of a region closest to that language, before then being translated once again into the desired target language. In essence, what the poet emphasizes is the sheer distance between the people of Chosŏn and the people of present-day Vietnam.

²⁸⁴ *Chinch'ŏk* (秦瘠) read here as a concise rendering of *wŏlsi chinch'ŏk* (越視秦瘠) or *wŏlbi chinch'ŏk* (越肥秦瘠), literally 'Vietnam looks upon Qin as Barren' and 'Vietnam is fat, while Qin is starved.' These expressions are more specifically used to convey a sense of stark difference between two places (not necessarily related to Vietnam or China specifically), while also highlighting a sense of indifference on behalf of the speaker regarding the chaos unfolding in the other territory. Here, it is being used from the perspective of a Korean, highlighting that there has been upheaval in Vietnam, but they have not necessarily paid attention.

²⁸⁵ Translation of *pijŏng* (秕政), literally a political situation that has begun to collapse or become 'dirtied.'

²⁸⁶ Read here as 'to experience' or 'to go through.' Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2001): 1961.

²⁸⁷ Read here as 'foolish' or also 'cunning' or 'sly' behaviour – a veiled reference to the elites. Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian*, 668.

引虎入其室	They let tigers into their own homes.
眈眈 ²⁸⁸ 恣噬食	[And the tigers] devoured [them] as their desires saw fit.
其民則何罪	But the general public, what sins [have they committed]?
忠良亦可惜	Their loyalty and honesty are just so tragic.
人生同天賦	[All] human life is a heavenly gift,
何由別黃白	[so] why [must they] distinguish yellow from white?
慘毒一至此	I have reached a point of bitter lamentation.
山川為失色	[Our] mountains and rivers have lost their colours.
天地本憤憤 ²⁸⁹	The sky and the earth have always been in disarray.
哀籥頁 ²⁹⁰ 竟無益	In the end, crying sadly is of no use.
公法安在哉	Where in the world is justice?!

²⁸⁸ Evocative of the four-character expression *ho shi t'am t'am* (虎視眈眈) – a tiger glaring down as its prey.

²⁸⁹ Synonymous with *kweran* (궤란 憤亂) Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 670.

²⁹⁰ Likely to be a printing error by the publisher or typist at the time. Most likely should have been rendered as two characters (哀顛) rather than three. Thus meaning ‘crying sadly’ as it is rendered in the translation.

列強竟含默	The powerful countries of the [West] remain silent.
各有狡焉謀	Every [Western] country is treacherous.
誰肯救焚溺	Who will dare to come to the rescue [of people] – [those who are] burning in fires and drowning in floods?
痛恨專制治	Their suppressive rule is bitterly disgraceful.
與民為仇敵 ²⁹¹	It has become the enemy of the people.
顛沛 ²⁹² 不知悔	The [Chosŏn elites] have been through difficulties, but [they] do not know of regret.
一轍堪歎息 ²⁹³	[Chosŏn] follows the same path [as Vietnam] and it is so deplorable.

Although not apparent through contemporary eyes, *A History of the Fall of Vietnam* is the title of book, written by leading Vietnamese nationalist Phan Bội Châu (1867-1940). His *Việt Nam Wong Quốc Sử* (越南亡國史) writes of the fall of his country and his lament of Vietnam's loss of sovereignty at the hands of the French. As Tikhonov's rightfully points out, it was a work widely circulated far beyond Vietnam's shores and "widely read by educated Koreans already

²⁹¹ Synonymous with *wŏnsu* (怨讎).

²⁹² *Chŏnp'ae* (顛沛) has a variety of potential meanings: 'feet caught up leading to a fall,' 'a critical situation,' 'a state of embarrassment, being flustered or frustrated' and 'a short period of time.' Here being read as a reference to the critical situation facing the people of *Chosŏn*, having been reflecting on the situation that befell Vietnam. Cf. Tonga *Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 2061.

²⁹³ "Tok wŏllam mangguksa yugam," *Taehan Chaganghoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 11, May 25, 1907.

in early 1906.”²⁹⁴ It is of note how soon after this book appeared on the intellectual scene that it was attracting critical acclaim to the extent that its content was also shaping the contemporary poetic imagination of progressive intellectuals.

Despite the differences between himself, the Vietnamese people and the vast distances that separate them geographically, in this piece, the poet highlights his pain reading about a fellow Asian nation falling to a foreign power and the greater significance of their loss of national sovereignty. Although it may be a ‘faraway’ and an ‘unrelated’ country to Korea, he expresses a sense of kinship. As the poem progresses, we see the poet draw comparisons between the elite of both Chosŏn and Vietnamese society, tersely chastising the corruption and moral bankruptcy of both countries’ elites. Parallels between Chosŏn and Vietnam through their ‘corrupt politics’ and ‘foolish kings’ and ‘evil ministers’ show that despite their distances, their situations when faced with imperial ambitions of the colonial era are one of the same. As was the case in *Song of the Autumnal Wind*, ‘the tigers and wolves’ wearing hats, acting as humans yet demonstrating no interest in the plight of the ordinary people, so too in this piece do the tigers make another appearance, as their corrupt ministers have seemingly let them in to their country to feast on the flesh of the innocent.

Poignantly, the poet makes reference to the French and their colonization of Indochina as a white nation overpowering an Asian one in the nineteenth century. Regardless of colour, both peoples should see each other as equals but yet this does not occur and the Vietnamese face suppression and subjugation at the hands of the French imperial project. Through reading

²⁹⁴ As he goes on to further highlight, Phan’s work “was soon translated into mixed Sino-Korean writing by the indefatigable Hyŏn Ch’ae and printed in November 1906” with additional, more accessible prints also appearing in 1907. “The book was frequently used in classrooms, mostly at the less controlled private schools, as its anti-colonial message pathos was more than obvious to the Japanese protectorate authorities.” Cf. Vladimir Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 150-1. Important to note, Tikhonov mistakenly mistranscribes the character (國) as ‘Guók.’ The correct transcription into standardised Quốc Ngữ is ‘Quốc.’

the history of Vietnam's fate, the troubled poetic voice of this piece is left to reflect on his own country's geopolitical situation and the difficulties that lay ahead into the twentieth century.²⁹⁵

At an emotional loss, the bright 'colours' of the Korean peninsula have already faded in the face of Japanese and Western colonial ambition (as was the case for Vietnam) and he laments the injustice of this new world of colonial aspiration and modern imperial warfare. Across the pages of the *Taehan Chaganghoe Wŏlbo*, readers lament in union with the poet at the fact that 'the powerful countries of the West remain silent' – seemingly complicit in Japan's expansion and imperial ambition – biting political commentary put forthrightly through literary Chinese.

The Fall of Vietnam is brought to a close, with the poet cursing the ills of contemporary authoritarianism and he deplores the autocrats and enemies of the people whose ambitions put themselves ahead of their own people. Just as Vietnam has found itself under the foot of Western imperialism, so too has Chosŏn found itself at the mercy of the Japanese. The helplessness of their mutual plight is palpable and expressed vividly through the medium of literary Sinitic; the loss of nationhood, identity and indigenous culture comes to the fore as a defining element of the Sino-Korean literary landscape of early twentieth century print culture.

The following poem published under the name of Ch'oe Yŏng-nyŏn demonstrates a common trend of poetic works of early twentieth century print media. Celebratory poems (works that sing the praises of the newspaper or magazine where they appear) became a common sight across the pages of print at the turn of the century. The birth of the media was a tangible outcome of Korea's road from dynastic rule into a new era of progress, exchange and

²⁹⁵ As Tikhonov points out, there was a published article titled *Making Efforts to Develop New Knowledge* that "warned Koreans that, unless they wish 'to be ruined like India, Vietnam and Burma' they should follow the same course in order to guarantee their survival in a world of rampant foreign aggression and incessant 'insults from abroad. In such an emergency, the 'readers of the old [Confucian] writings' refusing to re-educate themselves in 'civilised' ways, were simply losers, 'ruining their whole lives and giving up the wisdom and talents they are endowed with.'" Cf. *Ibid.*, 53. Originally quoting Yu Yŏngik, *Chŏlmunnalŭi Yi Sungman* (Seoul: Yŏnse Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2002): 307-326.

development. Interestingly, Sino-Korean poetic works also follow this trend of praising these accomplishments. This category of published work typically celebrates the magazine or publication itself, often praising them as unique locales that foster sociocultural change while also providing space for new intellectual possibilities for a new class of young new intellectual, as well as challenging long-existing social, cultural and political ills.

Titled *Ch'an Sŏu Haeng* (贊西友行) “Praising Sŏu,” Ch’oe’s poem sings of one of the more popular and influential modern magazines of the era, *Sŏu* (서우 西友) or “Friends of the West” that was produced by the *Sŏu Hakhoe* (서우학회 西友學會) academic association.²⁹⁶ Like many magazines drawn upon throughout this thesis, *Sŏu* was a successful contributor to the changing cultural landscape of twentieth-century Korea. First published in early 1907, the magazine was a defining contribution to new-intellectual debate and it fostered a place for young readers and writers to shape the tides of intellectual discussion for the benefit of a new future. The following is a number of fragments taken from Ch’oe’s long celebratory poem:

贊西友行

Praising Sŏu

[...]

[...]

嗟嗟同胞鮮²⁹⁷憂國

Alas! Few of my
compatriots worry about
the motherland.

²⁹⁶ As Tikhonov highlights, ‘West’ as it appears here is specifically a reference “to the the North-western region of Korea – Mainly Pyŏng’an and Hwanghae provinces, from which most members of the *Sŏu Hakhoe* hailed.” Originally quoting Han Sangjun, “Sŏu Hakhoe e taehayŏ”, *Yŏksa Kyoyuk Nonjip*, vol. 1, no. 1, (1980): 169-189. Cf. *Social Darwinism and Nationalism in Korea*, 81.

²⁹⁷ *Sŏn* (鮮), read here as ‘few,’ ‘little’ or ‘not many.’ Cf. example eleven, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 2143.

不識匹夫²⁹⁸仗安危

[They] do not realise that
[our national] security
depends on us all.

葛天古史謾自說

Languidly they talk
[among] themselves of
old history and legends.²⁹⁹

桃源春夢覺何遲³⁰⁰

They are oh so slow to
awaken from their dreams
of a perfect life.

開牖知識方汲汲

Open [your] window, [let
new] knowledge rush in
from every direction!

戶祝那將發天彝³⁰¹

[If you only] pray [behind
a closed] door, then how
will you understand the
ways of the world?

[...]

[...]

大霧先導指南車³⁰²

[Through] the dense fog,
[it] is leading the way.

一毫午針³⁰³定八維³⁰⁴

A small needle, adjusting
to eight directions.

²⁹⁸ P'ilbu (匹夫), literally ordinary folk or those of low social status.

²⁹⁹ In the original we see a reference to Gétian (葛天), who was “a legendary leader of Chinese antiquity, later revered as the god of music.” Cf. Sem Vermeersch, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea: Xu Jing's Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Koryŏ* (Germany: University of Hawaii Press, 2016): 333. Also Cf. Chŏn Kwansu, *Hansiŏ Sajŏn* (Seoul: Kukhak Charyowŏn, 2002): 66 and Chang Kigŭn, *Kosasŏngŏ Taesajŏn* (Seoul: Myŏngmundang, 2002): 13.

³⁰⁰ Potential reference to Tao Yuanming's *Táohuā Yuán Jì* (桃花源記) “The Peach Blossom Spring” from the unstable Taiyuan era of the Jin dynasty (266–420).

³⁰¹ Similar to *ch'ŏlli* (天理) – ‘the ways of the world’ or ‘the truths of the world.’ Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian*, 1541.

³⁰² *Chinamch'a* (指南車) has two meanings. One refers to an ancient Chinese cart where a wooden Taoist statue was placed on top. Regardless of the direction in which the figure pointed, the cart would always go north. In more abstract terms, it also refers to something that may serve as an example to follow, or a model of progress. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 712.

³⁰³ Short for *chaoch'im* (子午針), literally a ‘north-south needle’ or compass.

³⁰⁴ *Yu* (維) read here as literally ‘corners’ – Cf. example two: <https://hanja.dict.naver.com/#/entry/ccko/e02710c091ed4ccf8414af97fa85d60c>

西友一朶等此針³⁰⁵

Sŏu is like a compass.

能使開蒙而啓痴

It can make the ignorant
intelligent.

初似昏衢慧燭明

[For me], first it was like
a light in the darkness.

漸如冷陸韻律吹

Then it was like hearing
music in a lonely place.³⁰⁶

[...]

[...]

虎鬪獅鬪此何時

Now both the tiger and
the lion are looking [at
Korea.]

醍醐鑿灌世人頂

Sŏu wants to wake up the
compatriots in the
motherland.

西友苦衷我獨知

Only I know the turmoil
[that those working on]
Sŏu [are going through].

[...]³⁰⁷

[...]

In the fragments taken from Ch'oe work above, we see the new-intellectual poet sing of the magazine, while also using the Sino-Korean poetic genre as a means to challenge the social and political realities of the time. As is the case with other poets, in *Praising Sŏu* we see the poet's expressions of concern for the present situation in which Korea finds itself as well as the shortsightedness of the unenlightened. The first excerpt is taken from the opening of the piece, as he brings to light the myopic nature of his countrymen in regards to nation security;

³⁰⁵ A needle, eluding to a compass, a magnetised needle.

³⁰⁶ Unable to ascertain the meaning of this line. While in most cases the *raeng* or *naeng* (冷) character typically refers to "cold", there are examples where it can also mean unfamiliar or even lonely. The character *ryuk* or *nyuk* (陸) typically refers to land. Because of this, the tentative translation makes reference to a 'lonely place' where 'music can be heard.'

³⁰⁷ "Ch'an sŏu haeng," *Sŏu*, vol. 4, March 1, 1907.

rather than seeking to strengthen the nation moving towards a new era of colonialism and imperial control, we in fact see the people still enamored with an old order of rule, proud of the great monarchs and rulers of their once glorious past. They are stuck inside, and through their open window they will be exposed to a bigger world.

As the poem progresses, we see the poet express his admiration for magazines like *Sŏu*. Like a social, cultural and political ‘compass’ in a chaotic time, the magazine calibrates its readers to the direction and cause of enlightenment, progress and new cultural development. Like music in silence and light in the dark, the magazine both figuratively and literally enlightened the poet himself and it is celebrated as a powerful tool for the people. It provides them with a source for good, allowing them to break from their past of darkness and silence.

The final lines above are the most poignant and most engaged with contemporary concerns through their exploration of encroaching colonial realities and the importance of a new publishing culture and the spread of intellectual magazines for the future nation. The ‘lions’ and ‘tigers’ of the world, with their violent ambitions and desires for Korean territory, are already closing in. At the time of writing, the nation had already suffered a bitter loss to its sovereignty with the unequal treaty of 1905. Furthermore, the Russo-Japanese war situation was also exacerbating the country’s precarious situation. The poet sees *Sŏu* as a guiding light for the new-intellectual and Korean patriot in their desire to protect the motherland in a world of changing political currents and social Darwinian rises and falls.

In short, we see how Sino-Korean poetic works, while written in a literary language that was under attack at time for being elitist and disconnected from the burgeoning patriotic voices of twentieth-century Koreans, were actually fairly in tune with the desires and objectives of the new-intellectual age much in the same way as vernacular genres. Ch’oe Yŏng-nyŏn’s work is more than just a mere celebration of *Sŏu*’s successes. It is a work that stands out in the way the genre could be weaponized against the same class of people that caused Chosŏn’s

palpable decline. As the ‘tigers and lions’ from outside turn their eye to Korea, in this new era, those of the past need chastising and those with new views need to be supported and celebrated. Be it in the vernacular or in literary Sinitic, the loss of the nation and the twentieth-century man’s call for action could be poeticized broadly and reach new heights.

In Ryugye (柳溪)³⁰⁸ Hong Hŭi-ch’un’s (洪熙春) piece, entitled *Kamu* (感遇) “Sighing about What has Happened,” we see a continuation of the theme of corrupt officials and their inability to ascertain the damage that they may be causing their nation and its people through blind engagement with the Japanese and bending to their imperial whims. Hong presents to the reader a palpable sense of self-reflection through the voice of a Korean intellectual during this changing time. More specifically, the poetic voice of the poem laments how they should have done more and been more forthright in protecting their nation themselves rather than relying the inept highest echelons of government for protection:

感遇

Sighing about What has
Happened

豢養群狗意

[We] raise a pack of dogs

警盜守夜分

To be on guard for thieves
and be on the look out at
night.

大患自外至

[But] great calamities
arrive from outside.

恬若耳不聞

The idle and immature are
unable to hear [what is
coming].

³⁰⁸ Literally ‘Willow Stream.’

畢竟傾家³⁰⁹奪

In the end, all [their]
possessions [will be]
seized.

寂寂星月秋

[All that will remain] is
silence among the moon
and stars of autumn.

主翁昔食功

Their owner fed them
diligently

其意安在否

but where is the meaning
in this?

人皆為翁冤

Others all feel bitter
towards the owners.

我獨為翁羞

But I alone feel
embarrassment.

如不蓄爾輩

If we had not raised
bastards like you,

豈加此竊偷³¹⁰

Would we have ever been
robbed like this?

Published in the *Taehan Hyŏphoe Hoebo* (대한협회회보 大韓協會會報) in 1909, Hong presents to the reader the image of a pack of dogs, diligently fed by the people as faithful guards and protectors in case of harm and theft. But rather than providing protection, the dogs have been overindulged. Lazy and indolent, they pay no heed to the thieves who enter the homes of the people and seize all their assets with nothing left. As the poem draws to a close, the poetic voice overseeing such misery expresses his embarrassment at the owners of the dogs. Blaming

³⁰⁹ Short for the four-character expression *kyŏngga p'asan* (傾家破產) – referring to the seizure of all assets within the home.

³¹⁰ “Kamu,” *Taehan Hyŏphoe Hoebo*, vol. 12, March 25, 1909.

them harshly, if the owners had not have been so lax, the dogs would have been better trained and helped them protect their homes and possessions.

Although on first glance Hong's piece is a simple poem about indolent guard dogs, one can argue that his poem is a critically engaged work that subtextually seeks to get to the heart of contemporary matters relating to twentieth-century Korea; it presents to readers the frustrations of the enlightened and forward facing intellectual class as Korea fast approached full colonial control of their nation at the hands of the Japanese empire. His sentiments conveyed in this piece likely resonated with many, as the Koreans struggled to come to terms with the changing world in which they found themselves and the powerlessness they felt caught between greater powers exercising their will over the world's stage. As Yi Hŭi-mok highlights, the 'dogs' of Hong's piece, grown fat and full through feeding by the Korean people, are in his words, the officials (공경 재상) of government. 'They are supposed to be the ones that raise up the country. Instead, they have sat back and allowed for its own destruction and national sovereignty to be stolen.'³¹¹

Yi's critique indeed has reason, but in his writings, the importance of the choice of literary Sinitic to convey such sentiment is overlooked. The power of biting satire and the insult of being comparable to mere dogs through the public pages of a newspaper allows Sino-Korean poetic writing to transcend the limitations of Korea's dynastic past. Through the shift in power spheres between old Chosŏn elites and the new-intellectuals, we see Sino-Korean poetry as a critically and contemporary engaged genre that attacks its old master and lays bare to the people the damages of their ingrained behaviour. In this, the poem chastises the old elite that have allowed the Japanese to do as they please. It also casts shame upon the people as a whole for

³¹¹ Yi Hŭi-mok, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan Press, 2004): 23.

continuing to stand back and allow the old Chosŏn officials to cause so much damage that now the Korean people must deal with on their own.

While Hong may chastise the weak dogs that have caused much damage to the ordinary folk of Korea, in the following piece, titled *Mun* (蚊) “Mosquitos,” an anonymous poet under the pseudonym of Sinŭnsaeng (顯雲生)³¹² uses evocative language and imagery to spearhead contemporary issues of national sovereignty and those trapped by imperial tides. Sinŭnsaeng’s poem was published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (대한매일신보 大韓每日新報) newspaper in late June 1910, a mere few months before the second Korea-Japan treaty, which would lead to the total annexation of Korea into the Japanese empire:

蚊

Mosquitos

簾踈燈碧雨昏時

At dusk when blue rain
falls, the curtain is drawn
and the lamps are lit.

羣聚如雷刺似錐

A group [begins to]
gather, swift and lively,
resembling needles...

着嘴於人能吮血

Sticking their mouths into
humans, they can suck out
[our] blood.

桃紅萬點在膚肌³¹³

Peachy pink, there are
10,000 marks [left] on the
skin.

³¹² Or ‘Student Looking at Clouds.’

³¹³ “Mun,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, June 29, 1910.

Through the employment of simple, yet evocative imagery, Sinŭnsaeng’s piece provides us with a snapshot into the immediate and emotive reactions provoked by imperial and colonial ambition surrounding the Korean peninsula. The poet provides the reader with no further hint as to who the ‘mosquitos’ of the piece represent. From a contemporary standpoint, it cannot be ascertained whether they are a reference to the Japanese as a group with their many ‘needles,’ or whether the group of mosquitos refer to numerous covetous powers from near and far in pursuit of that which Korea possesses, baying for blood for sustenance. Regardless of who the mosquitos represent, due to the time in which the piece was published, the reader is met with a vivid depiction of imperial realities and colonial ambition that ‘bleeds dry’ the bodies of the colonized.

Interestingly, we can see that his poetic vision clearly bolstered a visceral reaction in his readers, as is evidenced by the attached comment featured together with his work:

評曰 古之蚊能知禮 今之蚊不知禮 磨牙吮血無所不至者也

The commenter said: mosquitos of the past knew of propriety; those of today do not know of propriety. They are creatures that [just] polish their teeth to suck [our] blood – there is no place that they cannot reach.

The anonymous commenter of Sinŭnsaeng’s *Mosquitos* highlights a stark difference between the ‘mosquitos of the past’ and those feasting on human blood at present. To the commenter, something has evidently changed – the creatures in pursuit of Korea have been more cunning and shun propriety, etiquette and loyalty to get where it is they wish to reach.

A similar level of palpable anxiety and growing existential dread is also ascertainable in a piece by Maeyusaeng (梅瘕生).³¹⁴ The following poem published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in 1910 entitled *Chiju* (蜘蛛) “The Spider” also draws upon insect imagery to

³¹⁴ or ‘Ailing Plum Student.’

sophisticatedly explore the insidious nature of imperial realities, at a decisive time between the signing of the two treaties between Korea and Japan:

蜘蛛

The Spider

滿腹經綸任白家

To fill its stomach, it
weaves its silk web [to
form] its own home.

綢繆奇巧詫豪奢

Bundles of silk,
remarkable and skillfully
made, a proud air of one's
own extravagance.

尋常蝴蝶原無罪

It seeks out an ordinary
butterfly, [fluttering over]
the fields without [any]
guilt.

一網打殲利械賒³¹⁵

In an instant it hits the
web and meets its end;
[such a] useful tool...

In a similar way to Sinūnsaeng's piece where the mosquitos attack the unsuspecting flesh of a human being, Maeyusaeng's piece also explores similar circumstances through the binary opposites of the cunning spider and the unsuspecting butterfly. This simple work opens to a spider weaving a web to catch its prey to consume. Skillfully made and proud of one's extravagance in such a detailed creation, with no sense of guilt the spider awaits the butterfly, which is swiftly tangled in the web with little effort.

In this piece, one can argue that the poet uses the insects to explore the troubling relationship and the clear imbalance between Korea and Japan, especially during the early years

³¹⁵ "Chiju," *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, August 3, 1910. '賒' unclear here.

of the twentieth century. In comparison to *Mosquitos*, however, while this piece was also circulated widely in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, this poem was published even later, on the 3rd August 1910, days before Chosŏn would formally begin a dark period under full colonial control by the Japanese empire. Maeyusaeng's piece appeared with a telling comment. While the anonymous contributor clearly sees the topical relevance of his poetic imagination, in this critique we ironically see scorn poured on the innocent and unsuspecting butterfly:

評曰 已知蜘蛛士儉之性 則何不效黃鳥止隅之警歟

堪歎蝴蝶少無戒懼³¹⁶之心

The commenter said: if [it] already knew that spiders are sly and cunning... then why, like an oriole, would it not just rest [for a while] in a corner and keep alert?! I deplore [how] this butterfly lacks any sense of concern!

From the above words, we see his sense of questioning, disappointment and despondence at the situation. The commenter laments how the butterfly did not 'wait in the corner' like the oriole but instead flies into a trap, unaware of the dangers. As was the case for the time, Korea's unequal treaties since the Kangwha treaty of 1876 had become highly contentious for some. Seeing Korea's sovereignty chipped away was painful to witness. In Maeyusaeng's *The Spider*, we see both poet and commenter lay bare their personal laments at the spider's web that Korea has found itself trapped within and those who seemingly lack the ability to see the dangers of such a precarious situation.

As the years go by and the Korean people witness their nation transition from dysfunctional dynastic rule to protectorate status through closer ties with Japan, a growing sense of malaise, sadness and shame come to the fore in the Sino-Korean poetic writing of the

³¹⁶ *Kyegu* (계구 戒懼), literally refraining and having concern out of fear of something. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 680.

twentieth-century print media landscape. By the eve of complete annexation into the empire, such sentiments have developed further. We come to see a far more palpable fear and anxiety give colour to Sino-Korean poems towards the end of the first decade of the 1900s. The following piece entitled *Maengho Haeng* (猛虎行) “Song of the Ferocious Tiger” was published in March 1909 in the *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo* (대한협회회보 大韓協會會報) and it explores this tangible fear:

猛虎行

Song of the Ferocious
Tiger

猛虎當大道

The tiger is looking at the
main road.

雙眼如挾鏡

Both eyes like a pair of
mirrors.

烈風捲九街

A ferocious wind whips
through the streets.

咆哮³¹⁷懼一境

With a roar, [everyone] is
scared witless.

人人但蜩縮³¹⁸

Everybody recoils,

驚呼熱中腸

they scream in alarm and
their insides burn [from
fear].

寧³¹⁹甘³²⁰就彼死

Would they be happier to
just be killed by him?

³¹⁷ *P'oho* (咆哮) literally ‘the fierce roar of a beast.’

³¹⁸ Rendered as *wich'uk* (蜩縮) – literally ‘shrink, draw back, [like] a hedgehog.’ Evocative of the way that hedgehogs react when afraid or when in the presence of danger. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajōn*, 1618.

³¹⁹ Read here as closer in meaning to the Korean ‘차라리.’

³²⁰ *Kam* (甘) read as ‘happy’ or ‘better’- Cf. example three, *Gudai Hanyu Cidian*, 446.

不願犯其剛	[Not a soul] dares to strike [such a] powerful [creature].
吾意獨不然	Is it I alone who thinks differently [to them]?
萬夫各執鎗	All of us [should] take up arms.
借曰不殺虎	Even if we cannot kill the beast,
勝似坐死亡 ³²¹	this would be better than just sitting back and waiting to die.

Also written by the same Hong Hūi-ch'un above, *Song of the Ferocious Tiger* explores a variety of contrasting dynamics – animal and man, coloniser versus colonized, developed nations versus the undeveloped, animal violence versus manmade weapons. As one of the few Sino-Korean poems to be explored in existing scholarship, we can ascertain the depth of its message and the importance of its place within the landscape of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century. Yi Hūi-mok sums up the poem starkly: Hong's work stands out as a fablelike work where the tigers are the Japanese and the terrified villagers represent ordinary Korean people.³²²

A straightforward piece, Yi rightfully highlights the lucid thread of resistance that runs through the work and the drive for the awakening of the people to drive out the Japanese. What is overlooked in his critique is arguably the more palpable sense of malaise, frustration and bitterness that underpins the poetic voice of the work. In this regard, we must focus on the poetic 'I' of Hong's piece. It is this voice and the importance of the narrator's message that

³²¹ "Maengho haeng," *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo*, vol. 12, March 25, 1909.

³²² Yi Hūi-mok, 28-29.

plays a significant role in the shaping of Sino-Korean poetry as genre of contemporary relevance.

Through this figure's speculative gaze, we see national irrationality (both the tiger's violent demeanour and the villager's uncontrolled hysteria) presented starkly in parallel to the rational and pensive thinking of the 'I' narrator observing the scene. While seemingly sighing in resignation to himself – 'is it I alone who thinks differently?' – the narrator is in fact speaking directly to a *new* audience. The readers of *Taehan Hyŏphoe Hoebo* were much like himself – more aware, more critical and thirsty for change. They are the antithesis of the villagers in the poem, unable or potentially apathetic to striking back at the marauding tiger.

Touching once again on Pak Ŭl-su's ideas of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century as a genre that also rose to the task of 'participation in reality' (현실참여문학) mentioned earlier, the above can be said to transcend the simplicity of its main theme that seeks to highlight the victimisation of Korea by the Japanese.³²³ Instead, we see Hong's poem demonstrate the 'maturation' of the Sino-Korean poetic medium. The genre is one that embodies the sentiment of the twentieth-century Korean intellectual, as Sino-Korean poetic language is weaponised against both their imperial aggressors and those that continue to impede the progress of Korea along the road of civilisation and enlightenment. With veiled critique colouring hansi of the twentieth century, the genre could evoke pride, shame, anger and also hope as Korea stood at the crossroads of imperialism.

3. Poeticising Imperial Currents – The Will of the People and the Light at the End of the Tunnel:

³²³ Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chŏhang Sigaron*. (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 2001): 318

In the following poetic works we also come to see how, despite the palpable political climate in which they found themselves, such a transitional era could also be a time of new possibility. Through the genre of Sino-Korean poetry, this era of change, development and the ability to look to a new future and forge a new destiny also begins to feature. In the following poems, rather than focusing wholly on lament and the weight of national loss, we see an antithetical sense of hope. Often, the poetic persona of these opposing works comes to the fore as an awakened and enlightened individual. They are expectant and somewhat positive, with their role as a strong guide to bring their nation to victory characteristic of a variety of works.

In Sino-Korean poetry of this era, the companionship of their peers comes to the fore as a noteworthy element of the poetic language of enlightenment. Within the youth of Korea lies a future of change and possibility. Through their efforts, this era does not have to dwell on the darkness but instead find the light in enlightenment:

逢大韓子

Meeting a Korean
Friend

長夜沉沉報曉鍾

[Like] hearing the
chimes of dawn [after]
a long night.

故人無恙舊時容

My old friend is in
good health, the same
face as always.³²⁴

赫赫光輝爭白日

[It is as if he] is
shining, his brightness
vies with the light of
the sun.

³²⁴ Good health as in *muyang* (無恙) – literary ‘no illness’ or ‘*t'al*’ (縫). Also *mubyŏng* (無病) given as an example. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 1075.

堂堂志氣撼青穹

His spirit and drive
[make] the azure skies
[above] tremble.

一別幾何相刮目³²⁵

It has not been long
[since we parted], but
he has changed so
much.

七聲連發直砭聾³²⁶

His seven sentences,
one after another, soon
make me [feel like] I
am deaf [and dumb].

同舟不畏風波急

I am not afraid of
rushing waves and
winds when sharing a
boat with him.

砥柱屹然東海東³²⁷

He is a resolute stone
pillar, to the east of
the East Sea.

Pong Taehanja (逢大韓子) or “Meeting a Korean Friend” was published in 1907 in the *Taehan Hyöphoe Hoebo* under the name of Sin Kyu-sik (申圭植). Juxtaposing with the previously explored poetic works that dwell on the pain of a nation inherent to loss of sovereignty in the face of imperial ambition, in this piece the reader is presented with the light inherent to camaraderie shared between young Koreans and the importance of such friendships. The poetic voice of this piece narrates his meeting with an old friend. Since they last met, the friend is different – he is healthier, brighter and more eloquent than ever, leaving the narrator to conclude his work with a sense of relief and pride.

³²⁵ *Kwalmok* (刮目) reference to the four-character expression *kwalmok sangdae* (刮目相對) to refer to his friend’s complete change. Cf. Chŏn Kwansu, *Hansiŏ Sajŏn* (Seoul: Kukhak Charyowŏn, 2002): 66 and Chang Kigŭn, *Kosasŏngŏ Taesajŏn* (Seoul: Myŏngmundang, 2002): 264.

³²⁶ Lit. ‘needle’ or ‘acupuncture’ (砭) and ‘deaf’ or ‘foolish’ (聾).

³²⁷ “Pong taehanja,” *Taehan Hyöphoe Hoebo*, vol. 3, June 25, 1908.

His friend has grown into a formidable figure and a proud Korean for all to follow. While the greater politics that are shaping the future of the Korean peninsula are moving into precarious territory, the poet presents to the reader the image of a friend who is *flourishing*; it is a celebratory and positive work that is thematically and tonally at odds with some of the other works of the imperial age. Though “it has not been long” he is nevertheless more admirable as his spirits remain high and his outlook is positive.

Sin Kyu-sik’s simple poem draws our attention to and also celebrates the new-intellectual Korean youth who are hard at work, using their experiences and the educational opportunities that the twentieth century is providing them. Like the sound of a ‘chiming bell in the dark of the night,’ his friend appears like the sun, shining and leading the way to a better future through the darkness of contemporary times. Iterated consistently throughout, the friend is the physical embodiment of twentieth-century progress and the shining light of civilisation. Even in such a short time, ‘his seven sentences’ surprise him as he now seemingly speaks differently – the new vocabulary of the twentieth-century man. The poet brings his work to a close, highlighting their new sense of ease despite such precarious times for the Korean people: with friends like him at his side, he is ‘not afraid’ of the waves they may face. He is a pillar that will hold strong, and support Korea through this time, remaining resolute into the future.

Meanwhile, in Kyōngsein’s (警世人)³²⁸ 1908 poetic work, *Yōng Noeu* (詠雷雨) “The Song of the Thunderstorm” published in the *T’aegŭk Hakpo* (태극학보 太極學報), we see continued attempts at contemporary critique of the imperial age, but instead with the onus of responsibility for bringing about change being more specifically on the individual. In *Thunderstorm*, however, most worthy of note is the imagery of the titular storm itself. We do not see the intellectual poet’s attempts to explore the troubles of the time through a

³²⁸ Or ‘The People’s Awakener.’

straightforward cliché but instead we see the unorthodox exploration of the impending storm as something of a new possibility for those that bear witness to it:

詠雷雨

The Song of the Thunderstorm

雷鼓大鳴雲影斜

Thundering drums in a
booming cry, the clouds
cast their shadows askew.

忽然雨脚亂如麻³²⁹

All of a sudden, a deluge
of rain streams down in
chaos.

山河裂盡轟轟響

The mountains and rivers
are torn up, overcome [by
the storm], strike upon
strike, sounds ring all
around.

劈破頑陰掃衆魔³³⁰

[It] smashes and tears at
the sinister shadows,
casting out the demons
that have gathered.

In this simple poetic work, Kyōngsein presents to the reader the vivid depiction of a raging electrical storm. The clouds boom with thunder and rains hammer down over the Korean peninsula. The ferociousness of the storm ‘tears up’ the landscape, laying waste to mountains and rivers in order to light up the shadows and expose the demons that lie in wait within. What is most noteworthy is the way the poet subverts the expectations of readers in regard to the

³²⁹ Translation tentative. *Ranma* (亂麻) literally means ‘strands of hemp tangled together,’ while also being used to refer to a chaotic situation that one is unable to comprehend. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajōn – Vol. 1*, 598.

³³⁰ “Yōng noeu,” *T’aegŭk Hakpo*, vol. 24, September 24, 1908, 53.

nature of the storm itself. Despite the chaos and destruction, the storm, almost personified, is seemingly seeking out demons that lie within the shadows cast across the earth.

While at first the reader may be led to infer the meaning of the thunderstorm as metaphorically comparable to Japanese encroachment on the Korean peninsula, expectations are subverted from line three, as we see the character of the storm as being unconventional in the way that it seeks to provide *protection*. In this regard, it can be argued that the storm is actually a manifestation of the innate struggle of Koreans and their sacrifices for legitimacy in the changing geopolitical landscape. The storm is the protector of the people, its power ferocious as it fights to cast out the demons lurking in the sinister shadows of colonialism.

In a similar regard, in the following work titled *Yaburan* (夜不眠) “A Sleepless Night” published under the name of Ojaesaeng (悟齋生)³³¹ in the *Kiho Hŭnghakhoe Wŏlbo* (기호흥학회월보 畿湖興學會月報), we also see this poet similarly playing with the expectations of his readers, concluding the piece with a sense of hope that lingers on the horizon for the poetic voice of the piece:

夜不眠

A Sleepless Night

病葉蕭蕭下

Parched leaves, falling
down in their melancholy.

曙星皙皙輝

The stars of twilight,
shimmering on brightly.

城棲無寐客

Staying in this city, [I] am
a visitor unable to sleep.

苦悶待朝暉³³²

[So, in the] bitter
darkness, [I] wait for the

³³¹ Literally an ‘Awakened and Pure Student.’

³³² “Yabuan,” *Kiho Hŭnghakhoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 4, November 25, 1908, 36.

shining light of the
morning.

In Ojaesaeng's 1908 submission, we are also presented with another straightforward scene, with an unknown figure unable to sleep at night. The tone of the work is melancholic but the mournful parched leaves are complimented by the vitality of the bright stars of the night sky above. Into line three, the reader understands that the poetic figure is a visitor in the urban world and unable to sleep; he restlessly looks out his window at the darkness and the stars. The poem comes to a close as he ponders over the darkness, awaiting 'the shining light' of the dawn. This poem is, at first glance, a straightforward work of little metaphorical or allegorical depth but the attached comment featured alongside Ojaesaeng's *A Sleepless Night* provides insight into how his contemporaries interpreted his work:

評曰 君非先覺者耶

The commenter says: [so] it is not *you* that is the *first* to be awakened?

In his work, the poet paints a picture of a visitor, potentially visiting a city that is different from his own, or indeed a traveller to the city whose hometown is originally in the countryside. We see the contrasts between the city and the splendour of the starry sky and the typically verdant greenery of the natural world. Unable to sleep, he is left to ponder until the morning comes. In this, the idea of being asleep and being awake is sensitively explored by the poet, of which has not gone unnoticed by the anonymous commenter.

The unknown figure that is the focus of this work is literary unable to sleep and in the 'bitter darkness' has no choice but to wait for the light of the morning to usher forth a new day. In the above comment, the idea of *being awake* provides an interesting play on meaning. While

of course denoting the act of being ‘awake’ or to be ‘awakened’ from sleep, it is also used metaphorically to refer to ‘being awakened’ in the philosophical sense of enlightenment.

In this reading, while the figure is seemingly plagued by insomnia and awaits the coming morning to bring him peace, in the anonymous reading we see that being ‘awake’ at night is actually positive. This figure has been ‘awakened’ early to the light of a new age before many others, and thus, he is a figure for adulation and a potential leader for the coming dawn of new opportunity. As the ‘early enlightened one’ or ‘the one to be awakened first’ (先覺者) he is privy to that which others are not. Just as the morning will bring restitution, so too can he bring much to the unawakened around him. In this, Ojaesaeng’s poem transcends the limitations often thrust upon the Sino-Korean poetic genre, instead breathing life into the poetic language of literary Sinitic through publishing a work that succinctly gets to the heart of contemporary Korean concern and the drive for a new dawn.

Another work that emboldens the youth, rallying them towards a united goal that is shaped by progressive ideas and actions is also ascertainable in a poem submitted under the pseudonym of Ran’gok (蘭谷).³³³ The following piece was featured across the pages of another defining publication of the golden age of enlightenment era intellectual pursuits, the *Söbuk Hakhoe Wölbo* (서북학회월보 西北學會月報) in 1909:

喜雨

The Joyous Downpour

旱天一雨洗春城

On a dry day, a burst of
rain washes Seoul clean in
springtime.

³³³ Literally ‘Orchid Valley.’

不費金錢潔又清

Money is not needed to be
spent, to make this city
clean and bright.

北岳³³⁴森羅生活畫

The dense forest
of *Pugaksan* spreads out,
like a painting full of life.

南江怒起放雄聲

The waters of Han River
angrily surge forth, letting
out a heroic roar.³³⁵

行何新政如人事

[Let us] progress towards
a new political system,
[one that focuses on] the
matters of the people.

賴此殊恩³³⁶富物情

Relying on [our own]
grace and favour, [let us
become rich] in both
material things as well as
emotions.

穢惡³³⁷盡流東海去

That which dirties us will
[finally then] flow back
into the East Sea.

大韓日月復光明³³⁸

And the nights and days
of Glorious Korea, will
again return to light and
brightness.

Ran'gok's poem entitled *Hŭiu* (喜雨) "The Joyous Downpour" narrates a scene that describes an unexpected yet welcome burst of rainfall over the city of Seoul on a dry spring day. The city is bright and clean after the rain, with the verdant slopes of *Pugaksan* in Seoul 'like a painting'

³³⁴ Mount Pugak (북악산), behind Kyōngbok Palace in Seoul.

³³⁵ Referred to as "The Southern River."

³³⁶ *Su'ŭn* (殊恩) – unique or special grace, favour or kindness.

³³⁷ *Ye'ak* (穢惡) – literally, something that is dirty or sullies a reputation. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn – Vol. 10*, 735.

³³⁸ "Hŭiu," *Sōbuk Hakhoe Wōlbo*, vol. 15, August 1, 1909.

full of life. After the rains, the southern river, likely a reference to the Han river, takes on the rain, absorbing it as the waters rise and swell. The faceless observer of this joyous scene, clearly spurred on by the charged scene presented before him, turns to the state of the nation and makes a deep, patriotic profession for a new era of great changes for both the Korean peninsula and its people.

Ran'gok's *Joyous Downpour* thus positions itself at a significant distance from previously explored works. While indeed the weight of national loss was a significant element of the poetic landscape of early twentieth-century Korea, we also see the way in which some Sino-Korean poems evoke passion for a new future. Seeing the effects of the downpour, the narrator of this piece is filled with passion. The forests of Korea seemingly burst into life rather than wither and die and the waters of the Han river, rather than running dry or becoming murky, are personified and given their own voice as the waves rise and surge and seemingly roar with an inner strength imbued with ethno-national consciousness. This powerful sight spurs him on, as he professes the importance of seeing this time as a time of new possibilities that can indeed fall into the hands of the Korean people. He calls out to his readers to 'progress towards a new political system' that can deal with matters most befitting their needs for a new future.

Rather than representing a regressive tradition that looks to the past, Sino-Korean poetry looks to the future in Ran'gok's submission. It is the Korean ethno-national consciousness personified. For a new, wider audience of readers never before seen in Korea, these powerful waters seize the ills of Japanese imperial and colonial ambition, and then physically carry this evil away again, sending them back into the East Sea towards the Japanese archipelago. Through this swell in national consciousness and the rise of the new-intellectual class that seeks progress and change, 'the nights and days of Korea' will indeed become bright once more.

The waters of the Han make another appearance in the following work by Pyök-ch'o (碧蕉)³³⁹ Ko Yöng-gi (高永箕). *Han'gang P'ungböm* (漢江風帆) “Wind Filled Sails on the Han River” was published in early 1910:

漢江風帆

Wind Filled Sails on the
Han River

漢江狂風激浪隨

On the Han river, a fierce
and swift wind follows
[atop] the waves.

十分危險九分知

[Yet despite] the dangers,
[I still] know [what to do]
to an extent.³⁴⁰

如今試看同舟客

Now [I find myself]
checking on the other
people with which I share
this boat.

濟後寧忘未濟時³⁴¹

After making it across,
how could I forget the
times when [once] I could
not?

Ko's poem continues to find the light inherent to life and the ability to trust in one's people to ferry across the metaphorical choppy waters of the twentieth century. In this piece, Ko recounts a scene traveling across the Han river by sailboat. A swift wind has picked up, causing

³³⁹ 'Green Banana Tree.'

³⁴⁰ Translation tentative but it seems like the *pun... pun...* (分) structure employed highlights the poet weighing up the difficulty of the situation: “10% danger, but there is a 90% chance I know how to get through this.” Cf. *Hanhan Taesajön – Vol. 2*, 420.

³⁴¹ “Han'gang p'ungböm,” *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji*, March 25, 1910.

significant swells to arise in the waters. But despite the storm that has begun to sweep over the city, the poet in his boat declares his lack of fear at the situation.

As the poem progresses, the reader comes to realise that, caught in the storm upon the turbulent waters of the Han river, the poetic voice of the piece is not alone; he is joined by others, attempting to ferry across. Casting off his concerns for his own well-being, the figure is more concerned about those with whom he shares his boat. The poem comes to a close on a poignant note as he is pensive about the outcomes of his journey. Tinged with a sense of positivity, he is looking to the bank on the over side, thinking about how he will feel when he finally ferries through the battling winds to dry land.

Wind Filled Sails on the Han River demonstrates a refreshing sense of positivity in a maelstrom of ever-increasing dread as the sovereignty of the Korean people over their land faced growing difficulties at the hands of foreign powers. In the poem's final line, Ko's work provides a pensive rhetorical question, ultimately highlighting how the trials and tribulations of life shape our journey. He does not seek to forget his difficulties, in fact, the poet subtly touches on the need to actively remember the difficult times, as it is those times that shape one's character and drive more profoundly.

As a final piece for analysis, this exploration of hope through the visceral imagery of surging waters appears once again in another of Maeyusaeng's works. Published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in July 1910, *Ryoch'ang* (潦漲) "Swelling Waters" provides a more detailed exploration of the allegorical representations of national strife, with the individual who seems powerless, actively finding light at the end of the tunnel and instead looking towards a brighter future on the horizon:

四野³⁴²霧凝眩碧空

The surrounding
countryside [finds itself]
enveloped by chilly fog,
darkening the blue sky.

滿城人塾³⁴³濘泥中

A bustling city [finds
itself] encased in a muddy
mire.

淫雲驟雨能傾海

The dense clouds give
way to sudden monsoon
rain, [enough] to compete
with the oceans.

古木盤根不畏風

The old trees with twisted
roots, are not afraid of the
gusts of wind.

天地猶有消息³⁴⁴日

[Because] the skies and
land [naturally] go
through times of flourish
and decline.

陰晴誰譏造化公

There are both overcast as
well as bright days, who
can reproach the Creator?

莫愁江漢無情³⁴⁵逝³⁴⁶

Do not worry about the
Han River, for it flows on
regardless.

萬折悠悠必復東³⁴⁷

No matter how many
times the direction
changes, the waters

³⁴² Literally ‘fields in all four direction’ (四野).

³⁴³ The meaning of *suk* (塾) is unknown here – typically refers to a place for study.

³⁴⁴ The concept of ‘flourish and decline’ a translation of *sosik* (消息) – Cf. example ㄷ in *Tonga Hanhan Taesajön*, 990.

³⁴⁵ Read here as the more infrequent meaning of fleeting, transitory, before one knows it (덧없이).

³⁴⁶ Read as ‘passing by’ (지나가다) or flowing of the waters. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajön*, 1846.

³⁴⁷ “Ryoch’ang,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, July 21, 1910. Final line evokes the four-character expression *manjöl p’ildong* (萬折必東): ‘no matter how many times the [Yellow Rivers] twists and turns, it will always eventually go east.’ Cf. <https://hanja.dict.naver.com/#/entry/ccko/5b57ddf387734db7ba19e1c4393d950b>

always slowly run back
into the East Sea.

As is the case in Ko Yōng-gi's *Wind Filled Sails*, Maeyusaeng also presents to the reader a work whereby chaos is beginning to make its way into the country. This poem depicts a country being overtaken by a creeping darkness. As the poem begins, this ominous darkness manifests as a creeping fog that envelops the fields of the countryside. The cities are caught in a 'muddy mire' as the encroaching storm gives way to abrupt rainfall that seemingly causes flood waters to engulf the entire landscape.

The poet draws the reader's attention to the image of a lone tree among the chaos, as this new imagery provides a change in focus and poetic tone as the swelling of stormy water give way to a vision of the resilience of life. As the poem draws to its close, the poet finishes on a poignant reflection on the path of water. When the chaos has died down, the tree remains and the waters flow back into the ocean to the East.

Swelling Waters also stands out as a work that embodies the hope and resilience of a people weaved into the poetic fabric of early twentieth-century mass publishing culture. The old tree, with its twisted roots deep into the proud soil of Chosŏn, does not bow to the pressure and insistence of the ferocious winds of the storm. The chaos that the water brings is not forever, it will indeed pass. And as it does, the muddy mire it has caused will be carried away once more, back towards the East where it belongs.

4. Conclusion:

As has been explored, the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century was a time of significant sociocultural and geopolitical upheaval. The Korean peninsula, due to its strategic location between China, Russia and Japan, would find itself greatly shaped by said upheavals.

Culturally, socially, politically and economically, the people of Korea were being shaped from without, while they themselves tried to grapple with the significance of this time from within. They tried to find their feet in a transitional epoch of enlightenment, imperialism, colonial ambition and new treaties. Across the pages of newspapers, magazines and the publications of literary coteries and Korean student publications, intellectuals sought to explore the vicissitudes of this time in their writings. They often raised their voices for a new future in an attempt to assert some autonomy in a time when more dominant voices drowned out the voices of Koreans.

For better or worse, the literary imagination of these intellectuals was naturally enriched by this chaotic time of uncertainty and possibility. This provided significant topical material to critique, ponder and muse upon in poetry. Poets, whether writing in literary Sinitic or the vernacular, made ample use of the newly developed print media, sharing their work widely to a broad audience which in turn engendered more to write and submit their own work for publication and appreciation.

As has been explored above, in this uncertain environment, rather than retreat into the comfort of the past, we see Sino-Korean poetry appear as a print media genre of poetry that was very much attuned to the rhythm of the so-called enlightenment age of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, as shifts in power through imperial conquests and colonial ambitions gripped the Korean peninsula. As was the case with vernacular genres, so too did poetry in literary Sinitic also seek to follow a trend of bolstering a uniquely Korean voice at such a critical time. In the Sino-Korean works of mass media print spaces above, we have explored two clear parallels between poetic works of this transitional era. In some ways, we see how poets took to the age-old genre of Sino-Korean poetry to poeticise their lament over the calamitous situation that the people of the Korean peninsula were facing, seemingly pained by

the ineptitude of Chosŏn, blind to the coming crisis and their blind adherence to a conservative and backward Sinitic worldview that only benefitted the few, rather than the many.

Beyond, we also come to see an equally clear sense of intrigue and wonder at the possibility of the future during such a chaotic time. In this regard, some poets, instead of lingering on the negative repercussions of the imperial age, actually looked to the twentieth century as a time where Koreans could flourish through their own initiative despite their encroaching neighbours. In this, a uniquely patriotic and brave voice also gives significant colour to a body of published poetry that communicates to us the diversity of ideas and voices that the poetic work of this transitional time provides, regardless of the choice of literary language.

7. Locating the 'Korea' in Sino-Korean poetry:

An Exploration of Geographical Iconography in Poetry of Enlightenment Era Publications

1. Introduction:

It goes without saying that human beings have long been influenced by the surrounding landscape. The natural world and all its bounty, from pastoral fields and rugged mountains to arid deserts and plentiful rivers and oceans, have long inspired the imagination of all cultures around the world. Since the so-called 'cultural turn' in geography studies, scholars have sought to further explore and scrutinise the relationship between humans and landscapes.³⁴⁸

Breaking away from a romantic 'nature for nature's sake' approach to landscape in poetic works, literary scholars seek to find the human – our identities, histories and cultures – written into landscape and reflected in literary works that focus on our mountains, rivers and other geographic icons, including the man-made. Scholars such as Scazzosi describe literary works on said landscapes as "open works" where "traces from the past interlace with those of the present and modify them continuously and inevitably. Places bear dense and diffuse tangible traces of their history (even the most contemporary urbanised areas) which are still visible if one knows how to read them. A places' characters and meanings contribute to the people's identity."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ As Norton highlights, "reading the landscape is an important tradition in cultural geography and the metaphor as text – a manuscript that has been written upon by people through time – is therefore not a new one, although it is certainly an idea that has experienced something of a renaissance in connection with the cultural turn. Thus, before about 1970, it was quite usual for historical and cultural geographers to conceive of a landscape as a document, written on by successive groups of people with each writing obliterating some of what was written previously and also adding something new." Cf. William Norton, *Cultural Geography: Themes, Concepts, Analyses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 296.

³⁴⁹ Lionella Scazzosi, "Limits to Transformation in Places' Identity: Theoretical and Methodological Questions," in *Landscapes, Identities and Development*, ed. Paul Claval (New York: Routledge Press, 2011): n.p.

As human societies have developed, cultures have subsequently left their own mark on the landscape, be it positive or negative. Due to the symbiotic nature of the human-land relationship, it is understandable that landscape and all it may entail feature significantly in poetry across the world. Regarding the creative landscapes of East Asia, elements of the environment, landscape as well as more specific points of religious or cultural significance have long featured in poems and paintings of the past. Koreans have naturally drawn upon their nature and landscape throughout their long history of poetic writing for inspiration.

Continuing on from the previous chapter, we continue to explore a variety of Sino-Korean poetic works of this new class that began sharing their works in print media. Having explored poetic works of Korean students away in Japan, in this chapter it is the specific ‘Korean’ character of icons of the peninsula’s landscape that come to life through the medium of literary Sinitic. More specifically in this chapter, a variety of works that sing of unique elements of Korean landscape – both natural as well as urban – will be explored as so-called “open works” on the story of Korea.³⁵⁰

A variety of geographic icons appear in the following works taken from newspapers, magazines and student publications. Sketches of mountains and rivers to manmade structures that have developed cultural and historic value over the years appear with intriguing variety. Through the following reading, what becomes clear is how said imagery and evocations of the peninsula’s geographic iconography continues to be employed as a means of furthering the patriotic enlightenment cause. As Daniels stresses, “landscapes, whether focusing on single monuments or framing sketches of scenery, provide visible shape; they picture the nation.”³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ “The current concern is with the way that cultural groups may assert their identity on landscape, intentionally and otherwise, such that the landscape has a *symbolic identity*. A description and interpretation of landscape that focuses on uncovering symbolic meanings, known as iconography, is premised on the idea that the identity of landscape is expressed through symbols.” Cf. Norton, *Cultural Geography*, 290.

³⁵¹ Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993): 5 quoted in Karen E. Till, “Political Landscapes,” in *A*

Namely, in evoking a Korean spirit *through* elements of Korea's landscape and territory old and new, Sino-Korean poetry could continue to be of relevance to the twentieth-century intellectual.

This chapter continues to address Sino-Korean poetry's lack of representation within the broader canon of twentieth-century Korean poetry while testing the boundaries of 'modern' literary production. In the following, there is further evidence that demonstrates how the younger, educated new-intellectual class of the early years of the twentieth century sustained literary Sinitic poetic production despite such passionate critics among their own ranks. Through the subtleties of Sino-Korean literary language, landscape imagery could tune itself to the beat of enlightenment, civilisation and twentieth-century cultural nationalist rhetoric.

Thus, this work continues to explore how intellectuals would experiment with Sino-Korean literary language in a way that could both lean on long-established literary language conventions, together with the circulation of newer ideas and twentieth-century thinking in the burgeoning print media sphere. In such a context in particular, nature, landscape and territory in literary production could effectively be 'recruited for the national cause' both in the ways said imagery has the ability to not only 'naturalise the connection between nation and territory but also visually to communicate and reinforce identity with the nation.'³⁵²

2. Geographic Icons of Print Media Sino-Korean poetry:

Companion to Cultural Geography, edited by James Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, Richard H. Schein, 347-364 (Malden, Blackwells Publishing, 2004): 349.

³⁵² John Agnew, "Nationalism," in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, 233.

Under the name of Mandang (晩堂)³⁵³ Yi Chong-jun (李鍾濬), the following poem entitled *Han'gang* (漢江) “The Han River” stands out as a vivid example of how prominent iconographical elements of the Korean landscape come to transcend the limitations of premodern natural poetic imagery. Instead, in the following piece, Yi’s 1906 poem draws on the iconic Han River to pen a poetic work imbued with patriotic enlightenment sentiment that also demonstrates to the reader the psychology of young Korean intellectuals regarding their role as mediators of change during this highly transitional period of socio-cultural change across the Korean peninsula:

漢江

The Han River

漢江江水遠連天

The waters of the Han
[stretch on] far, meeting
the sky.

不盡清流五百年

There is no end to [the
river’s] clear flow, [that
has existed] for five
hundred years.

而今欲渡無舟楫

But it is now that [I] feel
driven to ferry across,
[though] I lack both boat
and paddle.

佇立西風意惘然³⁵⁴

So vacantly I stand in the
western wind, caught up
in my thoughts.

³⁵³ The meaning of this pen name is difficult to grasp. *Man* (晩) is potentially a reference to the four-character expression *taegimansōng* (大器晚成) or “it takes time for a great bowl to be made.” *Tang* (堂) or ‘hall’ is potentially referencing a home. Therefore, the pen name may be referring to the *perfect home* (that has yet to be made and will take great effort on [my] part to achieve.)

³⁵⁴ “Han’gang,” *Taehan Chaganghoe Wōlbo*, vol. 5, November 25, 1906, 33.

In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, geographer D.W. Meinig states that “every mature nation has its symbolic landscapes. They are part of the iconography of nationhood, part of shared ideas and memories and feelings which bind a people together.”³⁵⁵ In the case of Korea, the Han River has long been a defining element of not only Korea’s geographic landscape, but also its cultural landscape. As Ŏm Ki-p’yo states, ‘in an era where numerous ancient kingdoms fought on the Korean peninsula, the Han river basin came to be seen as a symbol of hegemonic power [...] the area of Seoul where the Han river passes has been a place of spatiality and historicity, where politics, economics, society and culture have coexisted from prehistoric times until today.’³⁵⁶ The river that runs through Seoul continues to be emblematic of Korea, old and new, and even in contemporary times, the river has even developed new symbolic value, with South Korea’s economic boom dubbed “the miracle on the Han river.”

As the central, defining image of this poem, the poetic exploration of the Han³⁵⁷ is not dissimilar to more traditional imagery used in poetry of a past age that draws on the natural beauty of rivers for inspiration. However, Mandang’s composition presents to readers an iconic symbol of Korean strength and longevity in an ambiguous epoch of upheaval and change. In lines one and two, we are presented with the image of the expansive waters of the Han river. Reaching out and touching the unknown horizon, the river resembles a pathway, drawing the unknown figure to look towards the future that lies beyond the place where the water meets the sky. The poet touches upon the river’s omnipresence throughout history – “five hundred” long years, yet the flowing waters of the Han never cease and remain a constant presence in the landscape.

³⁵⁵ Donald. W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1979): 164.

³⁵⁶ Ŏm Ki-p’yo, “Han’gangŭi Yŏksasŏnggwa Sŏrŭi Konggansŏng,” *Munhwasahak* 46 (2016): 107.

³⁵⁷ For more research on the exploration of the Han river in Korean poetry, Cf. Lim Su-kyung, “Hyŏndaesie Nat’anan Han’gangŭi Changsosŏng Yŏn’gu,” *Urimunhak Yŏn’gu* 43 (2014): 653-679 and Lee Sung-won, “Han’gangŭi Sijŏk Pyŏnyŏnggwa Kŭ Ŭimi” *Sian* 2 vol. 2 (1999): 46-69.

Into lines three and four, the poet draws our focus from the waters and the horizon to concentrate on an unknown figure that is standing on the bank, looking out and surveying the great expanse of water and sky that stretches forth before him. The majesty of Korea's natural splendour presented to him, this figure feels compelled and motivated to tackle the waters flow. Unable to take to the waters through his own strength alone, however, he is left to remain standing at the waters' edge to take in the scene.

No matter how far, the river strives on. No matter how arduous, the river's source is never exhausted in the face of hardship or attack. As Ŏm Ki-p'yo's work talks of the mighty Han's symbolic nature throughout history, Mandang's poetic writing stresses the symbolic omnipresence of the Han River that continues to shape the Korean psyche. Mandang seems to hint at the unwavering future of the Han, metaphoric of Korea's future in a changing world. One can interpret the figure, trapped in thought at the river's edge, as contemplating the challenges that lay ahead for him and others. Just as he is lacking 'boat and paddle' to aid him through the waters, so too must the youth have the necessary tools if they are to continue to survive as the Han has long into a new future.

As Claval and Entrikin mention, "the basic question of identity – 'who am I?', or collectively, 'who are we?' – becomes geographic to the extent that such identity comes in part from that subject's relation to the world and the surrounding environment. As individual and collective identity become linked, one gains insight into shared attachments and conflicts over the meanings of landscapes, places and territories."³⁵⁸ The use of the symbolic nature of the Han river's presence and embodiment of a collective Korean national spirit facing the horizon

³⁵⁸ "Indeed, it is argued that a strongly shared connection to local geographies is essential to the development of a collective identity (Chivallon 1995)." Cf. Paul Claval and Nicolas Entrikin, "Cultural Geography: Place and Landscape between Continuity and Change," in *Human Geography: A History for the 21st Century*, edited by Georges Benko and Ulf Strohmayer (New York: Routledge, 2004): 43. Also Cf. Chivallon, "Space and Identity in Martinique: Towards a New Reading of the Spatial History of Peasantry," in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 13, 289-309.

of a new century resonates in Mandang's writing, allowing a uniquely Korean voice addressing Korean issues to sing through the 'Chinese' text.

評曰：說得感慨然 滔滔茫茫 惘然獨 且奈何哉 憑河也不可 絕河也不
可 只要得迴瀾手 只要仗濟世才

Comments: your words have penetrated my heart. The flowing waters are infinitely vast [while the individual] is alone and vacant. What is it he should do? Crossing the river is not possible. Stopping [its flow] is also not possible. Only those capable of [swimming through] the waves alone [know what to do]. Only the most talented [know what to do].

From the attached comment included with the poem, we can ascertain the anonymous commenter's stance on the central tone of this poetic piece. He interprets the flow of the water as a vivid and frenetic crashing of waves. His interpretation of the scene is arguably somewhat chaotic; rather than interpreting a quiet scene and a pensive figure, the figure is stood facing a more intense dilemma at a loss of how to solve it. The commenter concludes that it is only those who are good at swimming that know what to do; only those who have the ability to take on the challenge that lay forth know what to do. This reading provides an interesting take on Mandang's poem. In this reading, rather than the Han being an omnipresent figure of Korean essence, this poem to this critic is focused on the dilemma of Korea's crossroads, concluding on the specific point that only those who do not need to rely on objects made by others, and only those capable of swimming with their own might are able to 'save' Korea.

A collection of eight poems in succession written under the moniker of *Sodang Kōsa* (韶堂居士)³⁵⁹ under the title of *Namsung Ŭn'gye P'aryōng* (南嵩雲溪 八詠) "The Ŭn'gye Waterfall at Namsung Peak - Eight Poems." These eight poems supposedly drawing upon the scenic beauty of the Ŭn'gye waterfall, located at present day mount Kamak in Chōksōng, P'aju in Kyōnggido, South Korea. The following is the first poem from the collection of eight:

³⁵⁹ Sodang is likely the name of a place, while Kōsa refers to either a lay Buddhist or a scholar (sōnbi) that does not hold a government post.

南嵩雲溪

The Ŭn'gye Waterfall at
Namsung Peak

岩罅飛泉³⁶⁰噴雪清

[Among] the rocks and
crevices, a waterfall
sprays out like pure snow.

臨流鎮日聽寒聲

Looking at the flowing
[waters], I take in its cold
sounds all day.

年年恨作茲邱客

Year after year, I regret
that I can only visit this
landscape [as a] guest.

只有詩成屋未成³⁶¹

All [I] have is [some]
finished poems; the house
[in which I shall live] is
yet to be completed.

The piece also includes an anonymous comment by a reader, who writes that ‘it feels as if I am once again visiting this place where I have been before’ – seemingly impressed by the poets’ ability to conjure up such a vivid imagery of a place he had once visited in the past.³⁶² Although the spring that give life to the Ŭn'gye waterfall does not represent the same comparable symbolism of the Han River in Korea’s geographical and cultural psychology, the anonymous poet presents to his readers another example of the nation’s geographical beauty.

The flowing waters, carving through the rock of the Korean landscape usher forth emotions from the writer, and by extension his contemporary readers. The anonymous writer is trapped in thought at the sound of the rushing water. The regret that he feels is intrinsic to

³⁶⁰ *Pich'ŏn* (飛泉) synonymous with *p'okp'o* (瀑布) – waterfall.

³⁶¹ “Namsung Ŭn'gye P'aryŏng,” *Taehan Chaganghoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 3, September 25, 1906, 31.

³⁶² 評曰 恍若重踏舊境。The commenter said: [though the feeling is] faint, it is as [I am] once again visiting an old place.

his separation from this place of natural beauty: his land. In this, the reader is also able to feel an innate emotional response. Both *Sodang Kōsa* and the commenter feel a sense of attachment to this waterfall, which can be read as an embodiment of place, identity and Korea as a whole.

The serenity of the cool natural scene, as the waters spray out like a flurry of pure snow, is juxtaposed with the frustrations he feels from being separated from this serenity. He refers to himself as a mere ‘guest’ or ‘visitor’ in this natural landscape. From this we can make a number of assessments as to what the poem is referring – it is likely to have been written by a Korean studying abroad or written through the perspective of a Korean physically far from his home due to study. It could be that he is merely expressing the fact that he is an individual who now lives in a changing and quickly urbanising world, one far removed and out of touch with the natural beauty of his country.

At this stage in the poet narrator’s life, we can see that he has in his possession some completed poetry. He is clearly adept at writing, yet as it currently stands, these successes are all he has to show for himself at this moment in time. He is ‘yet to build a home’ for himself and yet to return to a place or frame of mind where he truly feels at one with the land and reunited with Korea. Here one can interpret some antithesis between the meanings of the characters of visitor (客) and house (屋). The transient visitor has an aim to later settle and break away from the world where he currently operates. He is hinting at poetry (or potentially more specifically, refining one’s education and learning while abroad) being his current focus, and his time will come to return to his country, where his home, or more metaphorically, a construction that will benefit the nation, can be built. This is further compounded by re-examining the moniker the poet uses. Perhaps the *kōsa* (居士) name with which he signed the piece is indicative of the life he aims to lead, at one in Korea’s natural splendour.

Also published in the same publication as the above piece is another poem by the writer Mandang, Yi Chong-jun. In this piece, *Tobong* (道峯) “Tobong Peak,” found in present day Tobong district in Seoul, South Korea, becomes the geographic icon for his poetic exploration:

道峯

Tobong Peak

道峯淑氣漢之陽

Tobong Peak with its pure
air north of the Han river.

虎踞龍蟠五百霜

[A landscape] like
crouching tigers and
reclining dragons [that
have resided for] five
hundred years.

鍾出³⁶³良材無不足

From the Heavens the best
materials [have be
provided] and [this place]
lacks for nothing.

上天爲我作金湯³⁶⁴

The Heavens above have
provided for us the
mightiest of lands.

As Crang point out, “the creation of a sense of home – and homeland – is a profoundly geographical construction in a text [...] one of the standard geographies in a text, exemplified in travel stories, is the creation of home – be it lost, or returned to.”³⁶⁵ Yi Hŭi-mok interprets this poem as ‘containing the wishes for the recovery of national sovereignty’³⁶⁶ but from a cultural geographic perspective that seeks to explore the landscape and geographic iconography as open works of a people, culture and history, the reader is presented with another

³⁶³ Reference to the heavens. Translation tentative.

³⁶⁴ “Tobong,” *Taehan Chaganghoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 6, December 25, 1906, 52.

³⁶⁵ Mike Crang, *Cultural Geography* (New York: Routledge Press, 1998): 47.

³⁶⁶ Yi Hŭi-mok, “Aegukgaemonggi Hansie Natanan Minjokjŏk Chŏntong” *Hanmunhakpo* 18 (2008): 1242.

of the Korean peninsula's defining mountains for contemplation. From ancient times, the area surrounding Tobong Peak was used a pleasure resort and for hundreds of years it has been a location of interest for wayfarers. A comment attached to this piece is complementary of the choice of subject matter:

評曰 美哉 山河之固 此我韓之寶也 讀孟子仁和章 可發一慨

Comment: Beautiful! The robustness of [our] mountains and rivers! This is the treasure of our Korea. Let us read Mencius' benevolent peaceful compositions and we can let out a big sigh.

The commenter marvels at the imagery the poet conjures up; the wonderful location and bountiful land has been 'passed down' to them, the Korean people, by the heavens. The lands provide them with the materials to succeed. The piece finishes on the bisyllabic expression *kūmt'ang* (金湯) – used to metaphorically describe ideal land, unwavering and bountiful.³⁶⁷ The space that lies between the mountains and the Han river being Seoul as it was designated at the time for hundreds of years. One can interpret the descriptions of Tobong Peak as being evocative of the Korean peninsula as a whole. Through these descriptions a deep, unwavering belief in Korea and its future to succeed shines through.

Mandang's poem demonstrates how a poetic visualisation of the natural world does not have to be overly sentimental nor follow a stereotypical style of days gone by. Instead, it can be representative of a celebratory snapshot in time, of which the feelings of Korea's new place in a global world are presented poetically and in turn can stimulate imaginations. Located between the great mountains and rivers of Korea lies Seoul, the city that was to survive. In this,

³⁶⁷ Here *kūmt'ang* (金湯) is alluring to the four-character expression *kūmsōng t'angji* (金城湯池), a fortress of iron and pools of warm waters. The expression is used to refer to a place of great sturdiness and impenetrability, or more specifically, ideal land. Cf. *Ciyuan* (Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1988): 1719. Also Cf. Chōn, *Hansiō Sajōn*, 102.

the land itself is metaphorical of the identity of Korea and Koreans. Art can be of value to a country, an embodiment of its metaphorical journey and growth. In many ways, we see social commentary shine through this piece. A love for the nation, standing alone and unwavering in the twentieth century of new changes.

The *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* was a publication where Sino-Korean poetry by Koreans were frequently circulated and enjoyed by readers. As a space whereby all areas of literary production and enjoyment could take place, Sino-Korean poetry held its own among the other genres of Korean poetry that were also widely enjoyed at the turn of the century. Submitted under the pseudonym of *Sansŏ Kwagaek* (汕西過客)³⁶⁸ the poem entitled *Kisanhong* (寄山紅) “To the Azalea flower” draws upon an iconic location that is imbedded into the folklore and oral history that contributes to Korean identity:

寄山紅

To the Azalea flower

問爾來從³⁶⁹臺石樓

I ask of you, what is the
[story] of *Ch'oksŏngnu*?

介娘芳烈照千秋

[You respond that] it goes
back one thousand
autumns ago, when
Non'gae's strong
fragrance was known.

至今惟有丹青³⁷⁰在

Now, all that remains is
[her] portrait.

³⁶⁸ or ‘Westbound Wayfarer.’

³⁶⁹ Potentially a bisyllabic word similar to *naeryŏk* (來歷) i.e. this history of the building, cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 117.

³⁷⁰ Referring to a portrait or painting, cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian* (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshugwan, 2001): 283 and *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (Beijing: Shangwu Yinshugwan, 2005): 51.

長使行人涕泗流

Which always makes
passing travellers shed
tears.

舉世爭趨賣國人

All people in this world
[should] fight [against]
traitors.

奴顏婢膝³⁷¹日紛繽

But these traitors increase
day by day.

公家³⁷²金帛高於屋

Though the nation may
[be in possession] of
riches that [pile] higher
than a house,

難買山紅一點春³⁷³

it is difficult to buy even
the littlest [amount of]
spring that the azalea
[represents].

In his poem *To the Azalea Flower*, an anonymous author has turned to the Korean tale of *Non'gae* (논개 論介) for poetic inspiration to write a piece of unquestionably Korean poetry. *Non'gae*'s fateful tale is set to the backdrop of Ch'oksöngnu pavilion³⁷⁴ (축석루 矗石樓) located in present day Chinju, South Kyöngsang province, South Korea. The tale of *Non'gae*³⁷⁵ recounts the tragic story of a *kisaeng*, who sacrifices her own life to take the life of a Japanese

³⁷¹ Literally 'a manservant's face and a woman-servants's knee.' A four-character expression used to point out obsequiousness and sycophancy of individuals. Literally, like men bowing their faces down, and women kneeling. Cf. Chang Kigün, *Kosasöngö Taesajön* (Seoul: Myöngmundang, 2002): 548.

³⁷² 'The nation,' Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian*, 469.

³⁷³ "Kisanhong," *Taehan Maeil Shinbo*, November 25, 1906.

³⁷⁴ First built in 1365 in the 14th year of King Kongmin's reign during the Koryö dynasty. The pavilion has gone through multiple reconstructions. Most recently, it burnt down in the Korean War but was rebuilt once more by the Chinju Society of Historic Preservation (진주고적보존회). The pavilion is also referred to as *Changwöllu* (장원루).

³⁷⁵ Having experienced significant misfortune since childhood, *Non'gae* was to end up a concubine to the provincial official Ch'oe Kyöng-hoe in Chinju. At the time of Hideyoshi's invasion of the Korean peninsula (the Imjin War), Ch'oe was murdered by the invading Japanese and *Non'gae* was forced into their servitude at Ch'oksöngnu by the Nam river. It was here that legend tells of *Non'gae* having seduced general Rokusuke Kedanimura in a murder plot. Leading him to the cliff's edge where Ch'oksöngnu overlooked the river, *Non'gae* sacrificed her own life to end his, dragging the general down with herself to the waters below. Cf. Elaine H. Kim, Chungmoo Choi. *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*. Routledge Press, 1998): 172.

general that was involved in the Siege of Suyŏng Fortress at the time of the Imjin Wars with Hideyoshi's Japan (1592–1598). Her bravery to take her own life has made her a symbolic character of Korean sacrifice and a defining image of a strong Korean woman.³⁷⁶ The rock from which she leapt has come to be known as Ŭiam (의암 義巖) or “Rock of Righteousness.”

The azalea flower of the poem's title is synonymous with the famous kisaeng herself, personifying the heroine. The poem recounts how the tale of Non'gae's suicide has been around for generations and although she has long departed this world, the portrait of her that remains moves Korean visitors enough to weep for her loss even after so much time has passed since the Imjin Wars. The poem's tone develops from one of mournful loss of a national figure to bitter concern for the future of the nation at a pivotal moment in history.

As the poem's energy builds, the closing lines present to the reader a critique on contemporary society. The poet, in reverence of Non'gae's sacrifice, admires her fight against the ‘traitors’ (賣國人) that aim to cause harm, but he is growing increasingly concerned over those who have forgotten Non'gae's story and her self-sacrifice for the Korean people. From the perspective of the time that *Azalea Flower* was published, these ‘traitors’ can be interpreted as the Japanese trying to exert influence over the Korean peninsula as the nation grew close to annexation in the present day. The poet expresses his disgust at the increase in individuals who are drawn to these traitors, describing them as ‘slaves’ and ‘servants’ to their past aggressor in Non'gae's time.

In the closing lines, the author issues a cautionary warning to those willing to listen: he writes that growing economic, national and societal development is all well and good, but what of the past that has shaped us? The untouched and pure beauty of the springtime, with which

³⁷⁶ For more research into the character of Non'gae Cf. Park Ki-yong, “Non'gae Sŏrhwaŭi Sŏsa Chŏn'gae Yangsangwa Ŭimi,” *Urimalgŭl* (2004): 169-214 and Min Chun-il et al, “Kwan'gwanggaegi Chigakhanŭn Chiyŏngmunhwa K'aerikt'ŏ Imijie Kwanhan Yŏn'gu - Non'gae K'aerikt'ŏrŭl Chungsimŭro,” *Kŭllobŏl Munhwa K'ont'ench'ŭ* no. 20 (2015): 51-71.

the azalea represents, cannot be bought with worldly money. The writer is seemingly hinting that no matter how much development takes place, no matter how much exchange occurs with these neighbouring powers, one must never forget the sacrifice that Non'gae made for the Korean nation and people, as she leapt off the Rock of Righteousness into the Nam river at Ch'oksöngnu Pavilion. This warning is all the more poignant, as in as little as four years, Korea would face the threat of Japanese invasion once more, as Non'gae had once experienced at the time of the Imjin War.

Also published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in 1905, *Tŭng Kyeryongsan* (登雞龍山) “Climbing Mount Kyeryong” submitted by a poet using the pseudonym of Chukhasaeng (竹下生)³⁷⁷ draws on mount Kyeryong for poetic inspiration, a mountain located in present day South Ch'ungch'öng province, South Korea. Mount Kyeryong³⁷⁸ has been a location of considerable importance since old times due to its spiritual energy, *qi* (氣), that the mountain is said to possess. This has attracted Buddhists and Shamans to the mountain and its environs throughout history.³⁷⁹

登雞龍山

Climbing Mount
Kyeryong

群山四擁掩朝暉

A group of four mountain
peaks block [out] the
morning sunshine.

³⁷⁷ ‘A Student under the Bamboo.’

³⁷⁸ For more research on mount Kyeryong in poetry, Cf. Oh Hong-jin. “Hyöndaesie Nat'an'an Kyeryongsanüi Sihak,” *Chungchöng Munhwa Yö'n'gu* 12 (2014): 113-128 and Kim Sun-bae, “Sanüi Inmunhakchök Kach'iwa Chirijök Ŭimie Taehan Shironjök Chöpkün – Kyeryongsanüi Chiriwa Chimyöngül Chungsimüro,” *Chungchöng Munhwa Yö'n'gu* 14 (2015): 29-52.

³⁷⁹ ‘Individuals who work with the spiritual realm go off to areas of great spiritual energy, receiving help from the *chigi* (지기 地氣) or ‘spiritual energy of the earth’ – Korea’s Mount Kyeryong is one of these locations famous among many of those that seek to cultivate oneself morally or religiously.’ Cf. Kim Se-hwan, *Maengja Ilkki* (Seoul: Sechangmidiö, 2013): np.

中立真容應紫微³⁸⁰

Among them stands [a
mountain] like a palace,

怪石虎踞龍倏躍

[comprised of] strange
stones like crouching
tigers and leaping
dragons.

層巒僧舞鶴將飛³⁸¹

The layers of mountains
are like the *Sŭngmu*'s
dance, like cranes about to
soar.

高雖劍閣難為比

Although its height [may
not be] comparable to that
of China's Jianmen Pass,

雄³⁸²則函關莫敢違

Even China's Hangu Pass
would not dare resent [its
grandness].

偶感來頭千歲事

Suddenly [I] think of what
is to come [in the next]
thousand years [for us].

萬家花發貴人衣³⁸³

Many homes, flowers
blooming and [well]
dressed rich people.

Exploring the rugged, mountainous landscape of the region, 'like a king' among the dramatic and rocky landscape of crouching tigers and leaping dragons, mount Kyeryong's peak rises up and stands out to the poet. By far the most significant focus of this piece are lines five and six, where comparisons between landscape icons of China and Korea appear. It is through an

³⁸⁰ 'Palace' as a reading of *chami* (紫微). Cf. *Ciyuan*, 1314.

³⁸¹ *Sŭngmu* (僧舞) refers to the Buddhist dance performed by monks in white robes with long billowing sleeves and conical hats. The comparison here is likely the billowing motion of the sleeves being compares to rock formations, Cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 156.

³⁸² Read as 'majesty,' 'excellence' or 'grandness.' Cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 1995.

³⁸³ "Tŭng kyeryongsan," *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, August 13, 1905.

evident separation from the Sinitic world's orbit that the poet seeks to highlight Korea's legitimacy in the new era.

In lines five and six, *kōmgak* (劍閣) and *Hamgwan* (函關) refer to Jianmen pass and Hangu pass, respectively. Both of which are extant points of interest that were of significant strategic importance in Chinese military history. Jianmen Pass, located to the Southwest of the city of Guangyuan, present day Sichuan province, was a strategic passageway renowned for its dangerous landscapes and the gateway to Sichuan. Zhuge Liang (181–234) discovered the location on route to battle against Wei, and he deemed the treacherous topography of the region to be beneficial to their defenses and the pass became a strategic location. Jianmen Pass' strategic location was written about by renowned Tang dynasty poet Li Bai (701–762).³⁸⁴

In the following line, the poet then turns to Hangu pass, located in present day Xinan County, Luoyang, Henan Province. Hangu pass was built during the Western Han Dynasty in 114 BC. It came to be another important location, as it was the site of many battles during the Warring States and early imperial eras. The pass protected Qin, Guanzhong, and Luoyang from assault. Hangu pass is arguably most renowned for its rumored connection to Laozi's (601 – n.d.) writing of the *Daodejing* (道德經):

‘According to one legendary account of Laozi's authorship, the wise sage had decided to withdraw from Zhou society (770-476 BCE) in his later years to live in solitude. He rode an ox to Hangu Pass where the pass officer, Guan Yi implored him to write down his doctrine. Thus the *Daodejing* came to be written.’³⁸⁵

Seemingly a nod to Li Bai's exploration of an iconic landmark of China's landscape and Laozi's writing of the *Daodejing* linked to Hangu, so too does the poet seek to root the strength

³⁸⁴ ‘其險也若此，嗟爾遠道之人，胡為乎來哉。劍閣崢嶸而崔嵬，一夫當關，萬夫莫開。’ Cf. Zhongguo Yu Yan Wen Xue Xi, *Li Bai Shi Xuan* (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1977): 46.

³⁸⁵ Li Puqun, *A guide to Asian Philosophy Classics* (Toronto: Broadview books, 2012): 155.

of mount Kyeryong’s geographic location into his poetic writing and sing of its legitimacy and significance throughout Korea’s history. In this we see the poet form an antithesis between these locations that concludes with an assessment in Kyeryong’s favour due to its’ similarly intense geography.

Through this antithesis and the poet’s assertion that Kyeryong is as iconic as Hangu, we see the poet go on to hint at some regrets felt towards Sinitic culture and ideas so valued by a former generation. In the final two lines, we see the metaphorical description of a new Korea flourishing freely. The poet looks out over the mountainous scenery and he envisages flowers in bloom and homes full of life. The landscape seemingly welcomes a new season and a new dawn and future in a changing world. In this, the author touches on a new beginning for this land, but he also expresses his sadness at the fact that for so long, Korea has been in China’s shadow.

This chapter on the exploration of geographic iconography of Sino-Korean poetry of twentieth century print media comes to an end with a piece that focuses on another of the Korean peninsula’s defining mountains, namely Namsan, located in present day Seoul. In *Choch’u Koyŏl Tŭng Namsan* (早秋苦熱登南山) or “Scaling Namsan in the Bitter Heat of Early Autumn” written by Hyangsan (香山)³⁸⁶ Oh Chae-myŏng (吳載明), the reader bears witness to the urban change rapidly taking place in Korean cities of the time:

早秋苦熱登南山

Scaling Namsan in the
Bitter Heat of Early
Autumn

漢城八月陟南山

During August in
Hansŏng (Seoul), [we]

³⁸⁶ “Fragrant Mountain”

	make [our] way up Namsan.
風水最佳天地間	[From the summit we see] the most beautiful scenery between heaven and earth.
走車層屋摠新界	There are [people] walking and vehicles [going by] multi-story buildings, all converging to form a new world.
盤石偃松依舊顏	But as for the rocks and pines, their appearance remains unchanged.
登臨非我本無志	Ascending to survey [this scene] was not my original intention.
奇觀與君同得閒	[Yet] leisurely with you, I am able to [enjoy] such a marvelous spectacle.
掛樹汗巾猶未曝	Hanging on the tree is my handkerchief, still not dried out.
斜陽又見鳥飛還 ³⁸⁷	In the setting sun, once again I see some birds flying back.

Scaling Namsan in the Heat of Early Autumn is a deeply pensive example of the potential of Sino-Korean poetry to be used as a medium to sing of the beauty of a Korea both old and new. In this piece, Hyangsan paints a vivid picture of Namsan, located in Hansŏng or present-day

³⁸⁷ “Choch’u koyŏl tŭng namsan,” *Sŏbuk Hakhoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 16, October 1, 1909, 40-41.

Seoul, bathed in autumnal warmth as the poetic voice of the piece ascends the mountain with a friend, where together they survey the landscape before them.

There is subtle exploration of imagery that portrays Chosŏn society in motion. Written in 1909, Korea has begun to change and Hyangsan's poem presents to the reader early twentieth-century Korea's interactions with the world that have begun to give way to significant changes. At the top of Namsan, the narrator has a picturesque view of the ever-expanding city, which is teeming with life as people are going about their day with new automobiles and new western and Japanese style buildings appearing.

After great changes were brought forth through the implementation of the Kabo Reforms between 1894-1896, Seoul as a city transformed significantly. As Guanzeng Zhang and Lan Wang mention, "Seoul became the first city in East Asia to have electricity, trolley cars, running water, telephone and telegraph systems all at the same time [...] In 1904, an American by the name of Angus Hamilton visited the city and said, 'The streets of Seoul are magnificent, spacious, clean, admirably made and well-drained. The narrow, dirty lanes have been widened, gutters have been covered, roadways broadened. Seoul is within measurable distance of becoming the highest, most interesting and cleanest city in the East.'"³⁸⁸

In this we see the poet uses literary Sinitic to meet with the twentieth century head on, allowing the genre to explore contemporaneity and be used as poetic language that can express one's feelings on the changes that Chosŏn society is going through. Quoting Claval and Entrikin, unity and solidarity among individuals and cultures "emerges from the shared ways of life and experiences in place and territory that give individuals a sense of being part of a collective. It offers collective narratives that emphasize belonging and membership and invoke

³⁸⁸ Guanzeng Zhang, Lan Wang, *Urban Planning and Development in China and Other East Asian Countries* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2018): 109.

a strong communitarian sentiment.”³⁸⁹ In a way, the friend that he has climbed the mountain with is representative of the Korean people as a whole. He is happy to be seeing this change with his friend. The poet expresses the social and cultural progress that he is witnessing through his exploration of urban geographic change. Of course, the change in the urban geography is a reflection of far greater social and cultural shifts in Korea at the time.

3. Conclusion:

This chapter has presented a number of poems of the latter years of the enlightenment era that draw upon examples from Korea’s natural and manmade landscape for inspiration. The above examples have been taken from a variety of early print media outlets, such as the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* newspaper as well as student publications such as the *Taehan Chagang Wölbo*. The above works draw upon geographic icons such as the Han River, as well as more recent icons of the peninsula’s landscape, such as the manmade Ch'oksöngnu pavilion as defining imagery representative of Korea’s rich landscape.

As Withers states, “geography itself is a form of intellectual enquiry – however understood by different people at different times in different places – it is treated as part of a wider conception of geographical knowledge, part of a range of discursive practices through which ideas about the nation and national identity [are] realised.”³⁹⁰ The above exploration of both natural and manmade geographic icons of the Korean peninsula presents to readers another way that concepts of identity and nationhood manifested poetically through the

³⁸⁹ Paul Claval and Nicolas Entrikin, “Cultural Geography: Place and Landscape between Continuity and Change,” 44.

³⁹⁰ Charles W.J. Withers, *Geography, Science and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 1

medium of literary Sinitic into the early years of the twentieth century. The writers of these poems were in many ways making a bold choice. In utilising a poetic medium under scrutiny to convey their thoughts and feelings, these poets challenged the dominant discourse that had been in development at this moment in Korea's intellectual history.

As has been explored, the dominant discourse that arose at the turn of the twentieth century that can be ascertained through writings by Yi Kwang-su and other social commentators dictated that literary Sinitic was a *hindrance* on the flourishing of Korean literature. New-intellectuals of this transitional period felt strongly that literary Sinitic was damaging to Korea's literary progress due to its incompatibility with the spoken language of Koreans. As demonstrated by such poems above, however, one can see how poets of the early twentieth century were able to use literary Sinitic as an effective tool to convey their belief in their nation and to express their personal feelings. The beauty of Korea's natural world and the fast-paced developments of the Korean cityscape could also be expressed vividly without the utilisation of the vernacular. In effect, these poems function as *open works*, with poets using geographical iconography to successfully construct their own identity as patriotic Koreans regardless of the medium in which these identities may be recorded.

As has been touched upon previously, while genres such as *sijo*, *kasa* – vernacular genres of premodern origin, as well as newer genres such as *ch'angga* songs, free-verse and new-poetry have long attracted attention as genres imbued with the ideas, sentiments and focuses of the new-intellectual movement, Sino-Korean poetry of the early twentieth century has not attracted the same scholarly attention. The above works, however, stand out as uniquely nationalist works of Sino-Korean making; we continue to trace vivid elements of patriotism, enlightenment thinking, twentieth century living and resistance to the tides of imperialism and Japanese encroachment. One may argue that the aforementioned works, despite the medium in

which they have been written, are no less 'Korean' than their nationalist counterparts that also deal with similar themes, imagery and sentiments.

8. The Conference of the Birds:

Avian Allegories and Passerine Imagery in Sino-Korean Poetry of the Enlightenment Era

1. Introduction:

In a sociocultural order where the power structures of old began to fracture seemingly beyond repair and with the cultural tastes of a past order ostensibly tainted through an association with the Sinitic order of Chosŏn's suzerainty to the Middle Kingdom, it would be paramount for Sino-Korean poetry's survival that it continue to make its presence known in new print culture – not as a relic of a past order of subservience and cultural reliance from without, but as a poetic genre of significance and creativity that could continue to benefit those from *within*, utilised by the new Chosŏn intellectual as a means of succinctly exploring the realities of the contemporaneous age. As has been explored, Sino-Korean poetry would fight hard, jostling for page space among the vernacular genres of this epoch, and defying common understanding and despite prevailing criticisms, it would maintain a foothold (albeit a precarious one) on the ladder of literary culture.

It can be argued that, among all creatures of the natural world, there is none that has quite captured the imagination of human beings as that of birds. From antiquity to the present, East to West, birds large and small, real and imaginary, have long found their way into the poetic world of human civilisations; they are omnipresent from the earliest oral myths, stories, fables and songs through to the most contemporary and experimental of poetic works of today.³⁹¹ As Warren highlights in his study on birds in literature, free to fly to places unreachable, while also flocking to one's window for food, it is both their sense of freedom,

³⁹¹ Interestingly, as Carey, Greenfield and Milne's scholarship points out, despite the omnipresence of birds in literary history, "there are, in fact, few book-length studies of birds in the literature of any period." Cf. *Birds in Eighteenth Century Literature – Reason, Emotion, and Ornithology 1700-1840* (Germany: Springer International, 2020): 3

and sense of proximity that has long kept birds in the mind of human beings.³⁹² The visual beauty of their plumage, their prowess both in song, and for some, the ability to mimic the human voice, has kept them at the forefront of man's creative endeavours.

In East Asian verse, painting and song, birds have consistently appeared since the earliest of times. The oldest collection of poetry in the classical Chinese literary canon, the *Book of Odes* or *Shijing* (詩經), feature a variety of works with birds as the main poetic focus.³⁹³ The earliest known songs of the people of the Korean peninsula unsurprisingly also draw on birds for inspiration. *Hyangga* (향가 鄉歌) songs such as the King Yuri's *Hwangjoga* (황조가 靑鳥歌), Old Songs (고대가요 古代歌謠) such as *Tongdong* (동동 動動), *Yugugok* (유구곡 維鳩曲) and *Chōnggwa Chōnggok* (정과정곡 鄭瓜亭曲) all feature enduring appearances of avian species, from orioles to cuckoos and owls.

Such songs of old are testament to the birds' unwavering presence in the artistic and creative imaginations of civilisations gone by; birds have long provided inspiration to the people of the Korean peninsula to explore the natural world as both an object of reverence, as well as acting as canvas' with which the creative may paint the human existence upon, raising profound questions about life, existence and philosophical and social concerns. As Chōng Min rightly mentions, for people of the past 'the way they understood birds was markedly different from that of today. Koreans saw *humans* when they looked at birds, rather than simply seeing the bird itself [...] When observing their behaviours one by one, they would endlessly ruminate on the lives of human beings. The behaviour of birds and the ecology of birds were all judged

³⁹² "Because they are separated from us so distinctively in various ways, we can more objectively identify the parallels that birds offer (unlike mammals, presumably, which, because of their closer species proximity, are less obviously 'literally parallel to... [us] on another level')." Cf. Michael Warren, *Birds in Medieval English Poetry: Metaphors, Realities, Transformations* (Boydell & Brewer, 2018): 8.

³⁹³ Works such as *Wild Geese* (鴻雁), *Yellow Birds* (黃鳥) and *The Cry of the Ospreys* (關雎) continue to be read, studied and admired.

according to the moral rules of the human world, and good or bad was decided.’³⁹⁴ Korean thinkers of dynastic times were not alone in this approach. As Warren further highlights in reference to the European tradition through his exploration of Levi-Strauss’ musings on ornithological symbolism, birds often resembled human beings primarily:

“for the very reason that they are so different. They are feathered, winged, oviparous and they are physically separated from human society by the element in which it is their privilege to move. [...] They form a community which is independent of our own but, precisely because of this independence, appears to us like freedom [...] Consequently, everything objective conspires to make us think of the bird world as a metaphorical human society.”³⁹⁵

As was the case in dynastic times, so too into the twentieth century do we also see a continued allegorical interest in birds in twentieth century Sino-Korean poetry. Albeit referring to literary representations of birds in Medieval English poetry, Warren and Lévi-Strauss’ observations regarding the human-bird relationship, one self-referential and self-reflective of one another, is also pertinent to past Korean society and culture before the birth of ornithology as a scholastic discipline in the twentieth century.³⁹⁶ In a world where Korean society still saw animals as perplexing and otherworldly due to limited understanding of their behavior, it is natural that in Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century there is a continued trend portraying birds through allegories, symbolisms and metaphors for human society.

Contrasting with Eum Yeong-cheol (Ŏm Yŏng-ch’ŏl)’s comments of birds as straightforward symbols of ‘hermitage, transcendence, messenger, woe, dead souls, filial piety,

³⁹⁴ Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1 (Seoul: Hyohyŏng Ch’ŭlp’ansa, 2003): 20-21.

³⁹⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* [La Pensée Sauvage] (London, 1966): 204 in Michael Warren, *Birds in Medieval English Poetry: Metaphors, Realities, Transformations* (Boydell & Brewer, 2018): 6-7.

³⁹⁶ It is important to note that while ornithology as an academic discipline greatly changed the way human beings viewed and understood birds in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe, the study of birds in Korea did not begin until the rise of Wŏn Hong-gu, Korea’s foremost ornithologist. Wŏn would be the first to write significantly on all aspects of birds in Korea, going on to teach in 1946 at Kim Il-Sung University, North Korea. Wŏn’s son, who he was separated from due to the Korean War, went on to be South Korea’s most eminent zoologist and ornithologist, Wŏn Pyŏng-oh.

evil, and death’ as well as broad representations of ‘various aspects of human emotions,’³⁹⁷ an exploration of avian imagery used by Korean poets writing in literary Sinitic into the twentieth century provides us with a canvas for projection but said projections can be said to be more profound and socially engaged than any other previous era. Through the medium of sociocultural and geopolitical critique, new print media poets come to employ both birds and *hansi* as elements of their poetic and intellectual toolbox – to diversify the new-intellectuals attempts to find new relevance for the established genre as it would meet with a new audience through mass media. Famously dubbed ‘the feathered parallel’ by poet Robert Browning, the bird is neither a caricature nor a symbol of infallibility, but a nuanced character and reflection of man on the poetic stage of artistic representation.³⁹⁸

Through an exploration of early twentieth century print media, the bird and its various species provided an impetus for poets that continued to use literary Sinitic as a creative outlet for expression. In the following works we will also see how avian imagery could be employed as a means of exploring the profundity of shifting socio-cultural realities for the ethno-national self, providing poets with a more distanced and succinct critique on the contemporaneous era in lieu of longer critical essays and newspaper think pieces. Exploring the allegorical nature of Sino-Korean avian poetics, birds appear as images imbued with the symbolism of enlightenment discourse, with the salient parallels between “bird world” and “human society” becoming unique elements of *munmyōng kaehwa* or “enlightenment and civilisation” discourse.

From swift birds of prey such as falcons and hawks, to transitory migrating geese, domesticated parrots, urban fighting cocks, as well as diligent forest dwellers, a wide variety

³⁹⁷ Eum Yeong-cheol [Ŏm Yōng-ch’ōl], “Han’guk Hyōndae Sie Natanan Sae Imiji Yōn’gu,” *Han’guk K’ont’ench’ū Hakhoe Chonghapdaehoe Nonmunjip* (2015): 403-404.

³⁹⁸ Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Florida: University of Florida Press, 1994): xi - xii. Lutwack here is ultimately quoting from Browning’s line “a feathered parallel to what we find. The secret motor of some mighty mind.” Cf. Robert Browning, *The Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning* (United States: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887): 320.

of ornithological imagery will be explored. This final chapter looks at the way Sino-Korean poetic works penned beyond the confines of the dynastic literary boundaries continued the artistic trend of turning to the natural world as a means of poetic expression. Yet it was through imbuing said imagery with the unique contemporary significance of the enlightenment era writer and their pressing concerns in the age of publishing, progress and growing imperialism that their works breathe ‘new’ life into an ‘old’ genre representative of aging cultural capital.

2. Avian Allegories – Birds as the Ethno-nation’s Saviours and Traitors:

As Damien highlights, scholars of literary studies have long contended “with the task of seeking how writers represent the nonhuman within orthodox frameworks that typically point out a desirable categorical difference between human and animal, and remind us that [...] from animals, people may learn what behaviour should be imitated [...], what may wisely be borrowed from them, and what should rightly be avoided.”³⁹⁹

While birds have made a variety of appearances throughout Sino-Korean poetic history, the poetic landscape of the enlightenment gave way to a new textual locale: newspapers, magazines and published coterie writings would provide the forward-thinking new-intellectual with a new site for their ornithological *écriture* for a broader audience and for new purposes. Particularly during the ‘golden age’ of circulated print publications from the 1900s to 1910 with the push towards enlightenment and civilisation discourse *through* print, we see poetry as

³⁹⁹ Michael Warren, *Birds in Medieval English Poetry: Metaphors, Realities, Transformations* (Boydell & Brewer, 2018): 3. Here Warren is also drawing on an original quote by Peter Damien (Petrus Damianus), *De Bono Religiosi Status et Variorum Animantium Tropologia*, 2, cited in and translated by John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 304-5.

well as prose fiction, taking a more active role in shaping sociocultural discourse and providing didactic mediations for the intellectual going into the unknown of the twentieth century.

One subtle motif that comes to the fore in the genre of twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry is juxtaposing avian appearances – both as symbolic representations of national saviours as well as traitors. Throughout a variety of works, we see birds utilised by poets to represent figures for admiration and veneration for the people, while also contrasting said images of birds with representations of treachery, moral weakness and betrayal of the people. Salient examples of birds representing traitors – whose behaviour, choices and political alignments have damaged Chosŏn sovereignty, culture and autonomy into the tempestuous imperial age, make for subtle yet lucid statements throughout the pages of print media.⁴⁰⁰ In antithesis, however, the same media outlets also provide the reader with manifestations of birds of moral fibre: bravery in the face of difficulty and protectors of the people.

Some of the more enigmatic avian appearances throughout the Sino-Korean poetic writing of this transitory epoch is that of the birds of prey, with hawks, falcons and eagles often rendered using the character of *ǔng* (鷹).⁴⁰¹ In his *yangǔngja sŏl* (양응자설 養隱者說), Kang Chae-hang (강재항 姜再恒 1689-1756) famously stated that ‘hawks are birds of prey but their veins and arteries, bones and sinews are exactly like that of man.’⁴⁰² Long associated with humans, particularly through the cooperative activity of hunting, the image of birds of prey in East Asian art and literature has come to be imbued with symbolic meaning, particularly

⁴⁰⁰ As is characteristic of the literary Sinitic poetic form, said subtlety often conceals critical depth and a skillful ability to communicate profound ideas through few words.

⁴⁰¹ The earliest appearance of hawks features in the *Samguk Sagi* (삼국사기 三國史記), with a record of hunting with a white falcon. As well as a myth featured in the *Samguk Yusa* (삼국유사 三國遺事). Cf. Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 2 (Seoul: Hyohyŏng Ch’ulp’ansa, 2003): 14. Chŏng also highlights the vast array of names that have long been used to refer to birds of prey in old texts. Cf. *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁰² Cf. Kang’s *Ipchaeyugo* (입재유고 立齋遺稿). For a digitalized copy, Cf: <http://db.mkstudy.com/ko-kr/mksdb/e/korean-literary-collection/book/8700/>

that of courage, power, heroism and resilience.⁴⁰³ Making a number of striking appearances across a variety of Sino-Korean poetic works during the golden age of print media, we see early twentieth century poets use the symbolism of the bird for more contemporary socio-cultural critique, as avian allegory galvanizes enlightenment and civilization sociocultural discourse in a changing twentieth century.

In the following piece entitled *Ŭng'am* (鷹巖) “Falcon Rock” published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* newspaper in 1905, we see the anonymous author, who has submitted his work under the name of Chukhasaeng (竹下生) “A Student Under the Bamboo,” provide readers with a meditative work on an iconic bird that has taken leave from one land, seemingly departing across the ocean to another distant place for a specific purpose:

鷹巖

Falcon Rock

突兀奇巖不可躋

A soaring, lofty, strange
rock, [seemingly] unable
to be surmounted.

蒼鷹昔日此來樓

[Yet] once upon a time,
the bluish-white falcon
[flew] to the top.

海天一去無消息

Over the seas and the sky
he went, with no news [of
his whereabouts].

空把虛名⁴⁰⁴載⁴⁰⁵赫蹄⁴⁰⁶

In a blank space on this
paper, [his as of yet]

⁴⁰³ Katherine Ball, *Animal Motifs in Asian Art: An Illustrated Guide to their Meanings and Aesthetics* (New York: Dover Publications, 2004): 211.

⁴⁰⁴ *Hömyōng* (虛名) refers to a name or reputation that does not match with reality or is still lacking. Cf. *Tonga Hanhan Taesajōn*, 1601.

⁴⁰⁵ Read here as ‘recorded’ or to ‘be written down.’

⁴⁰⁶ “Ŭng'am,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, August 13, 1905. *Hyōkche* (赫蹄) also written using the character (蹠) refers to a type of paper or silk to be written upon. Cf. *Hanhan Tasajōn – Vol. 13*, 287.

unknown name has been
written, [regardless].

Chukhasaeng's piece stands out as not only one of the earliest publications of Sino-Korean poetry to be featured in the pages of a new daily newspaper, but it is also a timely example that draws on an iconic bird for poetic exploration in circulatory print culture. In the above scene, the reader is presented with the vision of a towering, rocky peak. Although unsurmountable by ordinary beings, this same peak was once scaled with ease by the titular bird of prey. Having transcended the intimidating rock face, the bird, met by the vast expanses of the world that exists beyond, took to the skies and flew away. Over the seas, it set off towards the horizon, and a new beginning, with no word as to when it may return back to its homeland.

As Ball's work on hawks and falcons in painting demonstrates, birds of prey have long been associated with resilience and heroism. In *Falcon Rock*, the bird is vividly presented much in the same light – through its ability to take on that which may seem overwhelming. Despite the antithesis of the bird facing the looming presence of the rockface, through its tenacity the bird seemingly claims the peak as its own, surpassing it through the power of flight as it passes over the sea unperturbed. We see the marked contrast between the certainty and tangibility of the immovable rock with that of the fleeting and transient expanse of the changing sky, the winds and the waves. Transitioning into line three, the reader learns that some time ago, the falcon left over the seas and skies and has yet to return. With “no news of his whereabouts,” the poetic voice of the piece is left to ponder the bird's future achievements, as the brave bird's name is written on the page of history.

Lutwack's work highlights that flight has long had a deeply powerful sway over the minds of scientists and poets – a quality that human beings have long most admired in birds with “scientists esteeming flight a physical triumph of the first order” while “poets seeing in

flight a powerful symbol of the transcendence they wish to achieve in their writing.”⁴⁰⁷ This powerful sense of *transcendence*, or in the Korean context, the possibility of overcoming the stumbling blocks in the road to civilization through representations of avian flight into the twentieth century, was highly evocative of the prospects of progress, intellectual achievement and technological advancement.⁴⁰⁸

Like many of the time, it can be argued that the resilient bird in the story retold in Chukhasaeng’s piece above is emblematic of a group of younger Koreans overcoming the challenges of Chosŏn feudalism going out into the wider world for the first time. While his work plays with the readers’ expectations of the human-bird relationship long shared with birds of prey, the antithesis of the intransigent mountain and the bird’s swift wings stands out as being allegorical for the Korean’s struggle for progress, with parallels between the new class of intellectual students and the tenacious falcon. Once thought of as a challenge, they surmounted the peaks in their path and set their sights on a new horizon over the ocean.

Falcons and hawks are natural born hunters, but regarding the titular falcon of this piece, what, may one say, is its prey? It can be argued that the bird is not in pursuit of *prey* in the typical sense, but it is instead flying towards a more indefinable *target* in line with that of students of the enlightenment age. Subtly alluded to in the final line, despite the lack of news about where they are and what they are doing, the hope that they are engaged in worthy study towards enlightenment progress comes to the fore. Those left behind must wait longer for their return and the fruits of their labours to come to fruition. But through their determination to shape a new Chosŏn and the difficulties and pitfalls along the way, their names have already

⁴⁰⁷ Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature*, 45-46.

⁴⁰⁸ “Their flight has been read as augury foretelling the fate of humans.” Cf. Marie-Luise Egbert, *The Life of Birds in Literature*, 10. Important to note that the Wright brother’s first flight only occurred a few years previous, in 1903.

been written on the page of history, as their efforts for change have seemingly already been acknowledged.

While Chukhasaeng's piece provides the reader with the allegorical representation of valiant bravery to follow in changing times and an era for a twentieth-century ethno-national consciousness, in the following works, we come to see poets turn their pen to birds of the forest, offering up more satirical critique of unsavoury characters. Two poems, both with the same title of *T'angmokcho* (啄木鳥) "The Woodpecker" appear in the *Taehan Chaganghoe Wölbo* (대한자강회월보 大韓自強會月報) and the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* newspaper in 1906 and 1907, respectively. Due to the different names used, these pieces were likely submitted by two different poets, with the second inspired by the original piece submitted earlier in the *Taehan Chaganghoe Wölbo*. Furthermore, both have taken inspiration from an *existing* Chosŏn era piece of the same title, changing the content to fit a new social context.⁴⁰⁹ In the following, we see the power of a new circulatory print culture and its relationship in fostering a collaborative site for poetic exploration, expression and creativity as the poets use the woodpecker to also explore the realities of new imperial age.

While the first two lines remain identical, in Hyedang's (兮堂)⁴¹⁰ 1907 piece, the following lines have been subtly changed to provide a different outcome to the original submission. Additionally, as is the case for the majority of Sino-Korean works in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* newspaper, an additional anonymous comment has been included. The work presents to readers the image of a woodpecker, who, on first glance, in seemingly good-natured fashion, is steadfast in its resolve to build a home inside the tree:

⁴⁰⁹ Spin on a Chosŏn era poem – Cf. Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1 (Seoul: Hyohyŏng Ch'ŭlp'ansa, 2003): 174.

⁴¹⁰ Pen name unknown.

啄木鳥

The Woodpecker

啄木休啄木

[It] drills and drills at the
tree.

古木餘半腹

More than half has [since]
fallen away from the old
trunk.

一夜風雨至

*One night, a storm [may]
strike.*

木覆無爾屋⁴¹¹

*If the [remnants] of the
tree were to fall, would it
not [obliterate] your
home?*

啄木休啄木

[it] drills and drills at the
tree.

古木餘半腹

More than half has [since]
fallen away from the old
trunk.

風雨寧不愁

*[Despite] the storm, it is
[actually] calm, with no
anxiety.*

木摧爾無屋⁴¹²

*If the tree is destroyed,
would it not be you
without a home?*

⁴¹¹ “T’angmokcho,” *Taehan Chaganghoe Wölbo*, vol. 3, September 25, 1906.

⁴¹² “T’angmokcho,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, July 17, 1910.

Coming to the fore in these works is the diligent character of the forest-dwelling woodpecker, rendered as *t'angmokcho* (탁목조 啄木鳥). The woodpecker, in its various appearances in poetry and art of dynastic times, has long been a contentious character – “the woodpecker, devouring trees from the inside to use the wood for one’s home⁴¹³ was abhorred as a destructive figure while simultaneously looked upon with praise as a guardian of the woodland, firm in its drive to devote insects that seek to destroy the forests.”⁴¹⁴ In both poems, the reader bears witness to the clear resolve in their attempts at making a secure home while finding food deep within the tree trunks. Yet, despite such diligence in both works, the poets draw the reader’s attention not to the woodpeckers’ industriousness. In fact, both poetic works conclude on the *damage* that the birds are inflicting upon not just the tree but also those nearby.

Seemingly oblivious to the damage, both birds have overlooked the chaos of their actions as “more than half” of the trunk has been destroyed in their attempts to find food and shelter. While both poems may diverge in line three, they both make reference to a coming storm. As each work diverges, the reader bears witness to the ramifications of each storm as they bring about differing philosophical conclusions. In *San’un* (山雲)⁴¹⁵ Yi Hŭi-bal’s (李羲發) earlier 1905 piece, the poem concludes on a cautionary tone, highlighting that the woodpecker’s selfishness and concern for itself will bring destruction to those around; as the weakened tree is met by the storm, the remains fall away and destroy the reader’s house below. Meanwhile, in Hyedang’s piece, the poetic focus is not on us, the reader, but it instead remains focused on the woodpecker. In this, the caution is directed towards the bird; nonchalant and at

⁴¹³ Although not salient in this translation, Chŏng refers to the appearance of woodpeckers here as *tongryang* (동량 棟梁), which can be interpreted in two ways depending on the context. On one hand, the term is used to refer to builders and master craftsmen. Additionally, it is used to refer to the physical timber material that can be used as a support beam in the home. Said support beam is used metaphorically to describe individuals of talent, who are able to take on difficult tasks to support their families or the nation more broadly.

⁴¹⁴ Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1, 21.

⁴¹⁵ ‘Mountains and Clouds.’

ease in its home while the storm rages outside, his arrogance overlooks the fact that if the tree were to fall, it would lead to its own demise as well as those that surround it.

In the context of the imperial age and the slip of sovereignty from Chosŏn's grip into the hands of the Japanese, both poets use the Sino-Korean poetic genre, an indeed an existing poetic work of Chosŏn, as a means of calibrating their intellectual audience to the pulse of the day, exploring contemporary developments through literary Sinitic language. Their differing interpretation of the woodpecker, then, can lead the reader to infer differing interpretations on the allegorical explorations of the bird, the tree and the incoming storm in regard to Korea at this time.

Both pieces are unique in that they are some of the new works of the Sino-Korean poetic genre of the twentieth century to receive scholarly attention. They are even more of an anomaly in that they have been explored by more than one scholar. In Yi Hŭi-mok's critique of Yi Hŭi-bal's poem, for example, he touches upon one of the most defining themes of Sino-Korean poetry of the early decade of the twentieth century: poets that lament on patriotic death. He highlights the evocative imagery of the falling tree, comparable to the 'fall of the nation' with the woodpecker as an active facilitator in its destruction. In his words, they are 'national traitors' (賣國奴). Ultimately seeing the work as satirical, the exploration of such characters and their actions was 'an important means with which one can imbue poetry with feelings of patriotism for the nation.'⁴¹⁶

In Pak Ŭl-su's work on motifs of resistance in poetry of the enlightenment age, he explores Hyedang's piece on the woodpecker, highlighting similar conclusions made by Yi Hŭi-mok in regard to the other earlier work. Pak highlights a peculiar irony: unaware that its own pecking is simultaneously building but also *destroying* one's home, 'the drilling

⁴¹⁶ Yi Hŭi-mok, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2004): 31

woodpecker's [appearance] in the end points to *pro-Japanese thieves* (친일도배) draining the Korean nation.⁴¹⁷ Through both Yi and Pak's explorations, the push to contextualise and poeticise the 'new' Korean experience comes to the fore through Sino-Korean poetic works.

What we must also stress in the above two works is how Sino-Korean literary language could be utilised as an expressive and highly evocative tool for patriotic enlightenment comparable to vernacular language. In continuing to use literary Sinitic into the imperial age as a means to lament the ills of colonialism, the insidiousness of collaboration and the importance of patriotic thought, we see the twentieth-century Sino-Korean poet rise to the challenges of the day as the genre become one of possibility and choice for the twentieth-century writer.

From a satirical look at the woodpecker as a diligent yet absent-minded bird unable to see the damage its actions may leave in its wake, the pages of the *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo* (대한협회회보 大韓協會會報) magazine produced by new-intellectual Korean students in Japan provides us with another allegorical exploration of birds that contribute to an overarching motif of avian imagery as a representation of figures of the nation's coming demise. The following work, *Kyōnmin* (遣憫) "Relieving Anxieties," was submitted by Hō Tam⁴¹⁸ and published on December 25, 1908.⁴¹⁹ In this work, we meet two quite different avian species – the black kite, rendered as *yōn* (연 鳶) and the pheasant, rendered as *ch'i* (치 雉). Through the juxtaposition of parental nurture and vulturine natural selection, Hō's work is of relevance to a nation going through great change:

⁴¹⁷ Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chōhangsigaron* (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 2001): 300.

⁴¹⁸ The second character of the submitter's name is not recognized. *Hō* being printed as (許), while *Tam* is a hybrid character, comprised of (淡) with the bamboo (竹) radical above.

⁴¹⁹ Also the same title, although the first is unrelated to birds.

遣憫

Relieving Anxieties

老鳶吮枯草

The old black kite beaks
[around in] the dead grass.

朝朝下山陽

Morning after morning,
when the sun falls upon
the mountain.

雌雉抱卵久

The female pheasant sits
upon its eggs for as long
as it can;

三日不見糧

It has [now] gone three
days, without [so much
as] seeing food.

始疑終相信

At first, there is suspicion
[between them], but in the
end there is mutual trust.

爾守卵在傍

[And so the kite] closely
stands watch, taking his
position next to her eggs.

日暮歸來見

[But when the sun goes
down, the pheasant]
returns to find...

卵化⁴²⁰老鳶翔⁴²¹

her eggs are gone, as the
kite flees into the sky.

Although an uncomplicated piece, we nevertheless see the same thematic thread of saviours and traitors continue to play out through the meeting of two different species. Hō Tam's poem commences with a scene of a black kite, an opportunistic bird of the hawk family, seemingly

⁴²⁰ Read here more specifically as the verb destroyed, Cf. example four, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajōn*, 258.

⁴²¹ "Kyōnmin," *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebō*, December 25, 1908.

scavenging for sustenance ‘in the dead grass’ on the ground. Meanwhile, the reader is soon presented with the patient pheasant mother, sitting on its eggs in a nest and protecting them from harm. Two different species sharing the same space on the mountainside, the poet touches upon the distrust and unease that exists between them; in time, this disappears, with the pheasant later calm in the presence of the kite. As the poem is brought to its tragic denouement, the hungry mother finally takes her leave, trusting the kite that stands watchfully over her offspring. Yet, upon her return, it is clear that the pheasant’s trust was misplaced, as the black kite flies away to consume her children.

A highly opportunistic scavenger, the kite differs significantly from its cousins – falcons, hawks and eagles – in its lack of fastidiousness over what it eats, even betraying other birds. As Chŏng Min highlights in his research on birds in Korean painting and poetry, the kite or *solgae* (솔개), has long been depicted as untrustworthy. Actively seeking out chicks to eat, the bird is often considered evocative of *t’amgwanori* (탐관오리 貪官汚吏), literally “corrupt officials” that use their power and position for exploitation of their own people.⁴²² In this, while other birds of prey such as hawks and falcons have a sense of duty to the ‘nature of things’ while demonstrating their heroism, dexterity and pride, the kite, however, betrays said order and civility in lieu of sustenance and animalistic egocentricity. In this, the reader bears witness to the kite’s antithesis to the pheasant: portrayed as a caring parent, a bird of self-sacrifice and a symbol of a motherly national figure.

Hō Tam’s *Relieving Anxieties* is thus naturally informed by existing evocations of bird imagery in poetry and art but beyond, we come to see binary opposites of greed and selfishness and self-sacrifice and diligence through the characters of the kite and pheasant becoming evocative of contemporary times. This shapes the poem into piece that also functions on the

⁴²² Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1: 20. Also see vol 2: 210-17.

level of biting social commentary for the twentieth century reader concerned with national progress. Hō's work also featured commentary below:

評曰 悽切刺骨 令人大叫

Commenter said: So sad [that it even cuts to the bone], [enough to] make anyone let out a deep cry.

The anonymous commenter appears to be greatly moved by the poem, “enough to make anyone” let out a cry in response. Through the pheasant and the black kite, we see the realities of change taking place on a societal level as Chosŏn finds its place on the world stage, with an uneasy and imbalanced relationship with its neighbours. Through the allegory of the birds, we continue to see similar life lessons continually iterated on the matter of trust, power and inequality. Although both the same animal, the treachery of the kite is amplified, while the virtuousness of the pheasant as a protector of the future generation is emphasised.

In this, we can draw similar conclusions regarding the following parrot poem, also written by Hō Tam. Here the reader sees a continued emphasis on the importance of hesitance in times of change and national crisis. The following piece is also one half of two poems jointly published under the similarly titled *Kyōnmin* (遣悶) “Relieving One’s Stresses” a month later, in January 1909. In this extract, the poet provides the reader with the image of a domesticated parrot. In this piece, however, readers receive food for thought, as we see this work also develop into a cautionary tale:

遣悶

Relieving One’s Stresses

鸚鵡能言語

[Since] Parrots are able to speak,

從前眾所愛	they have been loved by many since long ago.
常恐鷹集至	Always fearful that eagles will flock to [hurt the parrot]
居處房室內	it resides here inside [our] home.
傍有故愛者	Around him [there have always been] admirers;
徐取撫其背	they slowly stroke his back.
人不知口噤	[Yet] some are unaware – [in front of parrots] one must guard one’s lips.
却坐但悔恨 ⁴²³	On the contrary [to what you may expect], all you will [end up] feeling is regret.

In the above, we see the poet play with the reader’s expectations of domesticated birds as amusing and faithful companions. Due to their uncanny ability to repeats the words of human beings, the parrot is presented as an animal worthy of love and admiration for its intelligence. Their domestication allowing for a strong bond, the parrot of the poem is highly valued and is protected from “the hawks” that reside outside. The bird also attracts visitors to the home to stroke him. As the piece progresses towards its conclusion, however, the reader is faced with a provocative and thought-provoking twist in regard to the parrot’s intentions and allegiances.

評曰 願與知者讀

⁴²³ “Kyōnmin,” *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo*, January 25, 1909.

A commenter said: I hope to read [this poem] with [other] intellectual people.

Although open to interpretation, it may be argued that the parrot of Hō's *Relieving One's Stresses* stands out as a cautionary character across the pages of the *Taehan Hyōphoe Hoebo*, one that warns of the types of relationships being forged between Chosŏn and its neighbours. Through his sketch of a parrot welcomed into the home, the poet provides a snapshot into a growing national consciousness, as the ever-encroaching spectre of imperialism and colonial subjugation continues to enclose on them. In this palpable climate of pressure, a sense of distrust and paranoia begins to breed and the poem hints at the enemies that may already lie in one's midst.

The bird's intelligence has won over the household and its visitors. Yet the poet hints that one should not be too deceived by the beautiful bird. Most interesting is how Hō juxtaposes the domestic and the wild through the antithesis of the parrot and the 'hawks' outside. As has been explored, hawks typically usher forth positive evocations of heroism and bravery, they are often valuable assets to the people. The parrot's owner, concerned about their pet's wellbeing, is worried about a non-existent threat in the hawk while failing to pay attention to the intelligent creature that observes them daily.

In *Kyŏn Chumangsŏlli Yugam* (見蛛網蟬罹有感) or "Feelings Watching a Cicada Trapped in a Spider's Web" by Ingosaeng (麟臯生)⁴²⁴ a species of bird rendered as *hwangjak* (황작 黃雀) makes an appearance.⁴²⁵ Appearing in the *Taehan Hakhoe Wŏlbo* (대한학회월보 大韓學會月報) in 1908, the following work is unique in that the poet is not

⁴²⁴ Reference to the mythic animal, the *kirin*.

⁴²⁵ The most reasonable translation of this species is not straightforward in the English language. It could refer to the yellow black-headed finch. It could also more literary refer to a 'yellow sparrow.' The bi-syllabic word (황작) also refers to both sparrows (참새) and orioles (피꼬리) in Korean.

anonymous. Ingosaeng is the pen name of Yu Sŭng-hŭm (유승흠 柳承欽 1876 - ?), who went on to be a bureaucrat throughout the Japanese colonial era. In the most surprising of ways, Yu's piece sets the scene of a cicada's avoidable demise. A tragic work with no positive outcome, the reader is left to ponder over the allegorical significance of the spider, cicada and the sparrow in an era of changing geopolitical power dynamics:

見蛛網蟬罹有感

Feelings Watching a
Cicada Trapped in a
Spider's Web

雨後簷端出老蛛

After the rains stop, an old
spider appears from the
eaves.

從容下上屋西隅

Quietly from the western
corner of the roof, he
descends.

少焉張結千餘罟

Soon it spreads out his net
of a thousand threads,

宛爾形成八陣圖⁴²⁶

Making a *p'alchindo*
formation.

風猶⁴²⁷不動絲猶細

[Even] in the blowing
wind, it does not move;
the silk is so intricate.

俗眼着過便若無

It is seemingly invisible to
the human eye.

從何吟罷清蟬子

From somewhere, the
clear cry of the cicada.

⁴²⁶ *P'alchindo* (팔진도 八陣圖) – a type of military formation or positioning.

⁴²⁷ Read as 'move' or 'sway' Cf. example fifteen, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 1121.

狂翅詡然向井梧

It urgently flies to the
paulownia tree by the
well.

形影乍翻還乍歇

It turns its body around
and takes another rest.

一身早作網中軀

And before long, its body
gets caught in the
[spiders] net.

於是蛛兒爭走脚

Then the spider nimbly
runs over.

左纏其足右吮膚

Tying legs from the left,
and from the right feasting
upon flesh.

黃雀來遲人不在

[But then suddenly] a
sparrow arrives slowly, no
humans around...

可憐仙殼獨哀呼⁴²⁸

*“how pitiful you cry,
cicada”* [the sparrow]
laments alone.

In this piece, the poetic voice is a passive observer of the Darwinian world in action. We are presented with the simple scene of an old spider, as it starts to spin a web within the eaves of a building. Despite its age, the spider’s dexterity in weaving a fine net captures the attention of the observer, watching the spider set its trap with military precision comparable to the *p’alchindo* formation. Both strong and seemingly undetectable, the spider lays in wait for its victim to be ensnared. Carelessly unobservant, the cicada finds itself caught in the web and the spider feasts upon its flesh. But as the poem draws to its close, a sparrow suddenly comes upon

⁴²⁸ “Kyōn Chumangsōlli Yugam,” *Taehan Hakhoe Wōlbo*, vol. 8, October 25, 1908.

the scene. Seemingly at a loss as to what to do, the bird is left to pity the cicada's avoidable fate.

Although sparrows are known for their intelligence, they have also long been associated with annoyance and the destruction of crops and harvests.⁴²⁹ The bird's intelligence is highlighted vis-à-vis the cicada as an insect supposedly representing significant ability. Ingosaeng provides the reader with an interesting work whereby the dynamics of contemporary Korean interests in Darwinian survival of the fittest take centre stage. Furthermore, the trope of the national saviour as explored metaphorically through the sparrow contributes to a poetic landscape whereby the Sino-Korean poetic genre could be utilised for socio-political critique. His piece ultimately provides the reader with another bird saviour image. But the ignorance of the cicada has rendered the talents of the bird obsolete and it has no choice but to look on.

As Lutwack's work into avian imagery in poetry highlights, in the Anglophone poetic tradition, "literature has much to say about the treatment of birds as pets and objects of sport"⁴³⁰ and in the following piece, we also see a thought-provoking example of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century that uses imagery of urban fighting cocks to explore far more profound contemporary geopolitical issues that transcend the entertainment of a spectator sport. Printed in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in 1906, *T'ugye haeng* (鬪雞行) "A Song on Cockfighting" published under the pseudonym of *Ponggye Sosaeng* (鳳溪小生)⁴³¹ is a powerful poetic piece of avian poetry that illustrates a frenetic scene of two cockerels fighting in a yard:

鬪雞行

A Song on Cockfighting

⁴²⁹ Chōng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1, 110.

⁴³⁰ Lutwack, *Birds in Literature*, 151.

⁴³¹ 'A Young Student at Phoenix River.'

東雞突墻垣	The chicken from the East stands high on the wall,
西雞凌氣岸 ⁴³²	the chicken from the West haughtily looks on with distain.
相呼即相誘	Screeching at one another, with mutual provocation,
相待如相憚	they both remain poised, seemingly in mutual fear.
躑躅 ⁴³³ 張翅 ⁴³⁴	Hesitating and remaining still – wings spread, they wait.
揮霍 ⁴³⁵ 距 ⁴³⁶ 悍 ⁴³⁷	Brandishing [their weapons], they suddenly [start] kicking with their ferocious talons.
落羽 ⁴³⁸ 粘觜	Feathers fly and their claws and beaks lock together.
衝冠 ⁴³⁹ 殷流	The cocks' comb [becomes] crimson with spilt blood, eyes glaring.

⁴³² *Kian* (氣岸), literally with an ‘air of arrogance’ or ‘pride.’

⁴³³ Rendered as *ch'ökch'ok* (躑躅) in the original text. Both characters separately convey the sentiment of ‘hesitation’ as well as ‘standing.’ However, also a bisyllabic Korean word, *ch'ökj'ok* refers to the Royal Azalea tree (철쭉나무). Thus, here the poet may on one hand be describing the hesitance of the bird (as in the English above) but also may be actively comparing the appearance of the bird’s presence as being similar to that of the Royal Azalea tree. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajön – Vol. 13, 575*.

⁴³⁴ Missing character. In Yi’s anthology he provides no further elucidation, although it could potentially be *ch'i* (時).

⁴³⁵ In all further examples in this piece, Yi does provide further thoughts. Potentially *ch'uk* (蹴). Yi Hui-mok, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2004): 66.

⁴³⁶ In this example, *kō* (距) refers to the claws of birds such as cockerels and hens, Cf. example two in *Tonga Hanhan Taesajön, 1785*.

⁴³⁷ Read here more specifically as example two, ferocious or brutal due to their sharpness. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajön, 560-1*.

⁴³⁸ Thought to be the character *kae* (皆). Yi, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip*, 66.

⁴³⁹ *Ŭn* (殷) Reference to a dark or vivid red. Cf. example sixteen, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajön, 929*.

佯敗更會合	Feigning failure, [one] regains composure.
不追能계완 ⁴⁴⁰	[The other] stops his pursuit so he can rest.
蚌鷓持今明 ⁴⁴¹	Just like the clam and the sandpiper, they fight constantly.
燕蝠爭夕朝 ⁴⁴²	Like the swallow and the bat, they argue over morning and night.
狠顧猶附翼	They glare [at each other] ferociously, latching on to each other's feathers.
死守不聽喚	Fighting to the death, they pay no heed to calls [to stop].
決勝俱黝舍 ⁴⁴³	Battling for the win, both like Beigong You and Meng Shishe.
堅拒若楚한 ⁴⁴⁴	Firm resolve like Liu Bang and Xiang Yu.
一場為酣戰	A battleground for a fierce fight.
此時誰解難	At this moment, who could pull them apart?

⁴⁴⁰ Potentially *kaewan* (개완 愒翫). Cf. Yi, 66. Same meaning as *wangae* (완개 翫愒) – to rest well, enjoy an easy life. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajŏn – Vol. 11*, 171.

⁴⁴¹ A reference to the four-character expression *panghyul chijaeng* (蚌鷓之爭) – literally, ‘the snipe and clam fight.’ This is derived from a longer expression ‘[if] the snipe and clam fight, the fisherman gains (鷓蚌相爭, 漁翁得利) which first appeared in the *Zhan Guo Ce* (戰國策) or “Strategies of the Warring States.”

⁴⁴² Literally ‘swallows and bats fighting over night and day’ (燕蝠爭夕朝). A metaphor for useless arguments.

⁴⁴³ *Yusa* (黝舍) short for the names Beigong You (北宮黝) and Meng Shishe (孟施舍) that feature in Mencius. Heroes known for their bravery.

⁴⁴⁴ Read as *han* (漢) Cf. Yi, 66. *Ch’ohan* (楚漢) – the name of 劉邦(Liu Bang) and 項羽(Xiang Yu)’s regime. Finally, Liu Bang defeated Xiang Yu and established the Han Dynasty.

讓之修⁴⁴⁵鄰怨

[Who could] sort out the
resentment between these
neighbours?

識者戒兵亂

An enlightened man
warns [and takes
precautions] against war.

只作兒童戲

This is merely the foolish
behaviour of children...

無益勝負筭

it is fruitless to tally
competition like this.

向聞西塞爭

I hear that fighting
breaking out along the
Western frontier.

因此倍□⁴⁴⁶歎⁴⁴⁷

Because of this I sigh.

Seen through the eyes of a jaded observer, their fight brings to mind a situation far more relevant and present in the lives of the readers of the daily newspaper. In this work, the allegory of avian species transcends the binary of saviours and traitors, instead the reader comes to see the fruitlessness of violence: Ponggye Sosaeng's poem stands out both in regard to its length as well as the poem's interesting use of avian imagery. In *A Song about Cockfighting*, while painting a vibrant picture of birds in the midst of a fierce struggle, we see the anonymous poet use said imagery to illustrate far more profound contemporary realities, metaphorically exploring the shifting geopolitical situation of contemporary Chosŏn caught between East and West.

⁴⁴⁵ Drawing on the idea of 'control.' Cf. example two, *Tonga Hanhan Taesajŏn*, 135.

⁴⁴⁶ Missing character in the original.

⁴⁴⁷ "T'ugyehaeng," *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, August 2, 1906.

The reader is presented with vivid descriptions of two opposing cockerels; one described as Eastern, while the other as Western. Locked in a battle of intimidation, the two males scope out their opponent from a distance, one from atop a high wall, the other from the fighting ring on the ground. Despite their bravado, there both have some trepidations concealed from one another. Swallowing their fears, the fight commences abruptly; the observer describing a chaotic scene of feathers, blood and struggling claws. Trickery and cunning ensue as their stubbornness does not allow either one to succumb to the other. As the viewer looks on, their fruitless fight brings a number of thoughts to mind. The unfolding scene concludes with the observer raising questions regarding the futility of their violent struggle and the parallels with war, questioning whether such choices are wise.

Cockfighting stands out as an exemplary work of twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry. In comparison with other works of bird poetry published across a variety of print media, in his newspaper piece we see a far more obvious exploration of contemporary geopolitics in lieu of more vague or complicated metaphorical sensibilities. In light of the year of publication, is it difficult not to draw clear parallels to the recent Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. Published eleven months after the war's end, the East and West's clash and its relevance to Korean intellectuals is palpable. With Korea the victim caught between the 'haughty' and arrogant powers that surround her, the poet, speaking through the cockfight's jaded observer, is despondent in his reflection on such upheavals – who could pull them apart? Who could yield and make better this resentment? Seemingly hinting at his powerlessness to step between the birds. It is interesting that in line nine, the poet describes the fighting cocks not as birds, but as *neighbours* – provided more nuanced geopolitical subtext to his Sino-Korean poetic project that would have been of interest to his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, the poem comes to a close with a sense of unease and lingering concern for the future. In an enlightened country of progress, the intellectual must be the one who

“warns [and takes precautions] against war” and to avoid the possibility of “foolish behaviour” that may lead to upheavals. But poignantly put, in a time of knowledge, progress and sociocultural change, the new-intellectual of today must realise that exchange and understanding between neighbours is paramount to success.

This poem is thus noteworthy in how it transcends the limits of the binary of savior and traitor. We see the fruitlessness of fighting, as neither cockerel, East or West, is presented favourably. Instead, across the pages of the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, twentieth-century readers were exposed to a biting critique that penetrates deep into the heart of contemporary concerns in a world of new warfare techniques and imperial nation building in East Asia. Through the medium of literary Sinitic, Bonggye Sosaeng’s work is both relevant as it is skillfully written in its attempt to carve out relevance in a changing literary landscape.

3. Freedom and Imprisonment:

As annexation into the Japanese empire beckoned, across the pages of twentieth century print, we also begin to see the palpable realities of future colonial conquest revealing themselves in Sino-Korean poetry through subtle motifs of freedom and imprisonment. Continued use of birds provided readers with pensive works of highly pressing contemporary concern as “they can connect humans with the state of their environment or detach them from that environment.”⁴⁴⁸

We see readers submit works that touch upon subjugation at the hands of a foreign power with a sense of helplessness coming to the fore, while others penned works of

⁴⁴⁸ Brycchan Carey, Sayre Greenfield, Anne Milne, *Birds in Eighteenth-Century Literature: Reason, Emotion, and Ornithology 1700-1840* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 6.

transcendence and escapism from the same realities of a changing time. Naturally, this sense of powerlessness caught in the maelstrom of geopolitical change as well as the escapism from it, lends itself well to passerine imagery, as birds continue to transcend the limits of their own species, and stand out as defined characters of the latter years of the enlightenment age.⁴⁴⁹

In the following piece from 1910, we see the bird appear as a clear victim of colonial ambition and the claustrophobic realities of a new imperial era. Differing greatly from the savior and the traitor binary explored in previous works, as can be seen in *Nonggŭm* (籠禽) “The Birdcage,” the complicated sentiments surrounding autonomy, freedom, subjugation and imprisonment come to the fore:

籠禽

The Birdcage

籠裏偷生是苟求

In the bird cage, life
pitifully ekes on.

堪憐垂翅又低頭

Utterly woeful, drooped
wings and bowed head.

春來縱有凌霄志⁴⁵⁰

Though it may try [with
all its] might to fly higher
than high when spring
comes,

可奈全身不自由⁴⁵¹

Its entire body [remains]
unfree.

⁴⁴⁹ As Lévi-Strauss highlights, there are defined parallels between the avian and human orders – “birds’ peculiar unlike-likeness makes them suitable metaphors because they can be assimilated and distanced at once. Birds are distinctly inhuman, well removed anatomically from humankind, and yet there is an enduring inclination to identify bird society as homologous to that in which we live.” Lévi-Strauss, 204 in Michael Warren, *Birds in Medieval English Poetry*, 7.

⁴⁵⁰ *Nŭngsoji* (凌霄志) – ‘higher than the sky’ or a ‘volition not to fall behind.’

⁴⁵¹ “Nonggŭm,” *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji*, vol. 12, May 25, 1910.

Submitted under the name of Ujōng (藕汀)⁴⁵² Ryu Si-hyōng (柳始馨) and published in the *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji* (교남교육회잡지 嶠南教育學會雜誌) magazine a few months before annexation in August, Ujōng's piece presents the reader with a straightforward image of a caged bird. Despite still living, the bird is caught between life and death. With its wings void of life and its head slumped, the bird has been stripped of the vitality and dexterity of a previously happy and free life. Unable to come and go at will, the bird has seemingly resigned itself to its fate. Although the spring will one day arrive, even the changing of the seasons brings no good news; the bird still remains imprisoned by the cage where it remains hopelessly enslaved within.

As Yi Hŭi-mok highlights, Ujōng's *Bird Cage* stands out as a powerful example of a poetic work that 'symbolises the situation facing the Korean ethno-nation' at the time of its writing.⁴⁵³ While the bird personifies the Korean people, the cage represents the colonial apparatus of imperial ambition that is encroaching on the peninsula. There was once a time when the bird was free, still with memories of changing seasons. The cage of external suppression has drained the life of the Korean people and under the weight of Japanese encroachment, the steady erasure of Chosŏn's sovereignty has left their wings useless and their heads unable to look ahead. As the poem develops, the poet touches upon the seasons in flux as he contrasts the internal environment of the birdcage with the outside world at large. His poetic exploration of the internal and external are at odds with one another.

Beyond Yi Hŭi-mok's initial comments, we must also highlight the deep sense of hopelessness that characterises the poetic imagery of Ujōng's submission. Unlike other poems where there is sense of hope or possibility or dynamism typically accompanies the employment of bird imagery, *The Bird Cage* stands out as a work that truly encapsulates the inescapable

⁴⁵² Literally 'Lotus Pond.'

⁴⁵³ Yi Hŭi-mok, *Aeguk Kyemonggi Hansi Charyojip* (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 2004): 22

realities of a people in the face of powerful colonial ambition. To Ujǒng, there was not hope on the horizon and Korea’s future was bleak, caged and held back from the sky, with a past no longer able to be revived. The piece is significant in that it almost prophesies a *future* Korea, an imagined colonial Korea under the thumb of Japanese control into the future. This makes for a salient example of contemporary, socially engaged poetry for the reading public. There is sense of pre-emptive writing here as this has yet to happen. Written from a future perspective, poems like this provide us a snapshot into the thinking of readers of new print publications.

While poems like *The Birdcage* stand out among early twentieth-century works of lamentation, we also see works that seek a contrasting escapism from the difficulties that the twentieth century age also brings. In *Manyǒng* (漫咏) “A Random Poem,” published under the pseudonym of Chibija (知非子)⁴⁵⁴ in 1909, we see a far more distanced and relaxed work that seeks a sense of freedom from the geopolitical realities of the time:

漫咏

A Random Poem

黃鳥翩翩白鳥飛

Yellow birds flutter and
white birds fly.

化中⁴⁵⁵羣動⁴⁵⁶盡⁴⁵⁷天機⁴⁵⁸

In the circle of life, living
things [are always]
moving; [they] all
[follow] the plans of
heaven.

⁴⁵⁴ or “He Who Knows What is Wrong.”

⁴⁵⁵ Translation tentative. *Hwa* (化) potentially deriving from *chohwa* (造化), which is used to metaphorically describe the principles of nature that govern life and death. Cf. *Hanhan Taesajǒn – Vol. 13*, 946-7. In this regard, *hwajung* (化中) has been rendered in English as potentially equivalent to ‘the circle of life.’

⁴⁵⁶ *Kundong* (羣動), literally ‘groups of living beings’ or ‘animals.’

⁴⁵⁷ Read here as ‘all’ (모든) or ‘only’ (만~뿐).

⁴⁵⁸ *Ch’ǒn’gi* (天機), literally ‘the secrets of the heavens’ or ‘God’s plan.’

好遷喬⁴⁵⁹木須求友

[Some birds] move to new
trees, as they need to
make [new] friends.

獨立晴沙渾忘依

[Some] stand alone, on
the bright sands [by] the
lapping ocean, having
ended their reliance on
others.

物理誰知時與變

Who can understand [how
long things] take or [how
things] may change
according to the laws of
nature?

閒情堪惜世相違

[Despite my] leisurely
mood, what a great pity
that the world is
[seemingly] in conflict
[with me].

擬將宇內無窮事

[I] plan to develop many
things [that are yet to
exist] in this world.

百路千路一致歸⁴⁶⁰

Many paths reach the
same outcome... they all
take [me] back [home].

The reader is presented with an uncomplicated scene depicting nature in motion. Nameless birds take centre stage, as their gregariousness takes them to the treetops. Others seek solace in their own company at the water's edge. As the piece develops, the poet muses on the ways of the world and the position of man within the laws of nature. He feels "in conflict" with the

⁴⁵⁹ *Ch'ōngyo* (遷喬) – from the longer *ch'ulgok ch'ōngyo* (出谷遷喬) often linked to the expression 'when the oriole flies out of the valley, big trees start to move' or 'when birds fly out from the deep valley, they perch upon the tallest trees.' An expression evocative of social progress and upward mobility.

⁴⁶⁰ "Manyōng," *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji*, vol. 2, May 25, 1909.

laws that govern the world. Despite such feelings, the poetic narrator's zeal for progress comes to the fore, with his plans always taking him back home.

The above work, in both subject matter and tone, positions itself somewhat away from many of the aforementioned works of passerine poetry of the latter years of the enlightenment through a gentle and pensive look at birds seemingly at ease with life. What is most evident is the anonymity of the birds themselves – no reference to a specific species – allowing for the birds to become a blank canvas. No existing ideas or associations attached, they are simply birds in the general sense, more akin to a faceless public in contrast to the poetic voice of the piece. In this, Chibija's poem draws clear parallels between bird society and human, with the poetic voice of his work standing out, at odds with the "laws of nature" that the birds aimlessly follow. Meanwhile, he sees himself as a maverick for change.

While the first half of the work sets a scene of order, civility and status-quo, into its second half, the poetic voice comes into its own and the meaning that underpins the work is strengthened. The unknown narrator of the piece, at odds with the existing natural order, soliloquizes his frustrations: "who can understand [how long things] take or [how things] may change according to the laws of nature?" he asks his readers, as he hints at nature's tardiness in the race towards progress.

Planning to "develop many things" that contribute to civilization and progress, the poetic voice is filled with a sense of hope for the future. In this regard, Chibija's work can be interpreted as a poem about a young student keen to shape his country through the disruption of the status-quo that has long existed through nature's way. Be it through inventions, business or new-intellectual culture, he has ideas for the future in a world that seemingly cannot keep up with his passion and drive. It is an untroubled work, but it is through its simplicity that the contemporary voice of the new-intellectual begins to subtly manifest through Sino-Korean literary language.

In the following piece, Ch'ōng-ch'o (聽蕉)⁴⁶¹ Yi Ki-ho (李琦浩) presents a different type of bird poem. In *Noyu Amnong* (老儒暗聾) or “The Old Confucian, Blind and Deaf,” birds take on the role of passive observers. Neither the partridges nor the cuckoos referenced in Yi Ki-ho’s work are allegorical manifestations of freedom or slavery. Instead, he provides readers with another unique exploration of birds as characters in Korea’s twentieth-century journey. In the following, we see an old man of traditional outlook who has become imprisoned by his own affliction:

老儒暗聾

The Old Confucian, Blind
and Deaf

何處花香觸鼻來

From somewhere comes
the scent of flowers,
reaching his nose.

浪吟詩思雪中梅

In vain he recites his ideas
for poetry of plum
blossoms abloom in snow.

隔簾絕倒⁴⁶²青年子

A curtain separates him
from a youth, who is bent
double laughing.

鵓鷓鳥啼山杏開⁴⁶³

Partridges and cuckoos
cry, while in fact apricot
flowers of the mountain
bloom.

⁴⁶¹ ‘Listening to the Banana Plant.’

⁴⁶² *Chōldo* (絶倒), literally ‘faint and fall down’ – here seemingly used to reference laughter at someone else’s expense. Cf. *Gudai Hanyu Cidian*, 848.

⁴⁶³ “Noyu Amnong,” *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji*, vol. 10, March 25, 1910.

Also published in the *Kyonam Kyoyukhoe Chapji* in 1910, Yi Ki-ho's work is a satirical piece that takes aim at the image of the traditional man of a declining Chosŏn. The old Confucian scholar, unable to see or hear, is captivated by the scent of flowers. Common since times of old and highly befitting of a learned man, the flowers trigger the desire to turn to poetry and the old scholar starts to pen a work on plum blossoms flowering in the snow. As the work progresses, another figure comes into the frame, a youth, who is laughing at the old man from behind a curtain. While the youth is seized by laughter, the work draws to a close, as partridges and cuckoos cry in dismay at the sight of the man. As they take to the skies, we see it is in fact apricot flowers that are in bloom.

Yi Ki-ho's poem is an amusing look at the intellectual landscape of twentieth-century Korea. Through his work, the reader is provided with a satirical jibe at the 'old-intellectuals' of a quickly fading era. In his old age, the Confucian scholar has become isolated from the world: symbolically represented through his blindness and inability to hear. All that may be left that precariously connects him to his past is poetry writing and the inspiration of nature. The sense of disconnection is heightened, as the reader is privy to the Confucian's mistake: he does not realise that not only is the scent of the flowers not plum blossom, but he has also misjudged the season.

In line three, the reader meets with a new figure, the youth of today laughing due to the sight of the Confucian making such an obvious mistake. Bound by the belief that he is correct, he pens a poem at odds with the season and scent. In this, we see the youth as the foil to the Confucian: juxtaposed to one another, Yi paints a work whereby the youth represents the new world looking critically upon an older order than used their power, influence and cultural capital to maintain a grip on an insular, unequal world. The birds of this piece make their appearance as they cry – either out of shame and embarrassment, or pain and lamentation – at the fate that has befallen the Confucian scholar. He is trapped in his ignorance with little

chance of seeing the light of enlightenment. Together with the youth of today, they find themselves in a better world. They are no longer trapped by the binds of tradition and obligation to a ‘Chinese’ past. Instead, they are free and becoming freer than ever into the twentieth century where apricot blossoms bloom.

4. The Weight of Obligation and the Importance of Hope:

The sense of separation felt by Koreans far away from their home is a prominent theme of Sino-Korean poetry of the early twentieth century. The dysphoria of the self as it clashes with changes in contemporary society appears in the following piece published in the *T'aegŭk Hakpo* printed in Tokyo. In the following avian piece *Wŏlha Mun'an* (月下聞雁) “Listening to Wild Geese in the Moonlight,” we see the synergy between geese and men come to the fore, illustrating the sentiments of a new era of Korean identity as the weight of twentieth-century progress weighs heavily on their shoulders:

月下聞雁

Listening to Wild Geese
in the Moonlight

蘆白霜華故國秋

[Here] the reeds are
whitened with frosty
flowers, while my
hometown is [still]
autumnal.

寒鴻南下水中流

In winter, wild geese head
south across flowing
rivers.

驚寒棲宿明月夜

They endure the cold,
roosting to sleep during
bright moonlit nights.

隨陽飛落白沙洲

Following the sun, they
fly down to a white
sandbar.

一般海外同為客

[Like them] I too have
become a wayfarer
abroad.

萬里天涯無限愁

Thousands of *li* [from my
home], [I feel] endless
anxieties.

飛去嚶嚶聲何處

From somewhere, I hear
their cry as the geese fly
away.

望鄉獨立自搔頭⁴⁶⁴

[So], standing alone, I
look toward my
hometown, scratching my
head...

Published in 1906 by a Korean student away in Japan, Chang Chi-t'ae's poem juxtaposes images of geese and students of Chosŏn. The poem opens to descriptions of seasonal differences between the students' home country and that of his current country of residence. While he is currently gripped by cold, the hometown that he pines for remains autumnal. In the night, this anonymous figure describes a scene of migratory geese flying south. Across the waters, the geese are going somewhere new. Bathed in a bright light, they eventually settle along a white sandbar. As the poem progresses, we come to see the sentimental comparison between the poetic narrator and the migratory geese on the move. Just as the geese have

⁴⁶⁴ "Wŏlha Mun'an," *T'aegŭk Hakpo*, vol. 4, November 24, 1906.

travelled “across the following rivers,” the student has travelled “beyond the sea” albeit for different purposes.

Chang Chi-t’ae’s poem is one of pensive melancholy that is in tune with the sociocultural realities of the enlightenment era’s drive for civilisation and progress. The sense of isolation felt by Korean students during the period of transition is palpable. “Thousands of *li* from home, [he] feels an endless sadness” due to his separation from his home, his family and his way of life. He sees a connection between himself and the transitory geese who are also away from their home but must persist of their mission.

The poem comes to a close with the geese taking flight once again as the figure looks on, “scratching his head” as they continue towards a warmer climate in the distance. In this, we reach a poignant sense of closure that ultimately characterises Chang’s *Wild Geese* poem. Although melancholic and reflective of a Korean student’s sense of isolation and homesickness while away in Japan, Chang provides his readers with the reality of self-sacrifice. Just as the geese keep on the move, so too must the youth of Korea continue on their respective journey towards their goals; they must not become pessimistic along the way.

In the following pentasyllabic work, we see a different exploration of migratory geese. In *Taegasō (Hyōnju Miguk)* (待家書 現住美國) “Awaiting a Letter from Home – Currently Living in the USA,” a student writing under the pseudonym of Ch’ōngnyōnin (青年人)⁴⁶⁵ Pak Yong-man (朴容萬), pens a far more expectant and positive work that also features geese.⁴⁶⁶ While a multitude of poetic works of this era were written and published by Koreans in Japan, or by Koreans on their experiences in Japan, poetic works by new-intellectual students about other destinations such as the USA are exceedingly rare:

⁴⁶⁵ Literally ‘a youth.’

⁴⁶⁶ In this work, geese appear as the Chinese character *an* (鴈), rather than *an* (雁) in the previous work.

待家書 現住美國

Awaiting a Letter from
Home (Currently Living
in the USA)

三年離母客⁴⁶⁷

[I have spent] three years
away from my family
home.

萬里待家書

I have been waiting for
correspondence to travel
some 10,000 *li*.

遙知南浦月

So distant, I know, is the
moon over *Namp'o*.⁴⁶⁸

秋鴈盡飛歟⁴⁶⁹

In autumn, geese rise up
and fly!

Pak Yong-man's poem is a rare example of a Sino-Korean poetic work potentially written in the USA or written based on one's experiences from studying there. A simple poetic work, Pak's submission focuses on a young and expectant youth, eagerly awaiting a letter from Korea. Having been away for three years, the student is hopeful for contact and news. The youth makes mention of *Namp'o* (南浦) literally the "southern port" – a possible reference to Busan in the South of the Korean peninsula or indeed *Namp'o* itself, which is a city located in North Pyŏng'an Province. Wherever one may find oneself, one thing remains the same: upon the changing of the seasons, the geese will make their migration.

In this, we see the comparable imagery of the migrating geese and the students of Chosŏn reflected in one another. Although momentary, the geese in this piece provide a far more profound connection to the author and the work's poetic voice far away in America. Just

⁴⁶⁷ Literally, one's 'mothers home.'

⁴⁶⁸ *Namp'o* (南浦), present day North Korea, North Pyŏngan province.

⁴⁶⁹ "Taegasŏ (Hyŏnju Miguk)," *Taehan Hyŏphoe Hoebo*, Vol. 11, February 25, 1909.

as the geese migrate, fulfilling their role in the circle of life, so too are the students of Chosŏn fulfilling a new role that the twentieth century has provided them. They have been dispatched for a purpose and wherever it is they may find themselves their role is clear. They must endure their sense of separation from their homeland as they will eventually find their way back to their flock and settle at home. Pak's poem attracted attention from the *T'aeguk Hakpo*'s editors, and the work was printed with the following commentary:

評曰 切⁴⁷⁰ 丈夫行色 本來如此 情則悲 志則嘉

The commenter said: 'that's right. When a boy leaves [his home], this has always been [exactly what he feels]. Though one's feelings may lead to sadness, one's drive leads to praise.'

The anonymous commenter evidently shares an affinity with the youth of the poem who is likely a reflection of the poet himself away in America. They identify with the feelings expressed in Pak's piece: the complicated mix of sadness from being far away, but also the sense of pride from their goals to bring about a new future for one's people.

Another domesticated bird to make frequent appearances throughout the long history of Sino-Korean poetry is that of chickens and cockerels, often rendered as *kye* (계 鷄). According to Katherine Ball, this domesticated species has long held great significance: "of all the birds the most pugnacious and fearless, it became the symbol of valor, while its habit of lustily crowing at sunrise caused it to be regarded as an auspicious herald":

"For, according to ancient lore, the denizens of darkness prowled at night, disseminated evil influences to afflict humanity [...] not only for this act of beneficence, but on account of its association with the sun, the cock became one of the potent symbols of *Yang*, the active principle of light and life,

⁴⁷⁰ Here the single character *chŏl* (切) is used in an exclamatory fashion stemming from the verb 'to be adequate, relevant, reasonable' (적절하다). I.e. 'that's right!', 'I agree' or 'what you are saying is appropriate here.'

which is ever employed as an instrument of good to overcome the *Yin*, the passive principle of gloom and depth.”⁴⁷¹

As a potent symbol of *yang* triumphing over the darkness and ushering forth the light of a new dawn, this symbolism also continues on into Sino-Korean poetic works of the twentieth century with an added layer of subtextual depth for new-intellectual audiences. Take for example the following work, Maeyusaeng (梅奩生)’s *Kūmhoe* (襟懷) or “One’s Innermost Thoughts,” published in the *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in 1910:

襟懷

One’s Innermost Thoughts

初鷄鳴了羣鷄鳴

[After] the first chicken
crows, then a group
begins to sound.

曉月當窓日欲明

At dawn, the moon [still]
reaches [my] window,
while the sun starts to
brighten.

耿耿丹心何所事

There is a flickering
resolve in my heart from
somewhere.

先憂後樂一端情⁴⁷²

First [must come]
difficulty, so after there
can be enjoyment...

⁴⁷¹ “Hence since it was believed that the forces of evil ever regarded the cock with perpetual dread and fear, the bird - either as a whole or in parts, alive or as an image - was used as an antidote against all forms of disease, adversity, or disaster.” Cf. Katherine Ball, *Animal Motifs in Asian Art*, 225.

⁴⁷² “Kūmhoe,” *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, July 12, 1910. Translation tentative. Unable to ascertain the meaning behind *iltanjōng* (一端情).

Maeyusaeng's poem stands out as a simple work that illustrates a scene of chickens coming to life at dawn. As the cockerel begins his call to welcome the sunrise, the other birds in the yard join him in chorus. The sound of the chickens singing for the morning awakens an unknown figure, as he takes to his window; he catches both the fading moon and the rising sun simultaneously as the birds begin to crow. The sights and sounds of a new morning are a catalyst for sentimentality, as the poetic figure feels a "flickering devotion in [his] heart" at this scene. The poem comes to a close as he reflects on the realities of the present.

As Pak Ŭl-su mentions in his work on resistance in early twentieth-century poetic history, while on one hand the listener hears the crow of the chickens as a straightforward marker for the dawn of a new day in the piece, "on the other [it is] also an expression of steadfastness and a devoted heart (耿耿丹心), as if to say "why it is that the bright days of independence for our people not yet arrived?"⁴⁷³ Beyond Pak's observation, however, we see how this particular avian species comes to represent a sense of *cohesion* which Pak overlooks in his brief critique:

評曰 羣雞亂唱 曉月來照 正是喚醒世夢之時

The commenter says: 'when a flock of chickens chirp together and the moon can be seen in the morning, it is time to wake the world from their dreams.'

As the anonymous commenter highlights, the domesticated chicken is characterised by its unity with the group. The flock sing in unison, and through their unity they are able to shape their environment and indeed the human world. The birds' song both marks the start of morning in the literal sense. It also acts as the impetus to "awaken the [human] world from their dreams" as the faceless voice of *One's Innermost Thoughts* himself is awoken by their call. Through existing connotations of benevolence, the gregarious birds never far from humankind are

⁴⁷³ Pak Ŭl-su, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Chōhangsigaron* (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 2001): 300-301.

“potent symbols of *yang*” that combat the darkness through their associations with dawn and new beginnings. In turn, they become evocative of enlightenment, new-learning and twentieth-century progress. At the sound of their song, the poetic voice of Maeyusaeng’s piece has sprung into action. Despite knowing that there will be ‘difficulties’ ahead along the journey of the twentieth century, their devotion will give way to better times.

While Maeyusaeng’s work is characterised by a strong a sense of expectancy for tomorrow, in this final piece, simply titled *Ŭng* (鷹) or “Eagle,” the poem submitted under the name of Wan’un (晚雲)⁴⁷⁴ Hong Chŏng-yu (洪正裕) provides readers with a different exploration of the eagle. Published in the *Kiho Hŭnghakhoe Wŏlbo*, Hong’s eagle juxtaposes significantly with typical representations of the bird as a symbol of strength, heroism and fearlessness. While Chukhasaeng’s aforementioned 1905 piece demonstrates the bravery of the eagle to transcend obstacles in *Falcon Rock*, we instead see this poem explore an aging, sickly bird approaching the end of its life as it looks on at other birds happily in flight:

鷹

Eagle

瘦骨凌凌立架頭

With his shaky, ailing
frame, the eagle perches
aloft

雲霄志氣動雙眸

[Reflected in his two
eyes] you see his ambition
to take to the skies.

如何不及閒鷗老

Yet [now], how it is that
he cannot compete with
the leisurely old gull,

⁴⁷⁴ Or ‘evening clouds.’

飲啄江湖得自由⁴⁷⁵

That eats and drinks at the
rivers and lakes,
completely free?

At odds with Chukhasaeng's piece, Hong Chŏng-yu's poem on the eagle is alluring in its ambiguity. Rather than providing the reader with another archetypal image of eagles and hawks as strong and brave, instead the reader is presented with the bird of prey seemingly at the end of its life. Now no longer able to fly valiantly as it once could, Hong's bird is instead resigned to a perch observing other birds flying. Observing this scene from a far, the poetic voice of the piece questions the situation that has befallen the eagle, while the common 'old gulls' still remain as leisurely as ever.

What conclusions can be drawn regarding Maeyusaeng's unorthodox depiction of the eagle in his piece and what comments can be made in regard to the contemporary situation at the time of publishing? While in their *Ornithologies of Desire*, Mason highlights that a bird's ability to freely take to the skies "represents the locomotive equivalent of what humans have not achieved and, as such, introduces an ancient nostalgia for, or distant memory of, what might have been,"⁴⁷⁶ in Hong's work, he plays with our expectations of flight as an allegorical representation for enlightenment progress in the twentieth century and the mismatch of identity of the aging Korean intellectual now too old to keep up with the changing times. You see his will to fly reflected in his eyes, but he is now too weak to keep up. Maeyusaeng's eagle is seemingly weighed down by the pressures of an invisible stress, as the world around him is changing. But what of the gulls, observed by both the ailing eagle and the pensive narrator of Maeyusaeng's work? The gulls are also old, but yet they are somehow more at ease with the

⁴⁷⁵ "Ŭng," *Kiho Hŭnghakhoe Wŏlbo*, vol. 11, June 25, 1909.

⁴⁷⁶ Travis V. Mason, *Ornithologies of Desire: Ecocritical Essays, Avian Poetics, and Don McKay* (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013): 63.

changing times, free to idle away their time and enjoy the riches that the rivers and lakes provide.

It may be argued that the gulls represent those who come and go, free in their daily lives and are unaware of the coming tides of the colonial age. In contrast, the eagle, a far braver and symbolic manifestation of reverence and heroism, is seemingly more acutely aware of the importance of such a changing time and the potential implications that such a time may have for his 'people' in the coming years. His time is coming to an end and as the piece comes to its conclusion, he looks on at the gulls, hesitant, yet mindful of a future he seeks to protect.

5. Conclusion:

At the turn of the twentieth century, the genre of Sino-Korean poetry found itself caught in the tide of a changing literary and linguistic landscape. A more general reader class had begun to grow, and those engaging in writing were now no longer solely of elite stock. Instead, a new generation of young and worldly Koreans, engaged with new-learning and calibrated to the West and Japan, were actively using print publications and media as a new sphere to spread their ideas on enlightenment and civilization in order to bring about a new era for the many rather than the few. The twentieth century represented possibility and prosperity in place of the stagnant and regressive culture of dynastic Chosŏn and its reliance on China. As we have explored throughout these chapters on Sino-Korean poetic works of the latter years of the enlightenment age, *hansi* as a genre would rise to the challenges set forth by this transitional era. The genre contributed a unique voice to the literary landscape of the early twentieth century in a way that is often overlooked.

In their work on birds in eighteenth century Anglophone literature, Carey, Greenfield and Milne point out that “representations of birds have always had a role in literature as similes and metaphors for attributes such as speed, unboundedness, or keen-sightedness, or as symbols for peace, wisdom, or the soul.”⁴⁷⁷ Working within the same scholarly framework, scholars like Warren provide further elucidation as to their broader significance, highlighting how avian appearances in literature are ultimately underpinned by “intertwined human-avian histories and existences that can and do suggest an interdependence or compatibility that makes birds integral, not marginal, to our self-conception.” They “ratify human exceptionalism [and] serve as dispensable tools by which to examine our own psychologies or morals.”⁴⁷⁸

To conclude, while indeed “birds that fly freely in the air have always been the object of envy and admiration for humans who cannot leave the earth,”⁴⁷⁹ in the above poetic works taken from a variety of early twentieth-century print media outlets, we see avian aesthetics in the poetic language of Sino-Korean literature transcend the mere standard of simple symbolism and similes, and instead such works also provide us with the ratification touched upon by Warren. They become tools with which one may more critically examine a people and their society.

What we have explored above is the remarkable way that avian imagery met with the challenges of an era in transition through the way that twentieth-century poets redefined the creative boundaries put forth by poets of a previous generation and their use of birds as symbols and allegories. In the above, we have seen how birds find a voice as a continuation of tradition. They also gain new twentieth-century relevancies and audiences. Most poignantly, a number of poems of new print media also demonstrate a significant break from the typical motifs that

⁴⁷⁷ Carey, Greenfield, Milne, *Birds in Eighteenth Century Literature*, 5.

⁴⁷⁸ Michael Warren, *Birds in Medieval English Poetry*, 220.

⁴⁷⁹ Chŏng Min, *Hansi Sogŭi Sae, Kurim Sogŭi Sae* vol. 1, 12.

surrounded birds in literature of the past: birds could also represent traitors, collaborators and ineffective hunters. These works play with existing expectations of avian imagery.

Avian allegories could play into the enlightenment and civilisation discourse for a new national identity as Chosŏn made a break from the Sinitic order of a past, declining age. As we have seen, the birds of twentieth-century print Sino-Korean poetry can “connect humans to the state of the environment or detach them”⁴⁸⁰ from said world, in order to provide deeper food for thought for readers in the latter years of enlightenment.

⁴⁸⁰ Carey, Greenfield, Milne, *Birds in Eighteenth Century Literature*, 6.

9. In Pursuit of a New ‘Modern’ Canon: Reevaluating Sino-Korean Literary Language
for the Future

1. Introduction:

This thesis started with an overview of what may be described as the more conventional and straightforward narrative of the history of Korean literature. This is a narrative that often describes Sino-Korean literature as having come to an end in the very late nineteenth century. This thesis has also explored more generally how literary Sinitic or hanmun would meet its demise as it came to be heavily criticized in new print media spaces. Beyond this, the establishment of literary studies as an academic discipline was examined. The greater implications of elevating the ‘native’ over the ‘foreign’ has also been explored. As highlighted, the negation of literary Sinitic was marked and this arguably had great consequences for future generations. As mentioned, debates surrounding *hanmunhak* as a legitimate, defining element of Korea’s literary landscape continued until as recently as the 1980s.

Despite a reassessment taking place, what discussion often still continue to emphasise, however, is literary Sinitic’s connection to the *past*, with Sino-Korean literature’s presence into the *present* still an oft overlooked element of so-called ‘modern’ literary studies. In the previous four chapters, this work has cast a light on the themes, images, voices and characters of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century. Enjoyed and published widely, this genre competed for space against more accessible styles of poetry in the vernacular. Yet the genre still held steadfast into the twentieth century. This work has looked closely at four specific topics that help to inform understanding of Sino-Korean poetry as a genre that, against the odds, made its way into the pages of contemporary magazine and newspaper culture: students of new-learning and their maneuvering towards unknown horizons; frank reactions to the imperial

age – both positive and negative; patriotic evocations of Korea’s geographic icons and finally bird imagery, long ubiquitous in poetry, now utilised as a means to express twentieth-century social, cultural and political realities.

As this thesis has demonstrated, in the age of patriotic enlightenment and budding nationalist developments when the vernacular came to be a gift to be celebrated and used by the people for a new age, Sino-Korean poetry would continue on and become emboldened with new relevance. From poems about life in Tokyo, witty avian representations of heroes and traitors to works that sing of the Han river’s majesty, the aforementioned works come to hold contemporary relevance. The genre continued to command the attention of twentieth-century readers, who were beginning to be overwhelmed with a wealth of ever-expanding material from around the world.

This work was born from the premise that Sino-Korean poetry is a missing piece in the puzzle of *hyöndae sisa* (현대시사 現代詩史) or modern poetic history, in need of further understanding and representation within the teaching of Korean literary history. How, then, can this reassessment of Sino-Korean poetry’s oft overlooked yet continued presence and relevance to twentieth century literary history be put to tangible use? Can the above theoretical applications of Bourdieu to the twentieth-century literary establishment and the previous explorations of Sino-Korean poetry’s themes, imagery and language give way to more nuanced discussions of twentieth-century literary history in the Korean classroom?

This brings us to the following closing topic that seeks to compliment the discussions and explorations of previous chapters: literary studies as a scholarly discipline taught and studied today in contemporary South Korea, as well as its standards of canonicity and how it may be time to carve a *new* space in the ‘modern’ canon for an ‘old’ genre. As leading scholar of literature Cho Tong-il mentions, in recent years academic enquiry into Korean literature has expanded significantly, with a variety of ‘lost’ works now ‘found’ and brought back into

discussion. He stresses a somewhat anti-canonical stance, adding that “to accept new members, the established canon system must be reconsidered” and a “new view of literary history is needed” where existing distinctions between long considered major and minor works challenged.⁴⁸¹ This final chapter thus seeks to conclude on ways we may be able to paint a more complete picture of the literary world of Korea in the twentieth century, one where the Sinitic legacies of Korea’s past are not so obsolete as often thought. This will ultimately aid to bridge a gap that continues to shape literary studies, while providing tangible applications of this research for the future.

2. Defining Canon, Canon Debates East and West and the ‘Problem’ of Nationalism:

Canon (κανών kanón), originating from the classical Greek ‘measuring stick’ or ‘standard’ typically refers to a collective body of literature deemed valued and worthy of being remembered, respected and studied both now and in the future. *Canonisation*, then, can be described as the process by which novelists, poets and playwrights become celebrated, with their literary works coming to represent the best or most representative works of a culture, place or people. Over time, these works come to possess high cultural and literary value and they become part of the nation’s story to be passed down, studied and celebrated for future generations.

Academic research into the canon and canon formation picked up pace in the West in the 1970s and has continued to diversify.⁴⁸² Theoretical approaches to canon formation

⁴⁸¹ “Many neglected works were found and analysed. The *Bongsan* Mask Play, Gim Ryeo’s poems in written Chinese dealing with social reality, and *Banquets of the Coverant* [sic] *Under the Moonlight* the longest Korean novel ever at 180 volumes, are typical examples.” Cf. Cho Tong-il, *Interrelated issues in Korean, East Asian and World Literature* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006): 21. This was ultimately Cho’s rationale for producing the *T’ongsa* collection.

⁴⁸² It must be highlighted that in regard to English scholarship, discussions on canon formation tend to be overly focused on issues pertaining to the West and as a result are not always as readily applicable to issues of canon

have come to fall into two categories, the *hermeneutic* approach concerned with an innate ‘literariness’ that causes a response in the reader, and the *sociological* approach concerned with the relationship shared by literature and social power dynamics. As Van Dijk touches upon in their work on canon formation, the hermeneutic method is the more traditional point of view, whereby canon architects look to *intrinsic quality* of the work with the pursuit of a “constant, lasting value” of a literary work as art to be celebrated. On the other hand, the sociological approach is comprised of scholarship taking the theoretical standpoint that “canon formation is [...] controlled by certain powerful institutions. They think it necessary to change this situation and they seek recognition for groups among the reading public that, in their opinion, are not fully represented in the existing hierarchy of values.”⁴⁸³

Two leading figures on academic enquiry into canon and canon formation, Kolbas and Guillory, also highlight that the contemporary debate on the *opening* of the Western canon is also further shaped by two factions of conservative and liberal critique, whereby the conservatives seek to strengthen and justify the canon as it stands and reinforce existing works, writers and their cultural values based on the aesthetic excellence of a work. While on the other hand, the liberals argue for more ‘proper’ representation through greater disruption and scrutiny of canons. In Guillory’s work, he describes their approach as “liberal-pluralism” of the canon – they see the canon as an embodiment of societal elitism and seek to overturn the

formation in East Asia or more specifically, the relevant discussions of this thesis. Nevertheless, some of the most significant publications on the Western canon include Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon*. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), Mihaly Szegedy-Maszak, *Literary Canons: National and International* (Akademiai Kiado, 2001), Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: the Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), Fielder, Leslie A. Fiedler and Houston A. Baker, *English Literature: Opening Up the Canon* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981) and Joseph Csicsila, *Canons by Consensus Critical Trends and American Literature Anthologies* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004).

⁴⁸³ Van Dijk makes reference to a significant number of examples of scholarship while illustrating this point. They point to defining scholarship such as that by Wellek, Altieri, Hirsch and Bloom as representatives of the hermeneutic approach, while pointing to the likes of Robinson and Granqvist as those that have contributed to the sociological approach. For specifics, Cf. Nel Van Dijk, "Research into Canon Formation: Nationalism, Literature, and an Institutional Point of View." *Poetics Today* 20, no. 1 (1999): 121-132.

dominant culture and launch reassessments of authors back into canon who have been ignored, overlooked or marginalized.⁴⁸⁴

The field has seen fierce discussions erupt, with the pluralists asking pertinent questions, such as whether the Western canon is sexist, racist, homophobic, classist or even a combination of all of the above. From the liberal perspective, it is argued that this may be true; defined for too long by privileged white male academics, essential works by woman, ethnic minorities, people of the LGBTQ+ community and those of the lower socio-economic classes may well have been overlooked or purposely faced exclusion due to a conservative system of canon formation. Particularly in the postcolonial space, numerous academics are attempting to challenge the firmly established canons of Europe, North America and Oceania (or more specifically a shared Anglophone canon). They are arguing for a better reflection on what was actually being written and read at certain periods in the past. As Jan Gorak highlights in *The Making of the Modern Canon*, it has long been proclaimed that the modern canon as we know it exists:

“only in order to conserve existing institutional practices and definitions; that it requires teachers of the humanities to transmit time-honoured platitudes; that it favours a privileged set of writings that alone constitute ‘literature’, while conspiring to conceal the way those writings become the basis for the curriculum; and that it compounds these sins of omission and commission by employing methods of reading that remove favoured authors and texts from processes of struggle and conflict.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, 3. As Du Ping further adds, drawing upon Abrams – “defenders of standard canons hold that canons are defined by aesthetic standards and must endure the test over a period of time. They are concerned with ‘canonicity’ of literary works, underscoring the necessity and irreplaceability, i.e., aesthetic quality of literary works. However, opponents claim that standard canons have been determined less by “artistic excellence than by the politics of power, that is, that the canon has been formed in accordance with the ideology, political interests, and values of an elite class that was white, male, and European.” Cf. Abrams, M.H, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2004): 30 in Du Ping, “Canon Formation in Literary Field - A Sociological Perspective,” *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, vol. 3 no. 8 (2015): 60.

⁴⁸⁵ Jan Gorak, *The Making of the Modern Canon: Genesis and Crisis of a Literary Idea* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013): 6.

Nevertheless, canon debate in the West since the 1970s has remained open-ended with no clear conclusions. Engagement with the literary landscape changes constantly. New attitudes, new viewpoints, methodologies and ways of opening the canon continue to come into discussion across the world, unique to their specific cultural milieu. What is clear, however, is that discussion on the canon still remains a significantly ‘Western’ area of scholarship.⁴⁸⁶

Looking to the literary canons of East Asia (and issues surrounded canon formation and the inclusion and exclusion of certain works, genres and authors) it is immediately clear that contentious points of debate on opening up the canon outlined above are not universal across the world. In the case of East Asia, we see the canon debate has developed differently due to certain socio-cultural, socio-linguistic and socio-political factors unique to the region that differ from the West’s issues of race, gender and sexuality.⁴⁸⁷

One thing that is consistent regarding both ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ canon debates, however, is the issue of nationalism, and its potential influence in shaping the ‘modern’ canon and how it potentially contributes to a culture of exclusion.⁴⁸⁸ As Hobsbawm and other scholars of nationalism have shown, seemingly non-political spheres such as aesthetics, literature, and ethics have been critical (if not even more powerful than political institutions) in the process of constructing nation-states, which had to unify their members by constructing a common

⁴⁸⁶ The Anglophone world is far *less* homogenous in terms of race, gender, sexuality and religion and thus, the act of actively *challenging* a lack of representation through canonical expansion and reassessment has become an essential scholarly endeavor, of which is also inherently political. Issues that characterize canon formation or reformation debates in particular in the Anglophone world are born from a unique social, cultural and political milieu that is not universally applicable.

⁴⁸⁷ For example, topics such as whether the canon has been historically exclusive and restricted the veneration of writing by people of different ethnicities is not yet a prominent element of the canon debate in most areas of East Asia due to racial homogeneity. This differs significantly from particularly Anglophone areas of the world where multiculturalism is the norm. In addition, LGBTQ+ writers and queer literature is also still taboo in many areas of East Asia, as a result, opening the canon in this regard is so far not a topic that is being significantly discussed.

⁴⁸⁸ “By the mid-twentieth century, nationality had come to be among the most dominant forms of social identity in Europe, North America and much of the rest of the world. It had permeated the content and function of education at every level, especially in the humanities, where the study of literature is usually placed. To that extent the transformation of literary canons in modernity has been profoundly influenced by the prescribed values and priorities of the state, where the inculcation of abstract aesthetic ideals has given way to fostering a sense of shared identity by appeal to national history and distinct cultural heritage.” Dean Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*, 21.

cultural identity. In his work on English literature, Eagleton clarifies that the arrival of vernacular literature into British education “rode to power on the back of wartime nationalism” in the wake of World War One.⁴⁸⁹ Meanwhile in John Guillory’s groundbreaking work on canon formation, he highlights that “the vernacular canon belongs to a nationalist agenda, quite distinct from the multilingual cultural internationalism of the renaissance humanists” with “the vernacular curriculum [...] a vector for nationalist ideology.”⁴⁹⁰

Forming the bedrock of this research, we have already explored the issue surrounding cultural nationalism, the written word and how changing attitudes to the status of certain types of writing and language has affected the way those in positions of power have shaped cultural discourse on a public and scholarly level. But finishing on a contemporary standpoint, how may this continue to shape a nation’s ideas of the most representative national canon of literature for appreciation and study *today*?

Although we have already explored this trend in the twentieth-century literary history of Korea and the relationship between the narrativization of Korean nationhood with the negation of Sinitic literary practices, the issue of nationalism stands out as arguably one of the most noticeable elements that shapes discussions and critiques of the established canons of China and Japan as well. It is not surprising that both China and Japan, of which literary Sinitic was once a defining element of cultural capital in the past, would also develop their own frictions with the genre alongside their vernacular languages.⁴⁹¹

In his work on Chinese literature, Michel Hockx applies a Bourdieusian approach to the Chinese literary field in his exploration of the New Literature Movement of the May Fourth

⁴⁸⁹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction – Anniversary Edition* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008): 26.

⁴⁹⁰ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 76-7.

⁴⁹¹ As Schmid highlights “Many writers felt that a break with the transnational culturalism of the East Asian past was necessary, one that would be marked by a rejection of those previously shared symbols and practices as alien. Only the recovery and sustenance of a pure culture, they assumed, come rescue the nation...” Cf. *Korea Between Empires*, 55-6.

Era. In many ways synonymous with Korea's enlightenment era, China's May Fourth Movement (五四運動) that began in 1919 also saw the rise and domination of a new class of intellectuals and writers that sought to break sharply from the old order and wholeheartedly embrace the use of vernacular Chinese language, *baihua* (白話). In examining the Chinese case, what is evident is the parallels that exist between the Korean new-intellectual class and their push for a national literature severed from the past and the way those involved in the Chinese New Literature Movement also sought to negate past literary practices to a position of liminality on the horizon of intellectual and literary culture due to the disturbances in established tastes through contact with the West and new literary practices. As Hockx mentions, writing in literary Sinitic instead of *baihua* was "already reduced to a marginal position within the literary field before 1949" as followers of the New Literature Movement pushed a "fiercely aggressive style of attack" to destabilize the habitus of intellectual circles into the twentieth century. It was this honed assault that would solidify 'new' vernacular literature as "the mainstream" of twentieth-century textual culture and intellectual consciousness in China.⁴⁹²

The marginality that Hockx refers to here is a result of the shifting power of the elite educated classes in early twentieth-century Chinese history, whereby the reform supporting new-intellectuals such as Shen Congwen (沈從文 1902–1988), Hu Shi (胡適 1891–1962) and Lu Xun (魯迅 1881–1936) superseded the old literati of the Qing that supported the continued use of literary Sinitic or *wenyanwen* (文言文). These figures became the ruling elite of literary circles of the Republican era through their support of *baihua* literary production. Through May Fourth, "young intellectuals had a device around which cultural and literary history could be reinterpreted. [...] Standing on the 'modern' side of the

⁴⁹² Michel Hockx, "Theory as Practice: Modern Chinese Literature and Bourdieu," in *Reading East Asian Writing - The Limits of Literary Theory*, ed. Michel Hockx, Ivo Smits (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003): 228.

boundary, one could claim to understand the past in an entirely new light. Those who continued older modes of writing on this side of the boundary became ‘holdovers,’ strangely out of place, their work no longer valid because it happened at the wrong time.”⁴⁹³

Hockx is not alone in this analysis. This exploration of the May Fourth era, new literary movements and new narratives on Chinese literary history is also explored by both Stephen Owen and Ellen Widmer. As was the case for early academics and scholars of literature during the Japanese colonial era of Korea, Owen highlights how the process of *anthologising* China’s literary history by nationalists was also a significant task for Republican era intellectuals in a similar regard. Owen makes reference to the purposeful narrativization of *struggle* by anthologists and literary historians, constructing “a line of development in which a literature in the vernacular was continually struggling against an eternally moribund ‘classical’ literature.” While the classical may have lost its lustre and relevance into a new century, the vernacular was “perpetually emergent,” with a new history of Chinese literature born from the efforts of May Fourth era scholars.⁴⁹⁴

In other words, according to the May Fourth writers, the perpetually emerging new literature of ‘modern’ China was stifled by ‘classical’ language and its supporters.⁴⁹⁵ These writers who contributed to writing on China’s literary history had great sway over the way in which the fall of literary Chinese and the rise of the vernacular was to be historicised. This separation of literary Chinese as being premodern and old, and vernacular baihua being modern has only broadened further on the basis of this narrative first put forth during May

⁴⁹³ Stephen Owen, “The End of the Past: Rewriting Chinese Literary History in the Early Republic,” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital - China’s May Fourth Project*, eds. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, Oldřich Král, Graham Sanders (Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center): 169.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁹⁵ Owen also makes reference to Hu Shi, who spoke of ‘living literature’ being writing in the vernacular, and ‘dead literature’ in regard to literature in classical and literary Chinese. Adding that “Hu Shi is telling us that just as there is one general category of ‘literature,’ so there is *one* literary history, in which values are self-evident if one only looks. The good texts are the ones that show the vernacular; the bad texts are the ones that are ‘classical.’” Cf. *Ibid.*, 176.

Fourth in more contemporary times: “the restriction of most students and the general reading public to books published in simplified characters and the increasing dependence on vernacular annotation and translation give the academic scholarly establishment the power to shape and control access to the Chinese past. In the classroom and for interested readers who have not studied in a *zhongwenxi* (中文系), the past is radically mediated by May Fourth taste.”⁴⁹⁶

In her work on women’s writing of the Ming and Qing eras and their reception and exploration in May Fourth literary histories, Ellen Widmer explores how May Fourth era literary historians actively overlooked women’s writing of the Ming and Qing eras in order to strengthen their narrative: that it was the New Literature Movement and their progressive and enlightened supporters who created the first inclusive environment *for* Chinese literary women. There may be grounding to the argument that traditional women’s writing of ‘the past’ was intrinsically linked to a traditional culture that lacked the means to properly serve the cause of modernity. However, and as Widmer puts forth, Republican era intellectuals overlooked “many of the signs of proto-feminism” that indeed can be found in earlier writing. May Fourth literary historians instigated a campaign of “cannibalizing the old tradition” in an act of simultaneous elevation and subjugation of literary culture:

“This act of erasure constitutes one of the more intriguing features of May Fourth reactions to Ming-Qing women writers. It is not only that May Fourth leaders disregarded evidence that might have made their own feminism look less pathbreaking. It is that the ‘burden’ of their break with feudalism was so total as to submerge evidence of this old system’s own efforts at self-reform, knowledge of which is only now re-entering the scholarly mainstream.”⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 190.

⁴⁹⁷ Ellen Widmer, “The Rhetoric of Retrospection: May Fourth Literary History and the Ming-Qing Woman Writer,” in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital - China’s May Fourth Project*, eds. Milena Doleželová-Velingerová, Oldřich Král, Graham Sanders (Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center): 199-200.

Through the scholarship on canon formation in twentieth-century China explored above, we come to see a familiar pattern of *liminality* and isolation of certain elements of East Asian literary history that do not fit an established national narrative. In essence, in order to maintain a certain narrative that strengthens the national canon, certain outliers must be excluded and sacrificed.

Another example that also contributes to this debate surrounding canon and how powerful groups can have sway on the narrative of national literary history is also explored by Haruo Shirane in regard to Japanese literature. In his work on canon formation in Japan, Shirane highlights that during the eighteenth century, *kokugaku* (國學) scholars were critical of external sways on Japan and its culture and they instead sought to emphasise learning through Japanese works that reflected their *Japaneseness*.⁴⁹⁸ In this, ‘native’ Japanese genres such as *waka* (和歌) and *monogatari* (物語) were to be emphasized, while Sino-Japanese literary works and texts were to be pushed *out* of the canon. As Shirane explores, leading figures of kokugaku studies during the Meiji era pushed for the solidification of a national language as a defining facet of the “national body” or *kokutai* (国体), which was positioned ideologically in contrast to literary Sinitic or *kanbun* as the defining facet of a China in decline. “The result was a dramatic pedagogical shift away from the Confucian classics, the devaluation of Japanese writing in kanbun, which had been the language of religion, government, and scholarship.”⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁸ “It was not, however, until the mid-Meiji period (1890s), with the rise of modern nationalism, the influence of Western phonocentricism, the emphasis on a ‘national language’ (*kokugo*) based on kana, and the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), that this inversion finally becomes irreversible.” Cf. Haruo Shirane, “Canon Formation in Japan: Genre, Gender, Popular Culture, and Nationalism,” in *Reading East Asian Writing - The Limits of Literary Theory*, eds. Michel Hockx, Ivo Smits (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003): 24.

⁴⁹⁹ It is important to note that Shirane does further clarify that while this break from kanbun was bolstered by the rise of Japanese nationalism, it was never “completely abandoned as part of national literature or national culture. Both the Chinese writing system and the field of Chinese studies continued to have a profound impact on Japanese culture, particularly as a means of ethical and moral education, which was critical to modern nation-building.” *Ibid.*, 32-33. As Fraleigh also points out, “there were many kanshi poets active in Meiji who saw themselves as being on the very cutting edge of contemporary culture and literary expression.” Kanshi possessed an adaptability

As can be ascertained by the above, the literary histories of both China and Japan have been shaped and historicised due to certain power shifts as each nation moved into the twentieth century. Through a Bourdieusian approach, these shifts in power led to the sacrifice of elements of literary culture that did not fit the powerful's narrative of a unifying literary history that emphasizes the nation, national spirit and a 'modern' identity. As Du Ping mentions, "it is, as it were, those agents and agencies with more power of cultural capital that take control of the power to select canons. Pierre Bourdieu's sociological views on the cultural field throw new light on cultural production; it therefore helps to gain an insight into all kinds of social forces which shape the field of literature by legitimizing some authors and works."⁵⁰⁰

3. The Modern Canon Debate in Contemporary South Korea:

As is evident, canon formation is a complex process. It is reasonable to suggest that bringing about a definitive body of 'esteemed' literature for posterity as well as future study in schools and universities requires a delicate balancing act. The process is ultimately going to be influenced to some degree by culture, politics and also emotions. In the Bourdieusian sense, the hidden power dynamics that control our social world and our cultural dispositions will naturally have great sway over canonical processes. As a reaction to this, in contemporary scholarship (especially in the West), the need to challenge the established canon and what it professes to be 'valued' or 'representative' has come to be seen as an important exercise in seeking truth and representation. Indeed, in the West, these so-called "counter-canonical

"to engagement with new sociocultural phenomena, specifically dialogue with Western literature and material culture [...] to view kanshibun as antiquated or 'obsolete' in Meiji is thus to retrospectively read the practice through foreknowledge of its eventual decline." Cf. *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, 10.

⁵⁰⁰ Du Ping, "Canon Formation in Literary Field - A Sociological Perspective," 66.

movements are nearly as old as the idea of the canon itself” and in many ways the canon “is actually *defined* by attacks upon it.”⁵⁰¹

In the case of South Korea, academic discussion and critique surrounding the *kǔndae chǒngjǒn* (근대정전 近代正典) or ‘modern canon’ is a fairly new element of literary studies, with enquiries only began as recently as the 1990s.⁵⁰² While nationalist legacies in the shaping of the literary field have been explored in previous chapters, here some further elements of the Korean canon debate highlight the way that contemporary South Korea and its ongoing exploration of the canonical can be a site where further questions relating to canon and re-presentation can be made that neither prescribe entirely to Western liberal or conservative approaches.

To clarify, there are a number of uniquely ‘Korean’ issues in relation to the nation’s tumultuous history that has, and continues to, greatly affect the canonisation of literature from the latter Chosŏn era through to the present. The most pertinent, is a far more recent topic – the issue in question in this thesis – Sino-Korean literary works of the twentieth century. But foundational work into the so-called modern Korean canon has brought to light a variety of more visible stumbling blocks in the road of literary historiography that need to be superseded: issues surrounding the canonisation of Korean literature composed in Japanese; Literary works composed in Korean by Japanese collaborators; Literary works by writers who went North; Post-division North Korean literature and finally literature of the greater Korean diaspora.

⁵⁰¹ Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*, 22 and Frank Kermode, “Institutional Control of Interpretation,” *Essays on Fiction, 1971-82* (1982) p. 177-178 in Kolbas, 23. Italics my own.

⁵⁰² Kang Yōng-mi states that research into canon began in Korea in the latter years of the 1990s - this early research focused on the colonial era, liberation era literary world formation, poetry anthologies, the formation process of North-South Korean literature textbooks, among other topics. As of yet the canonisation of ‘modern hanmunhak’ has not been evident. Cf. “Chǒngjǒn'gwa Kǒmyŏl 1 – Sijo Siin'gwa Chakp'umŭl Chungsimŭro,” *Uri Munhak Yŏn'gu* 37 (2012): 161-191.

As Kim Tong-sik's scholarship outlines, South Korean academic enquiry into such areas still remains fairly new ground. The ban on scholarship on North Korean writers was lifted in 1988 but North Korean literature has come to be seen by academics as a 'pseudo-foreign' category of literature that fulfills the requisites of 'Korean' literature (as it is indeed written in Korean for Korean people) but its unique character and the experiences and sentiments that it exhibits lacks the universality needed for canonical acceptance and broader study.⁵⁰³ Meanwhile for diaspora literature, scholarly interest only began to pick up pace from the mid-1990s where research by scholars in South Korea 'started from a place of introspection on the way in which they (the diaspora) had come to be othered' through what Kim Tong-sik refers to as 'the violence of erasure.'⁵⁰⁴ Similarly, it was not until the late 1990s that dual-language writing (이중어 글쓰기), namely Korean literature or writings by Koreans primarily in Japanese as result of colonial history, came about due to South Korea's more recent shifts towards multiculturalism.⁵⁰⁵ Although these areas are beyond the scope of this thesis, they highlight the idiosyncrasies of Korean canon debate and the obstacles in the way of reforming the canon to meet liberal-pluralist expectations of 'true' representation. These issues are uniquely Korean – all of which remain politically and emotionally charged. This creates significant difficulty for scholars arguing for reform.

Thus, throughout twentieth-century history, with an emphasis on the post-war era, institutions, scholars and compilers of literary histories, school textbooks and university syllabi have had to address a complex question: what are the defining works, authors and genres of so-called 'modern' Korean literature as well as the question of what is *worthy* of study in 'modern' Korean literary history. This question of great difficulty is, more often than

⁵⁰³ Kim Tong-sik, "Han'guk Munhak Kaenyŏm Kyujŏngŭi Yŏksajŏk Pyŏnch'ŏne Kwanhayŏ," 60.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 63.

not (as we have also seen regarding both Japan and China), influenced by the same power dynamics that Bourdieu's sociology elucidates, whereby the politics of those at the top of the cultural and intellectual pyramid give form to canonicity. In this way, the dominant intellectual powers greatly shape the modern literary canon, which has historically deemed the above examples to be inferior, dangerous, liminal and/or not suitably Korean enough for canonisation, teaching or academic exploration.

Following what has been discussed frequently throughout this thesis and has also been explored above in the case of neighbouring Japan and China, nationalism has played a significant role in shaping the historiography of literature and how we come to understand and define what 'Korean' literature is or is not. As has also been explored in the work of Hockx, Owen, Widmer and Shirane, with so many contentious elements of Korean literary historiography that remain liminal and on the periphery, one cannot help but raise a number of questions when examining literary history books and anthologies in print in South Korea today.⁵⁰⁶

Yu Yong-t'ae's work on the literary canon as a literary institution in contemporary South Korea highlights the strength of the canon as a *transmitter* of the ideological project of the twentieth-century nation-state. This is due to the fact that politics have long found their way into educational textbooks as a means of providing a political narrative and strengthening particular ideological stances. To Yu Yong-t'ae, literary education in the post-colonial, post-war South has shaped the people into patriotic *educatees*, with exclusion of literary works that

⁵⁰⁶ The issue of incomplete canons is not unique to modern Korean literary studies. As Michael Pettid's work on the premodern classical Korean canon highlights, even in dynastic times when scholars were compiling the *Tongmun'sŏn* (東文選) "Chosŏn Korea's Anthology of Eastern Literature," the Korean peninsula's earliest extant compiled anthology of Korean literature, many interesting works or genres of writing were left out – creating an imperfect canon than he deems needs reconsideration, especially for foreigners attempting to understand what truly constitutes 'premodern' literature of Korea. Cf. Pettid, Michael J et al. *Premodern Korean Literary Prose – An Anthology* (New York: Columbia Anthology, 2018). More investigation into the selections made by Chang Chi-yŏn in the 1918 *taedongsisŏn* (대동시선 大東詩選) published by Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's *Sinmun'gwan* is also needed.

do not demonstrate state ideology a standard: “due to this reason, current study on the Korean canon after the liberation era has become an issue principally focused on school textbooks.”⁵⁰⁷

Other academics working on canon in South Korea also highlight the paramount importance of the school and educational textbooks but go further in exploring the issue of state intervention. In *The Politics of the Canon*, Ryu Ch'an-yŏl highlights the ideological apparatus that exacerbates what Yu Yong-t'ae and others have observed as a particular issue in canonization in Korea and the education system. While Yu homes in on textbooks in general, the issue of state-authorisation of textbooks *before* dissemination forms the backbone of Ryu's critique. School Korean language and literature textbooks or *kugŏ kyogwasŏ* (국어교과서) have significant sway over public opinion and as Ryu states, these textbooks have great influence over consolidation of what is considered *valued* Korean literature of the twentieth century:

‘Since 2010, the status of Korean language and literature textbooks have been weakened as the state textbook system shifted to a state-authorized system.⁵⁰⁸ This weakening of the status of Korean textbooks inevitably entails changes in perceptions and attitudes toward literary canon. In other words, it means that the authority and status as a canon enjoyed by the works in Korean textbooks in the past have been greatly shaken.’⁵⁰⁹

Although the scope of this issue surrounding textbooks is too broad to be covered in detail, Ryu and others nevertheless raise pertinent questions regarding the *politicisation* of canon, the influence of the state over the decision making of inclusion and exclusion of certain works and authors and the greater implications of state intervention in literary studies.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ Yu Yong-t'ae, “Kūndae Han'guk Munhakchŏngjŏnūi Munhakchedojŏk Chŏpkūn - Hyŏndae Chosŏn Munhak Chŏngjibŭl Chungsimūro,” *Ōmullonjip* 47 (2011): 290-1.

⁵⁰⁸ Ryu quoting Kim Chong-hun, “Sigyoyukkwa Chŏnwiŭsi,” *Pip'yŏngmunhak* 41 (2011): 88-9

⁵⁰⁹ Ryu Ch'anyŏl, “Chŏngjŏnūi Chŏngch'ihak - Kyogwasŏ Surok Siūi Sŏnt'aek kwa Paejerŭl Chungsimūro,” *Uri Munhak Yŏn'gu* 37 (2012): 222.

⁵¹⁰ Of course, political intervention into school textbooks is not new in Korea: ‘after liberation, Korean textbooks published by the US military government were born in a process of erupting ideologies [...]. The first Korean textbook after liberation, published by Karam, Yi Pyŏnggi, incorporated the sharp opposition between the left

Touched upon throughout, Korea's identity and culture has fought against significant adversity through various upheavals involving foreign powers particularly from the late nineteenth century onwards. These events still shape Korea's place in the world and how identity is constructed or emphasized on a national level and ultimately Korea's successes have ratified its struggle as being worthwhile in preserving its culture and identity. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "the formation of nationalistic 'traditions,' particularly those based on vernacular literature, has also been crucial in decolonialization, in movements of national liberation, in India, Korea, and elsewhere, which had to forge new national identities separate from that imposed by the colonizers. Canon formation, in short, has served as both a vehicle for control and for liberation."⁵¹¹

Nations that have faced similar challenges, where identity and culture have faced eradication, where the country has been torn apart by civil wars or has been fought over by other nations, tend to develop strong patriotic sentiment and unique nationally constructed identities highlighting their *differences* from others. As has been explored, literary figures and academics in South Korea throughout the twenty and twenty-first centuries have thus sought to establish a 'modern' *Korean* literature, and give shape to a definitive canon of ethno-national literature (민족문학 民族文學). This is for further study by future students of an ideologically divided nation in an attempt to strengthen notions of the self, nationhood and *Koreanness* (한국성 韓國性) once so vital for cultural survival throughout past eras of strife and hardship. Korea's literary history of the twentieth century has thus been greatly shaped by this pursuit of a specific Korean *minjoksŏng* (민족성 民族性) or ethno-national character,

[...] and this textbook later became the origin of the literary canon. However, with the establishment of a single government and the truce of the Korean War, a full-scale anti-communist domination system was established in South Korean society, and only the right wing began to compile Korean textbooks. In this process, the works of literary men who fled to North Korea in sympathy with the left also disappeared from textbooks.' Cf. Ibid., 225.

⁵¹¹ Haruo Shirane, "Canon Formation in Japan: Genre, Gender, Popular Culture, and Nationalism," 31.

and thus a modern Korean canon has sought to capture that essence.⁵¹² Academics and teachers highlight the importance of recording it, researching it and teaching it for posterity in the form of a defined modern literary canon that can be turned to, looked up to and revered. It is through this process of consolidation that the canon is a facilitator in fostering and shaping Korean identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁵¹³

In her work on tuning literary histories to world time, Wiebke Denecke stresses that that literary historiography emerged as a by-product of the nation-state in the nineteenth century in Europe and such developments have shaped the narrativisation process of national literatures globally in a way that may be described as flawed.⁵¹⁴ Nineteenth-century literary historiography's emphasis on the idea that "a nation is a monolingual, monoethnic community defined by a 'people' unified by a 'national language' and 'national spirit,' expressed in a 'national literature'" forces scholars working on literary history today to ponder questions as to whether we should now work towards writing new literary histories that better reflect a *global* experience or whether new literary histories can or indeed should "do more justice to premodern literary traditions" through denationalization.⁵¹⁵ Denationalisation through the bringing to light of shared heritages, traditions and narratives is an important task for future literary histories and canon reformers. As can be seen in the Korean context, the pursuit of a

⁵¹² "Modern poetry in various textbooks after liberation were used as a medium to practice the ruling ideology under the influence of nationalism." Cf. Ryu, "Chǒngjǒnūi Chǒngch'ihak, 240.

⁵¹³ In *Contingencies of Value*, Herrnstein Smith puts forth that the canonicity of a particular work is dependent on adherence to political allegiances to the dominant class: "since those with cultural power tend to be members of socially, economically, and politically established classes [...] the texts that survive will tend to be those that appear to reflect and reinforce establishment ideologies [...] they would not be found to please long and well if they were seen radically to undercut establishment interests, or effectively to subvert the ideologies that support them." Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988): 51 quoted in Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 19-20.

⁵¹⁴ Wiebke Denecke, "Tuning Literary Histories to World Time," in *Literary History in and Beyond China: Reading Text and World*, ed. Sarah M. Allen, Jack W. Chen and Xiaofei Tian (US: Harvard University Asia Center, 2023): 208.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

monolingual and monoethnic ‘national’ literature has contributed to significant issues of omissions and an incomplete literary canon.

Leading scholar of Korean literature, Kim Yŏng-min, has written about the issues that plague a modern Korean canon. In a general sense, Kim sees the modern literary canon as having been shaped more by forces of education than academic research. That is to say, it has more been about canonising literature for transmission. Kim highlights that the canonisation process of modern Korean literature has been problematic, pointing to the fact that *chŏnjip* (전집 全集) or collected works are vital to academic research on authors but they are plagued by problems, primarily omissions. As Kim further evinces, issues relating to *intentional* omission are especially egregious in regard to figures like Yi Kwang-su, with his 1962 *Collected Works* published by Samjungdang Press an ill reflection of his complete oeuvre. Kim also points to similar omissions affecting Kim Tong-ri, Yŏm Sang-sŏp and Sin Ch’ae-ho. He highlights the contentious Japanese colonial era and pro-Japanese activities as often having the most significant effect on omissions from collected works:

‘There is a very deep connection between the Japanese colonial era in which some modern Korean authors were active and the issue of omissions in their collective works. This is because the process of whether to include so-called ‘pro-Japanese works’ in their collections causes so many arguments. It can be said that the omission of pro-Japanese works is an intentional omission from the decision of the editor.’⁵¹⁶

With pro-Japanese activity one of the greatest sins a literary figure or artist may commit, those who deliberate over the canon face a conundrum. Does one include this author or this work into the canon because it may be considered by many to be an epoch-defining masterpiece on face value? Does one simply overlook it (or prioritise a lesser work or author) because of the

⁵¹⁶ Kim Yŏngmin, “Han’guk Kūndaemunhakkwa Wŏnjŏn Yŏn’guŭi Munjedŭl - Chŏngjŏn Chaegusŏng Nonŭiŭi Kich’o Chagŏp,” *Hyŏndae Sosŏl Yŏn’gu* 37 (2008): 13.

author's pro-Japanese activities or elements of pro-Japaneseness (subtextual or overt) that may have been interpreted from the literary work? Ultimately, pro-Japanese activity may be seen as the most significant betrayal to the twentieth-century nation-state and as is evident, it is hard for Korean editors and compliers of literary history to simply forgive or forget.

Additionally, Kim points to the problematic practice of *overediting* works of the twentieth century for canonisation. Kim exposes how Korean editors and publishing houses edit the spelling, structure, grammar and literary style of authors partly in an attempt to comply to the rules of a han'gŭl only modern canon. It is important to know how a literary work was originally written because its use of sinographs, grammar and stylistic choices communicates to readers and scholars essential information about a text, its milieu and moment. On the part of the editor, misinterpretations also often occur and when editing the work into contemporary standard Korean, meanings can, and indeed have, been changed. Although some changes may be inconsequential, some of these mistakes (as others have also noted) can be egregious and highly problematic.⁵¹⁷

Finally, and of relevance to twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry in particular, Kim Yŏng-min also mentions the issue of *anonymity* in Korean literature. A significant body of early twentieth century literary publications in print media outlets have an alias, or do not feature an identifiable name as to who penned the literary work.⁵¹⁸ In her recent work on the birth of the modern novel, Jooyeon Rhee writes that especially up until the beginnings of the colonial era, the majority of writers, “were not professional novelists in today’s understanding of the term; they were thinkers, journalists, educators and reformers who did not necessarily view fiction writing as a literary endeavor but rather a political act.”⁵¹⁹ In this regard, writing as a *writer* (i.e. a calling or profession) had yet to be realised and thus adding one’s name to

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 19-22.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. *The Novel in Transition*, 4.

a work and creating a body of writing for a career was not of particular importance. Demonstrated throughout, this is a significant issue regarding Sino-Korean poetic works of the twentieth century and we can draw similar conclusions. Without a definitive person or literary figure to turn to for biographical information or greater understanding as to the possible motivations that underpin the work, said novel, poem or play can easily *fall out* of the canon due to having no ‘face’ to the text. Additionally, there is the possibility for texts to be incorrectly attributed to figures who did not in fact write them.

The criticism of canon in contemporary Korean scholarship continues. In *Censorship and the Canon*, Kang Yǒng-mi points to the interesting phenomenon of the way that both North and South Korea canonise poets and poetic works that were published from the beginnings of the colonial era through to liberation. Though the works and authors are the same, the canons are different due to the ideological differences of each respective dominant class. Some figures are ignored, others are celebrated by one and ignored by another and sometimes a particular work is celebrated in both places but for entirely different reasons. In the South, the phenomenon of suppression due to differences in ideology of author or with that of the dominant class gave way to “a literary system that focused on pure lyric poetry while excluding and pressuring the poets of KAFP.” On the other hand, the process of canonization of poetry in the North points to a differing phenomenon that rejects “modernism and bourgeoisie lyric poetry and instead forms a canon on poetry that focused on life and reality.” As Kang further concludes:

‘In this way we see that after division, the literary worlds of North and South Korea have each created concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘minjok’ and ‘lyric’ that mutually differ through a process of canonisation of mutual poetic assets via different methods and contexts. It is clear that [in a Korean context] that which we call canon formation is obviously the product of power and ideology.’⁵²⁰

⁵²⁰ Kang Yǒng-mi, “Chǒngjǒn'gwa Kǒmyǒl 1,” 163-4.

As of yet, the canonisation of Sino-Korean literary works that were written in the twentieth century remains an unexplored area of academic enquiry in the realms of modern Korean canon debates. In his work on Bourdieu and literature, Speller says that if “we can pause to assess what Bourdieu brings to literary history, which has for a long time stressed the evolutionary character of literary production, Bourdieu himself claims that there has been a veritable ‘amnesia’ of literature and art’s historical genesis, requiring a sociological work of ‘anamnesis’ to bring these historical conditions back into awareness.”⁵²¹ Although significant shifts have brought Sino-Korean literature in its broadest sense (referring to Sino-Korean literature as an element of so-called *classical* or *premodern* literature) back into the cultural and academic orbit of contemporary South Korea, the transitional nature of Sino-Korean literary production of the *twentieth century* evidently remains a difficult topic. The amnesia that Speller touches upon ultimately corroborates what has been explored throughout this thesis: the presence of Sino-Korean poetry as a genre of choice among a variety of styles present in the twentieth century literary landscape.

Yet it is bound to face liminality and negation by the cultural nationalism that forms so-called ‘modern’ canons and literary historiography, not just in Korea, but throughout East Asia. But as has been highlighted in discussions by Tuck, Fraleigh and Shirane working on Japan, Hockx, Owen and Widmer working on China and Cho Tong-il, de Fremery and Yi Hŭi-mok working on Korea, the birth of a new collective body of scholarship on East Asian literary movements from the late nineteenth to twentieth centuries is beginning to challenge existing approaches for the better. Scholars such as Denecke push even further for a far more global approach. As she mentions, “transnationally collaborative literary histories in regions with fraught histories [...] can have tremendous effect on collective identity formation and society

⁵²¹ John Speller, *Bourdieu and Literature* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2011): 84.

as a whole, especially if they serve as reading materials and reference works in school and college education.”⁵²² Especially in the case of East Asia, such a push can destabilize what she refers to as the prevailing “ideology of *vernacular triumphalism*” that shapes literary historiography, particularly in East Asia.⁵²³ Thus, and as Cho Tong-il also professed, “a new literary history is needed” with the canon a principle target for reformation. This was the drive behind his writing of the multi-volume *Han’guk Munhak T’ongsa*. “The distinction between major and minor works must be abolished [...] the scope of literature is broadened extensively and replaced by new conceptions of the text or of literacy. The conception of canon loses meaning and is disappearing.”⁵²⁴

4. Room for Change? Arguing a Case for the Incorporation of Twentieth Century Sino-Korean Poetry into the ‘Modern’ Korean Canon

It may be natural for one to conclude that Sino-Korean poetry written in the twentieth century would hold a place of liminality outside (or on the fringes of) the so-called ‘modern’ canon due to the complicated trajectory of nationalist Korean history. Nevertheless, one of the aims

⁵²² Denecke, “Tuning Literary Histories to World Time,” 215. Denecke expands on this point further, highlighting the way that recent Harvard University Press literary histories of France, Germany and China “sidestep the dominant master narratives focused on periodization and great authors, works, and genres. They entice the reader with surprising anecdotes and micro-facts that pinpoint moments of cultural change in snap-shot fashion; they include figures and phenomena of larger and lesser canonical status (rather than focusing on genres).” Ibid., 216. For some recent translational scholarship in Japanese that also looks comparatively at the development of East Asian Literature, while exploring similar approaches to denationalizing literary historiography, also Cf. Kōno Kimiko, Wiebke Denecke, Shinkawa Tokio, Jinno Hidenori (eds.), *Nihon “bun”gakushi vol. 3: “Bun” kara “Bungaku” e: Higashi Ajia no Bungaku o Minaosu* (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2019).

⁵²³ Denecke, Ibid., 209. Italics my own.

⁵²⁴ “A new view of literary history is needed. I wrote my *A Comprehensive History of Korean Literature* [...] to carry out such a demand. The distinction between major and minor works must be abolished [...] the scope of literature is broadened extensively and replaced by new conceptions of the text or of literacy. The conception of canon loses meaning and is disappearing.” Cho, *Interrelated Issues*, 21-2. Cho’s *Interrelated Issues* volume in English is one of three works by him that looks at East Asian literature in a comparative context worthy of note. For similar publications by Cho Tong-il in both Korean and Japanese, Cf. *Tongasia Munhaksa Pigyoron* (Seoul: Sōul Taehakkyo Ch’ulp’anbu, 1993) and *Higashi Ajia bungakushi hikakuron* (Japan: Hakuteisha, 2010).

of this thesis has been to bring to light twentieth-century Sino-Korean poetry of the early print media age and how this genre of poetry has become an unnecessary casualty of said historical trajectory.

As has been explored, Sino-Korean poetry transitioned into a poetic genre of new relevance during these times and a bold, if not unorthodox, choice for young intellectuals. This new relevance mirrors similar transitions as seen in Japan, particularly from the Meiji era onwards. A highly transitional period of sociocultural change, excitement, uncertainty, fear and also technological development, we come to see Sino-Korean poetry *meet* these challenges as a genre presenting ‘new’ possibilities in an ‘old’ format. In their attempts to write *new* poetry out of an age-old tradition, new-intellectual poets helped transform the genre into one of possible twentieth-century relevance and application. In this transformation process, the *Sino* of Sino-Korean poetry is merely a link to *Sinographs*, rather than being deeply and passionately evocative of a Sinitic past of suzerainty and toadyism.

As seen through a Bourdieusian lens, although the negation of Sino-Korean literary genres was indeed the natural outcome for the times, now in the present as we have come to see the reappraisal of Sino-Korean literary works of dynastic times, so too must publications of Sino-Korean literary works of the twentieth century, as their *own* genre, find their feet. Despite this, the genre has not been able to do so within the hierarchy of poetic genres of the twentieth century. The genre has not been canonised as a twentieth-century poetic genre due its connection to past Sinitic cultural influences, which is ultimately completely out of favour with the nationalist, patriotic historical narrative of Korea. But how might we go about opening the canon to the possibility of ‘modern’ *Korean* poetry that happens to be penned in *literary Chinese*?

As has been touched upon, issues that surround ‘opening the canon’ in Korea are difficult and sometimes cause emotive responses. The legacy of Japanese collaboration has

mired the life and work of some of the most prolific writers of early twentieth-century Korea, affecting how they are understood, read and taught in classrooms even today. The issue of division is still of great relevance to literary studies, leaving the question unanswered as to whether reading literary works by North Koreans or writers who went North could be of any benefit or relevance to South Koreans. If it was written by a Korean and it is an exemplary work, could or should it not find its way into the canon through discussion and teaching?

Additionally, should important works of the Korean diaspora, such as the writings of Zainichi author Lee Yang-ji (이양지 李良枝 イ・ヤンジ 1955–1992), *Koryōin* writer Mikhail Park (미하일 박 Михаил Пак 1945–) and Korean-American author Younghill Kang (강용힐 姜龍訖 1898–1972), all of which are valued contributors to the literary landscapes of their respective countries, be also included in the Korean canon today? Can the formation of a more open and representative canon of Korean writing see these writers as Korean? As stated above, regarding disputes as to how the ‘Western’ canon should be opened, the argument to these Korean questions also remains open-ended and are beyond the scope of this thesis but nevertheless raise thought-provoking questions.

Regarding the matter of reforming the canon to find a space for Sino-Korean poetry, one of the glaring issues surrounding this genre is the fact that few Koreans are aware of its existence. Although the cultural shifts from the Chosŏn era through to the twentieth century are well documented in scholarship and are also well-known among the general population, the general linguistic-historical narrative is arguably somewhat simplified to the extent that it were as if literary Sinitic swiftly dropped out of use from 1900 and out of the cultural consciousness of the public. Thus, there needs to be a moment to readdress gaps in general knowledge and misunderstanding that surrounds literary Sinitic in Korea at the turn of the

century. We need to step away from the cultural nationalist approach that has long pitted han'gŭl against hanmun and instead look at this transition with new eyes.

This could be facilitated through high school textbooks and university syllabi that explore poetry.⁵²⁵ As mentioned, various elements of canon formation in the twentieth century have been a struggle and continue to be so, but for the future syllabi of universities and high school textbooks as well as general readers on Korean poetry, the inclusion and discussion of Sino-Korean poetry written beyond the end of the nineteenth century can now only be seen as an additional positive contribution to literary history. As figures like Kermode, Kolbas, Damrosch (and Bourdieu himself) point out, the university or school teaching syllabus or reading list is a vital tool for *familiarisation*.

In Kolbas's exploration of Bourdieu and literature as a product of the social world, he points out that "the reproduction and prestige of canonical works depends on a process of cultural familiarization that in turn depends on social confirmation and broad institutionalization" and "continual social confirmation over time is necessary for any work to be canonized."⁵²⁶ In Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, he argues that:

"The consecrated authors dominating the field of production tend also to make gradual inroads into the market, becoming more and more readable and acceptable the more everyday they seem as a result of more or less lengthy process of familiarization, whether or not associated with a specific apprenticeship."⁵²⁷

⁵²⁵ As Du Ping mentioned, "critical reviews, book reviews, annotations, quotations and introductions all are important vanes in the literary world for canonical familiarization. Some empirical studies show that 'literary institutions and in particular the institution of criticism are of major importance' in canon formation. "Cf. "Canon Formation in Literary Field," 62-3.

⁵²⁶ Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*, 60.

⁵²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996): 159.

Through this inclusion, namely, beginning the process of reproduction, and cultural familiarisation through the education system, this thesis puts forth the argument that more and more will come to see the relevance and new thematic possibilities of the genre and thus come to look upon Korea's literary history in the twentieth century in a new light – one of significant diversity, flexibility and artistry with roots that run deep into a past literary history but flowers anew in the light of the twentieth century.⁵²⁸

Rather than starting discussions on modern poetry with Ch'oe Nam-sŏn's *From the Sea to the Boy*, I propose that the introductory syllabus start *earlier*, instead exploring poetry genre hierarchies of the enlightenment era during the late nineteenth century and thus also include Sino-Korean poetry *within* that discussion. In introducing a number of late nineteenth as well as twentieth century Sino-Korean poems from the print media sphere into textbooks, students can come into contact with an 'old' genre in a 'new' way. This will strengthen understanding on Korea's literary historical *continuity* rather than discontinuity within the school and more importantly the university system.⁵²⁹ In this, greater discussion on how these poems interacted intimately with the culture, politics and historical realities of the twentieth century can take place.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸ This helps to break down the dichotomy of new/old, classical/modern, Korean/Chinese that continues to cause issues in literary studies. Works such as Tuck and Fraleigh in English and well numerous Japanese publications by Mareshi Saito demonstrate how detailed scholarship that challenges existing literary-historical narratives that too often simplify the nineteenth/twentieth century divide can have a positive impact. For Saito specifically, Cf. *Kanbunmyaku: The Literary Sinitic Context and the Birth of Modern Japanese Language and Literature* (Germany: Brill, 2021).

⁵²⁹ As Guillory points out, the university in particular is a "locus of real power (for the distribution of cultural capital), and therefore a good place for political praxis to define its object. Such an object should not be the imaginary alone, the canon as image, even if such a praxis must sometimes act upon the image or mobilize the potent force of the imaginary. The imaginary has real and sometimes beneficial social effects, but these effects are always mediated by the institutional form within which they are expressed." Cf. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, 37.

⁵³⁰ As Damrosch argues, "as readers, we should resist it; as scholars we should turn it to our advantage. We now have the resources available, in anthologies and in individual volumes, to read more widely ourselves and to present a wider range of materials to our students. [...] we don't always and everywhere have to come back to the same few figures. In particular, we should take more care than we usually do to coordinate syllabi." Cf. David Damrosch, "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006): 50-51.

Understanding literary Sinitic poetry requires study, however, as is already evident, other genres written in old styles of literary language inaccessible to Koreans today without study, such as *kodae kayo*, *hyangga* and indeed well-known Sino-Korean poetic works, have found their way into public consciousness through their long-established presence in textbooks and university syllabi thanks to translations and glosses for accessibility. Currently, very few Sino-Korean poetic works of *the twentieth century* have ever been translated into Korean. This is something in need of attention by scholars going forward.

As Kolbas points out, one method through which higher education has worked towards the opening of the canon is through situating existing “canonical works in their historical contexts, often by studying them in tandem with other, comparatively neglected contemporary works.”⁵³¹ Pierce-Baker also urges for what she calls “a new narrative quilting of voices” in the teaching of literature, so as to “validate and valorize understudied authors and literatures simultaneously with traditional ones that we all know.” She also encourages historical “ensemble” analyses and believes that pairing books from within and without the canon is more fruitful than studying existing and unquestioned canonical works in isolation.⁵³²

Although I accept that anonymity may be a stumbling block to canonisation, I also disagree somewhat with the need to prioritize biography in one’s analysis. Although it may matter in terms of anthologisation, as is ascertainable in the previous poetry chapters, we are still able to explore the works without biographical information from a historical, socio-cultural standpoint, allowing their voices to appear in the “ensemble” of literary history with this genre “quilted” into the fabric of so-called ‘modern’ Korean literature. We know such a process is not out of the realms of possibility purely on the basis of anonymity. As we see in

⁵³¹ Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*, 40.

⁵³² Charlotte Pierce-Baker, “A Quilting of Voices: Diversifying the Curriculum/Canon in the Traditional Humanities,” *College Literature: The Politics of Teaching Literature*, no. 17.2/3 (June/October 1990): 154, quoted in Kolbas, *ibid.*, 40.

the case with many old Korean songs and poetry, the earliest of which do not have authors, they have been canonised, enjoyed and respected without significant issue. This thesis ultimately concludes with the hope that we can move beyond some of these key issues in canonisation and come to explore the genre of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century in a new light, with the ultimate aim of enriching modern poetic history for future generations.

10. Conclusion:

The initial idea for this thesis topic was born from the sense of disconnection that I felt between what I was experiencing in the classroom as a student of literature in South Korea with what I was seeing in the archive in my early steps as a researcher during my master's degree. More specifically, as a student, Korea's transition from dynastic times to the twentieth century and the country's literary-historical shift from the so-called *premodern* or *classical* to the *modern* was (more often than not) superficially abridged. Said abridgement often overemphasised literary Sinitic's relevance to the *past*. It also seemingly centred the study of twentieth-century literary history entirely on vernacular literary production in han'gŭl.

I found myself often wanting to know more about literary production in han'gŭl in its earliest form. I also wanted to understand more on the specifics of hanmun's end as a vehicle for creative expression. How did this 'end' occur? What was Korea's 'last' novel written in literary Sinitic? Was it written in brush and ink, serialised in a newspaper or published as a book? As a student, my studies had mainly focused on early twentieth-century poetry, but a passion for literary Sinitic was also strongly supported and encouraged. As an advocate for the importance of understanding Sinographs in the study of the Korean language, for my doctoral research I sought a topic that could ultimately marry my knowledge of early twentieth-century literary history with my interest in Sinographs and literary Sinitic. As I transitioned from the classroom, exams and essays to archives, libraries and primary source materials for research, I began to see that literary Sinitic was still alive across the pages of print media in a way that surprised me. As a student of Korean poetry, what intrigued me more was the sheer volume of Sino-Korean poems that appeared; slowly, I began to pick apart these works and within, I found clues to a genre that was as relevant and salient as ever to writers of the early twentieth century, with literary Sinitic not the relic of the past that

textbooks so often seem to suggest. This took me on a journey that would eventually lead me to Bourdieu, whose scholarship would provide a framework that could properly explain my feelings of this period of history and indeed help to strengthen some of my hypotheses for contemporary literary studies.

In chapters two through four, this work has contributed to scholarship through an application of Bourdieu to the Korean literary field. While Hockx, Shirane and others have discussed Bourdieu in parallel with the literary histories of China and Japan, an exploration of similar topics, or more specifically in regard to the narrativization of literary history and explorations of transitional epochs regarding Korea, proved difficult to find. Even more specifically, an application of Bourdieu to the sociocultural shifts of the latter years of the enlightenment (1880s-1910) has provided new understanding of the process in which a national literature was narrativized.

When the habitus of the aging, Neo-Confucian elite of dynastic Chosŏn or *kujisigin* “old-intellectuals” met with the vicissitudes of the so-called enlightenment age, they would experience an acute sense of what Bourdieu calls *hysteresis*. Namely, they would experience a feeling of alienation and discordance with society at large. That which was once held up as the highest example of cultural capital in their time – the literary practices of the Sinitic world (as well as principles governing marriage, gender roles, diplomacy and warfare among others) – would no longer be of the same value, or indeed make as much sense, in a rapidly changing world of new rules, foreign ideas and avant-garde tastes. This cultural shift was galvanised by a forward-thinking and vocal new group, the *sinjisigin* or “new-intellectual” class, who moved in and claimed dominance over the fields of art, literature and education. As a result, the culture, tastes and inclinations of these fields (once wholly shaped by the ideas, tastes and dispositions of a Sinitic elite that looked inward) would find themselves following the compass of the enlightenment age. In particular, a new, highly valued form of cultural capital,

the Korean vernacular (as well as new literary trends communicated through vernacular language) would come to be coveted and favoured in lieu of restrictive Sinitic ideas on language, literary production and access to education.

These chapters broadly investigated a significant period of Korean history from the latter Chosŏn period, through to the post-colonial and pre-war era of the late 1940s through close readings of a wide variety of print media as well as later literary histories. An application of Bourdieu to the sociocultural shifts of the latter years of the enlightenment era has provided new understanding of the process in which a national literature and a patriotic elevation of the vernacular was narrativized, while also further emphasising the lasting legacies of this fraught process.

In applying Bourdieu's ideas to this transitional era, we see that the habitus of the Chosŏn era's ruling cultural and intellectual class was one comprised entirely of what may be called Sinitic tastes and practices. The ability to read and enjoy poetry in literary Sinitic was the highest of intellectual achievements. With the vicissitudes of the enlightenment age, however, this would be greatly challenged. Like the opening of Pandora's Box, the enlightenment age brought about 'Westernisation' – international exchange, technological developments, new political and economic ideas and new approaches to language, literature and education – all of which were at odds with the ways of dynastic Chosŏn. Said vicissitudes gave way to the Kabo Reforms, which energised a new class of intellectual that prescribed to the tenets of the enlightenment age and this old order, along with their tastes, values and dispositions, would be challenged. What is especially evident is that which may be described as the highest example of cultural capital, literacy in literary Sinitic, would come to be greatly negated.

While Bourdieu is often criticised for his overemphasis on the immutability of the power structures that hold elite culture and tastes in a place of dominance, this research draws

upon and contributes to scholarship that expands on his ideas by pointing to moments where these structures fracture and how elements of ‘change’ have been overlooked in interpretations of Bourdieu’s ideas. This thesis sees the arrival of the West in the late nineteenth century as a significant example of fracture or ‘crisis.’ The new-intellectual class moved into and claimed dominance over the space of the elite. As a result, the culture, tastes and inclinations of the field would become aligned with a new cultural capital and strengthened by the tides of *munmyōng kaehwa* or “civilisation and enlightenment.” As evinced, Sino-Korean literary practices faced vilification in print media from the late nineteenth century and by the early twentieth century the negation of once such highly esteemed capital would become the fashion and characterise a new time. In an era of imperial tides, colonial expansion and later ideological warfare, the celebration of the ‘native’ and the ‘indigenous’ of Korea functioned as a means of self-strengthening and cultural preservation.

In such an environment, then, the ‘death’ of literary Sinitic is understandable. A convoluted, archaic tradition that serves little purpose to the culture and society of twentieth-century Korea: a new, patriotic nation-state with its own alphabet, literary genres and a new perspective on global interactions. But as this thesis moves into chapters five to eight, we are faced with the curious anomaly of Sino-Korean poetry as a genre that, despite all that has been covered in earlier chapters, continued to maintain popularity *despite* the negation of literary Sinitic as once valued cultural capital of the past. In these chapters, through a close reading of a wide variety of Sino-Korean poetry, primarily from the years 1900 to 1910, we come to understand the genre as it met with the needs of the twentieth century and the demands of a new prevailing intellectual class in a way that has received little attention by scholars of Korean literature.

While the pages of the press were full of articles attacking literary Sinitic, paradoxically, these poems also shared this contentious space, and as explored, aligned their

themes, symbols and ideas with the climate of the times. Despite being written in the medium of literary Sinitic, the aforementioned poetic works proved their worth and value to a new age and new intellectual class. Despite criticism, we see in these chapters how Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century differed from the cast-iron criticisms of the twentieth-century scholar – it was not quite so backward nor quite so irrelevant to the Korean people as was often described. This language, born from a ‘Chinese’ past, could indeed be used to render the thoughts, feelings and ideas of the twentieth-century intellectual Korean as equally well as newer poetic works in the vernacular.

But what of chapters five through eight? How do these chapters marry up with the previous chapters two through four? If (as seen through a theoretical framework applying Bourdieu) literary Sinitic would become negative cultural capital at odds with the enlightenment age, while the vernacular would become mythologized as the gift from King Sejong that allowed Koreans autonomy, progress, patriotic identity and the ability to truly and wholeheartedly express themselves, why does the continued presence of Sino-Korean poetry and its evident popularity into the twentieth century not disaffirm this Bourdieusian approach of so-called inescapable determinism? Why would individuals still continue to write in a style that would only provide negative cultural capital, making you appear retrograde to your contemporaries?

What is evident is that the narrative of history is rarely as straightforward as is often communicated. Writing primarily through pseudonyms, many twentieth-century intellectuals of a new reader class would maintain a fascinating connection to a ‘past’ tradition. Literary Sinitic (despite the heavy criticisms) could always give way to beautiful, evocative poetry for deep contemplation. The continued presence of the genre speaks volumes: from suit wearing, science studying Koreans at Tokyo universities, to aging Confucians of literati stock teaching the Analects in the provinces, the hidden depths of the genre and the challenges of its

composition remained alluring. With a mere handful of Sinographs, a poet could paint a vivid picture for contemplation and discussion or deliver a biting critique subtextually hidden. In their brevity, said works could be conveniently slipped into narrow poetry sections (사조란 詞藻欄) of print media, requiring little space or ink for printing.

Reflecting on Meiji Japanese writers composing poetry in literary Sinitic, Fraleigh adds that to progressive figures of an era of great transition, the genre was a “vital means of self-expression. Beyond simple lexical diversion or intellectual challenge, it provided them with opportunities for literary artistry, intensive self-scrutiny, rich forms of social interaction, engagement in political critiques to which other poetic forms were unsuited, and a host of other purposes.” Moreover, poetry composition in literary Sinitic was one of the most vital components of education that united generations and transcended borders: “exchanging Sinitic poems with their peers offered opportunities for dialogue, but even in their own compositions they took part in multifarious forms of interaction with figures from the literary past (and present). The act of writing Sinitic poetry was a means by which they could insinuate themselves into a common textual tradition: a tradition that in many ways structured their worlds.”⁵³³

It is natural to draw similar conclusions regarding Korea’s relationship to Sinitic poetry during the enlightenment era and beyond. Despite the rush towards a new horizon, the genre still provided intellectuals with a means of flexing their creative muscle at a time when creation and education was so heavily emphasized. In this, there is some hypocrisy at play – the new-intellectual class thrived off of the new cultural capital of the twentieth century and while their new power status allowed for the disparagement of the older Chosŏn Neo-Confucian class, try

⁵³³ Fraleigh, *Plucking Chrysanthemums*, 11-12.

as they might, they still had a vague respect for the ‘Chinese’ language that they challenged in print media culture.

It is true, social and cultural exchange beyond Korea’s borders, which began in the mid to late nineteenth century and continued on throughout colonial times, delivered a fatal blow to once venerated practices, ideas and tastes of Chosŏn. Sino-Korean prose never recovered its status as valued cultural capital in Korea again. Nevertheless, through further assessment of the same newspapers, journals and magazines that were so influential to Korea’s journey to patriotic enlightenment and cultural nationalist academism, Sino-Korean poetry was still an *overwhelmingly* popular genre. It stands out as a significant anomaly, especially when reflecting on aforementioned articles and literary publications of the past, that stressed a narrative that exacerbated the negation of Sino-Korean literary practices.

This anomaly is highly significant, as those engaging with new print media technology (and the textual spaces it produced) were not an aging elite, desperately clinging on to a ‘Chinese’ genre. Instead these poems were often written by young, progressive ‘new’ intellectuals growing up in an era that saw this genre as supposedly belonging to the past. Writers of Sino-Korean poetry of the twentieth century were often young, travelled and educated in Western learning and languages, but for whatever reason, they still enjoyed *hansi* and engaged significantly in Sino-Korean poetic production despite the cultural climate of the times.

In this we may reflect on Fraleigh’s conclusions: Sinitic language was a long-established, rich language of self-expression that could still serve a purpose for the so-called new-intellectual man, without necessarily being used a tool to maintain a feudal system or celebrate Korea’s past relationship to China. For Korean students abroad, literary Sinitic could have also potentially been seen as an artistic form of *shared heritage* and interest that united

rather than divided.⁵³⁴ Beyond, literacy Sinitic in the most general sense, was of great importance to intellectuals of the twentieth century simply as a tool for enhancing literacy and literary creativity for the greater good. As Cho Tong-il stresses in his attempts to reenvision the history of Korean literature, “each nation’s literature has to be understood as part of a civilization” but as we write the history of Korean literature, we must take care in characterizing “the giver [as] superior and the receiver [as] inferior [...] the dynamics of the cultural hegemony were not so simple,” particularly in regard to the transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries across the Sinographic sphere.⁵³⁵ Despite a cultural shift toward the ‘native’ in the pursuit of a ‘new’ literature, the peoples of the Sinitic cultural sphere still ultimately benefitted:

“Is it wrong that hanmun was used [...] for over a thousand years? No. Thanks to the acceptance of hanmun as a *shared written language* (공동문어), [many] participated in establishing an East Asian civilization which [also] fostered a high standard of ethno-national culture (민족문화). It is unreasonable to imagine that the history of Korea would have developed any more brilliantly had it not have been for the acceptance of hanmun. [...] Even if you look only within the scope of East Asia, the peoples who did not participate in the shared language civilization (공동문어문명권) suffered misfortune because they lacked the ability to build and defend their nation.⁵³⁶

In this, Cho Tong-il makes a comment on the foundations that Sinitic culture provided twentieth-century Korean intellectuals; a foundation that also guaranteed the success of the

⁵³⁴ As Jooyeon Rhee adds, “the development of Korean literature during the *Aeguk Kyemong* period occurred in a transnational context in which print capitalism contributed to the enhancement of the intellectual exchange between Korea and Euro American Chinese and Japanese texts.” Cf. *The Novel in Transition*, n.p. The giver and receiver relationship being described here by Cho Tong-il is colonial and imperial in character. In the *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Literature*, Denecke and Nguyen also touch on this in a similar regard, highlighting that “the modernist mythology of national literature is not just untrue to the history of each individual tradition and of East Asia as a whole, it also fosters further divisiveness in a region which in the current media is largely defined negatively through the lingering painful memories of war and Japan’s imperialist expansion, colonial exploitation, and more recently economic and military competition.” Cf. Wiebke Denecke (with contributions by Nam Nguyen), “Shared Literary Heritage in the East Asian Sinographic Sphere,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature 1000 BC - 900 CE*. 510-532, ed. Wiebke Denecke, Wai-Yee Li and Xiaofei Tian (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 511.

⁵³⁵ Cho, *Interrelated issues in Korean, East Asian and World Literature*, 87.

⁵³⁶ Cho, *Han’guk Munhak T’ongsa vol. 4*, 243.

ethno-nation. The shared linguistic and literary heritage of China, Korea, Vietnam and Japan is thus described as an asset that provided defense and blew life into future opportunity.

It is important here to make a final comment on Sino-Korean poetry as a twentieth century genre. As has been touched upon, the rise and fall of literary Sinitic is a well-established and researched aspect of Korean history and culture. From the 1980s, Sino-Korean literature or *hanmunhak* came to be accepted by the scholarly community as being *Korean* enough for study, posterity and teaching as ‘Korean’ literature and not ‘Chinese’ literature. Sino-Korean poetry of the *twentieth century*, however, is not the same as so-called *premodern* Sino-Korean literature, which is part of so-called ‘classical’ Korean literature or *kojŏn munhak*. While one could be reassessed and welcomed again, the other needs more time, as the continued presence of a Sinitic or ‘Chinese’ literary genre forces a reassessment of the *character* of a so-called *modern* Korean literature.

To reiterate, the literary history of what is called modern Korean literature (*hyŏndae munhak*) can be characterized as the pursuit of a pure, indigenous, patriotic and even nationalist literature by South Korean scholars throughout the twentieth century. It is a history of literature that is written *in* Korean, surviving the dark era of Japanese colonial repression; it is a history of literature that survived the Cold War’s tearing apart of the peninsula itself; it is a literature that is anti-communist, a literature that is anti-Japanese and a proudly *new* literature – one that has no lasting connection to a Sinitic past. As Holly Stephens highlights, however, “shifting the emphasis on what counts as modern in Korean history can thus be a powerful tool in writing overlooked voices into the historical record.”⁵³⁷ Although Stephens is not referring to Sino-Korean poetry specifically, the arrival of this liminal genre, long overlooked by the scholar of modern poetic history, back into contemporary literary discourse on a public scale, means that

⁵³⁷ Stephens, “Three Reforming Regimes?,” 119.

this aforementioned narrative of *what* is ‘modern’ Korean literature (its character, its message and its origins) has no choice but to be questioned and reinterpreted. This is similar to the types of comments made by Cho Tong-il and Wiebke Denecke who call for great scrutiny of existing narration of how literary history (both national and international) is historicized and interpreted, both now and in the future. Both, in their own ways, also call for “the building of a shared regional identity” through bringing “the memory of biliteracy” back into public consciousness across East Asia.⁵³⁸

This brings the thesis to the final chapter focusing on canon formation and literary studies in the South Korean education system. In this final chapter, I outline the canon debate, with an emphasis on how an understandable patriotism and cultural nationalism shaped the twentieth-century canon as we know it today – with a variety of exclusions beginning to be questioned by scholars, from North Korean literature, to Koreans who wrote works in Japanese to works of the Korean diaspora. This work on Sino-Korean poetry aligns itself with said recent scholarship. Through an exploration of the canon debate as it currently stands, this thesis concludes on the perspective that the ‘story’ of Korean literature of the twentieth century is far richer than the university syllabus often demonstrates. In future, through greater integration of said works into teaching at the university level and the breaking down of the pre/modern dichotomy, a reassessment of the canon can and should take place.

I conclude this thesis acknowledging its limitations. Although the archive may provide us with ample Sino-Korean poetry to explore, the genre so revered in the past and so scorned into the present can be exceedingly difficult for interpretation. The translation of the works featured in this thesis were both a joy and an everlasting difficulty, of which took up far more time than I had previously ever imagined. In future, I hope this work can function as a

⁵³⁸ Denecke, “Shared Literary Heritage in the East Asian Sinographic Sphere,” 511.

foundation for both myself as well as other scholars, to continue working away at this at times seemingly impenetrable literary genre, unlocking the mysteries hidden within.

Furthermore, it would be amiss to not touch upon the Corona Virus pandemic that began in 2020 as I entered the third year of my PhD program. The pandemic proved to be a double-edged sword for many a scholar – on one hand, the quiet of one's days in isolation allowed for more time to read, write, translate and indeed think. On the other, however, the uncertainty of the times, the precariousness of finances, health and the well-being of family and friends was a taxing burden on the mind. Additionally, closures of universities and libraries, the difficulty in travelling to and from South Korea and the cancellation of conferences to share findings has undeniably limited my scope and complicated my journey significantly. All weaknesses in this thesis are my own, however. No matter how insignificant, I hope this work can help to bridge the gap that continues to exist between the two dichotomies of modern and classical Korean literature for future scholars.

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