

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**CREATION AND RE-CREATION:
MODERN KOREAN FICTION
AND ITS TRANSLATION**

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Edited by

Young-Key Kim-Renaud and R. Richard Grinker



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CREATION AND RE-CREATION: MODERN KOREAN FICTION AND ITS TRANSLATION

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Preface

This volume, *Creation and Re-Creation: Modern Korean Fiction and Its Translation*, contains papers and commentaries presented during the 6th Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities, held at The George Washington University, on the 30th of October, 1999.¹

Translation is a risky enterprise, as Alf Hillebrandt tells us in his contribution to this volume. The most powerful texts are often the most ambiguous — and the most open to interpretation—and therefore risk being shaped in the translator's image. Postmodern theorists now hold the view that there is no unmediated authenticity. Every act of translation is an act of interpretation and representation, a complex process of creation and re-creation. The essays contained in this collection encourage dialogue and debate about that process. Each writer reflects on the central challenge of translation: How are we to comprehend the meaning of a given text in translation without mapping that text onto our own categories of understanding and possibly modifying the original writer's creation?

¹ The Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities Series at GW provides a forum for academic discussion of Korean arts, history, language, literature, thought and religious systems in the context of East Asia and the world. The Colloquium series is made possible by an endowment established by the estate of Hahn Moo-Sook, one of Korea's most honored writers, in order to uphold her spirit of openness, curiosity, and education.

In his discussion of creative process, the author Ch'oe In-ho explores the theme of encounter and discovery in literature. He compares literature to a voyage in search of new continents. The analogy is even more apt than he probably realized, for in English continent implies something that holds or retains. Translation makes seemingly inaccessible borders permeable. Ch'oe shows that an author is not unlike a good translator. When a writer "names" something he or she has encountered and discovered, what was previously unknown and ignored achieves both its existence and meaning. Translation is certainly akin to a voyage into a new continent.

There is an additional and critical element, described eloquently by Pak Wan-sō: the unleashing of the imagination. She describes the problems she faced while writing the biography of the artist Pak Su-gūn, which she considers an act of translating a life. The old saying—fiction should read like non-fiction, and biography should read like fiction—held up for her. Only when she could let her imagination run free was she able to translate Pak's life into text. Through this act of translation, Pak attempted to dissolve the remoteness between her own life and another, between her subject's distinct historical reality and her own experiences. Writing, for Pak, became a creative act that resembled myth making, dreaming (even disregarding or distorting facts) and other forms of narration. A

creative moment in that act of translation is reached, as the author or translator begins to liberate the self from the illusion of a pure or authentic reality, and ironically a reality emerges, one that articulates real experience in ways previously not thought possible.

At the starting point, Bruce Fulton reminds us that the choice of which works to translate may be just as difficult as the act of translation. This critical initial step is in itself a discovery procedure. Fulton describes the labor of translation as a four-part process of retelling, recreation, reenactment, and joint enterprise. And then, a successful work of translation is not merely a version that is true to the authors' intentions, but as Yu Young-nan argues, it also must be readable. A readable text is one that in some way resonates with the experiences of the new audience of the translated work.

Yu Young-nan talks about her experience as a translator who is not a native speaker of the target language. She confesses her sense of insecurity and her worries about what she considers as a huge handicap, as she faces the act of translation. How can a non-native-speaker translator overcome such a handicap? Yu points out that non-native speakers feel compelled to consult with as many critics and potential readers as possible. They feel obligated to be open to every criticism and suggestion of native speakers of the target language during the editing process as they endeavor to refine their translation. Paradoxically, the handicap can thus be turned into an advantage. Yu believes that intuition and a "sense of language" can be acquired through experience and

constant reading of good literature in the target language. Regardless of any translator's competence in the target language and culture, however, any translator runs into fundamental problems of translation such as how to deal with deliberate ambiguities in the original text.

Translation is fundamentally a bridge and relationship between different cultures but such a relationship has to be forged by translators — the actual practitioners — whether translators of texts, or translators of experience and knowledge, such as anthropologists, historians, and other scholars. Peter Rollberg, in his commentary, also points up the dynamic, if often unspoken, role of the target audience in an act of translation. Does this mean that some aspects of the original culture—what Fulton calls "cultural subtext" whose successful translation scholars or writers are pessimistic about—will never travel? What is it about a particular text that makes it amenable to translations? The works of both Pak Wan-sō and Ch'oe In-ho, the two distinguished Korean authors represented here, travel well across cultures, and they use the opportunity presented by this volume to tell us why they believe they can succeed.

Fulton discusses enormous challenges which translators of Korean literature into a language like English face. The linguistic and cultural gaps between original texts and the target language are quite substantial. How can culture-specific information be transmitted? How do we deal with literary devices whose aesthetic qualities are of great appeal to readers

of the original texts but which may not be appreciated by the target audience? Fulton considers a certain amount of interpolation as translators' prerogative as well as necessity.

What constitutes a successful translation? To answer that question, Peter Caws reflects on his reading of Gabriel García Márquez's novel, *Cien años de soledad*. He began reading this celebrated book in the Spanish original but eventually finished it in Gregory Rabassa's English translation. Rabassa's translation is successful for Caws for one simple reason: He could not determine where he stopped reading in Spanish and where he began reading in English. In this translation, the boundaries between words, cultural subtext and meaning were not simply pregnable; they were seamless.

Personal—intellectual as well as emotional—sympathy with the original work may well be an absolute prerequisite for successful translation. Commenting on translating the *Mahābhārata* into English, Alf Hiltebeitel acknowledges that what drives him first and foremost as a scholar is his passion for the text, rather than a direct concern for the tastes of his likely audience, with whom he wishes to share his experience. The original text is intrinsically ambiguous, subtle, and enigmatic. To convey such essential qualities, the translator must take risks and offer an interpretation. Many culture-bound texts from distant times and far-away places are not translatable without scholarship; indeed scholarship is another form of translation.

Young-Key Kim-Renaud sees her "ideal" literary translator as someone

who makes his or her own voice as well as the original author's heard in a way that touches the heart of the reader in the target language. Such a translator, possessing his or her own creative urge and talent, encounters and discovers the essence of the original work in its intellectual and aesthetic dimensions. Translators must not only meet the creation of the original author, but they also meet and discover the author in the process of translation, eventually becoming the author's alter ego. Isn't it the goal of successful transition, asks Kim-Renaud, that the voice of the original author and that of the translator converge? Many unforgettable translations throughout history seem to attest to the fact that such a successful outcome is not always beyond reach.

Peter Rollberg points out that a translator's imperative is to enable the reader to experience a new aesthetic enjoyment that would otherwise have been closed to that reader. A translator, therefore, is a mediator between cultures, similar to the literary critic and the teacher of literature who can help readers in decoding aesthetic systems formerly alien to them. The task of the translator, however, appears to be much more difficult than that of the literary critic or the teacher. A translator can neither evaluate nor lecture. He or she has to cover an entire new territory, yet make it virgin land to the new audience.

To illustrate his point, Rollberg chooses the "search for a continent" by Russian-Korean author Anatoly Kim; only this time Kim's voyage is his travel back to his roots, for the discovery of the *real Korea*. In a

moment of beautiful simplicity and revelation, Kim's intercultural voyage—as much a voyage into himself as a voyage home—ends at a continent where experience, humanity and humane spirit come together.

Contributors to this volume have very different interests and training. They range from professional translators to authors of fiction, and to scholars, again all in different disciplines, who have reflected upon and translated different kinds of text in different languages. In spite of their extremely diverse individual professional interests and experiences, however, their voices somehow converge. Taken as a whole, these essays about translation are reminiscent of a museum exhibition. We have here

a collection of thoughts and perspectives that, without the Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium, might have remained unnoticed and unseen. These “discoveries” are, of course, incomplete, partial, and preliminary. They spotlight certain aspects of translation while, perhaps necessarily, masking others in the shadows of their own illuminations. What is special about this collection is that it offers a way of looking at the subject of translation in the context of an intercultural dialogue between Koreans and non-Koreans. Good translation, like the best kind of exhibition, is a journey full of expectations that meets with the fulfilling joy of encounter and discovery.

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LITERATURE AS ENCOUNTER AND DISCOVERY, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY HAHN MOO-SOOK'S NOVEL

ENCOUNTER

CH'OE IN-HO

The Italian explorer Columbus (1451-1506) discovered the American Continent in 1492. Of course, the unknown continent had existed even before he discovered it. But through Columbus' discovery the unknown entity has emerged above the surface of the historical waters as a "New World." Literature is like a voyage in search of a new continent, and the author is like Columbus. In the course of our lives, undiscovered subject matters abound like countless islands in the gigantic ocean of awareness. If perchance such a continent is not discovered through the eyes of a writer, it would sink to eternal oblivion. An author, therefore, is like an explorer who, through an endless literary voyage, discovers and reveals a fascinating New World. Accordingly, an author may be called a *christener* of a particular subject matter just as Columbus who, upon discovery of an unknown continent, finally helped it exist by *naming* it America. Just as a conductor's baton directs a violinist in an orchestra or a drummer's dance, when a writer names something, he or she confers upon it both its existence and meaning.

In classical Korean literature, two great literary pieces, *The Tale of Ch'unhyang* and *The Tale of Shimch'ong*,

represent two prototypes to which modern Korean literature can be related. In the classical tale of Ch'unhyang, the important motif is none other than "encounter." Love sprouts from an encounter at the Kwanghan Pavilion in Namwŏn in the Southwestern Province of Chŏlla, between Yi Mong-nyong, son of the county magistrate, and Ch'unhyang, daughter of a retired *kisaeng* (a woman entertainer, similar to Japanese geisha). For them, their class difference is not an obstacle. The romance, whose beauty is unrivaled in world literature, falls into a crisis with the entrance of an evil figure by the name of Pyŏn who succeeds Mong-nyong's father as the magistrate. Eventually, following his "homecoming in golden robes" as the secret royal inspector, Yi Mong-nyong rescues Ch'unhyang, and the evil magistrate is dismissed and punished. The story has a happy ending, as their love is fulfilled.

In contrast, the theme of the story of Shimch'ong, based on a Buddhist legend, is about an opening of the eyes, i.e., a prototype of "discovery." Shimch'ong, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a blind man, sells herself to the boat people, who throw her into the ocean as a sacrificial lamb to the god of the sea for their

protection. The filially pious daughter Simch'ong is resurrected and is betrothed to a king, who invites all the blind people of the country to his palace in hopes of finding among them his wife's father. The blind Shim's eyes open at the dramatic moment of his re-encounter with his daughter. In the Asian thinking based on the Buddhist belief, "seeing with open eyes" corresponds to "being awake and seeing through the Truth."

Modern Korean literature has inherited the spiritual legacy of the tales of Ch'unhyang and Simch'ong. One notable example is Hahn Moo-Sook's novel, *Encounter*.^{*} The novel's very title and plot correspond with the eternal themes of encounter and discovery represented by *The Tale of Ch'unhyang* and *The Tale of Simch'ong*. *Encounter* is a rare novel in Korea, because it explores and probes so deeply into the Catholic faith, a faith which took root in Korean soil, through the beliefs and actions of Koreans themselves and not by proselytization. It recounts the early Christians' tenacity that led to their heart-rending martyrdom. Hahn creates her work around two historical figures, Tasan Chong Yag-yong, a modern thinker and a scholar of the Sirhak (Practical Learning) School, and Hasang, Tasan's nephew and a Catholic martyr. The novel *Encounter* is distinguished by Hahn's ability to produce great fiction at the same time

that she chronicles an actual historical event.

In the twilight of her life, Hahn Moo-Sook, a practicing Catholic, had a burning desire to write a novel based on her faith. It might not be a coincidence that, between 1985 and 1989, she was the President of the Korean Catholic Writers' Association. In her preface to *Encounter*, Hahn explains her motivation to write a Catholic novel that sums up her own life:

Tasan Chong Yag-yong, in spite of his noble life based on pure principles, was unable to free himself from the attachment of human nature. This gigantic but lonely soul, paradoxical and impregnated with human weaknesses, has long captivated me. His very human faults and trespasses came to move me just as deeply as his greatness. Another personage that I have adored is Tasan's nephew, St. Paul Chong Hasang, who unlike Tasan, trod the road of unwavering faith, for which he willingly sacrificed his life. St. Paul Hasang's immaculate life has always cleansed my soul. These two souls, contrasting as they are, have filled my heart, one just as dearly as the other.

Hahn Moo-Sook made her debut as a writer in 1941 at the age of twenty-three with a novel titled *A Woman with a Lantern*, but it was written in Japanese. It was in 1948 when she made a spectacular debut into the Korean literary circles by winning the contest organized by Kukche Daily Newspaper with a novel titled *And So Flows History*. Her literary career culminated with the writing of her most significant novel *Encounter*,

^{*} *Encounter: A Novel of Nineteenth-Century Korea* by Moo-Sook Hahn, Translated by Ok Young Kim Chang. Foreword by Don Baker. University of California Press, 1992.

which she published in 1986 at the age of sixty-eight. It was also her last work, as she passed away in 1993. As a Catholic, Hahn seems to have always felt indebted to Tasan Chŏng Yag-yong and his nephew Chŏng Hasang. Hahn Moo-Sook explains her choice of her novel's title as follows:

Tracing the history of mankind,
we come across individuals who
met pathetic ends after a life of
suffering because they were so
far above the ordinary people,
their lives so lofty, and their
eyes open so ahead of their
times.

It goes without saying that her encounter with Tasan Chŏng Yag-yong became a novelistic motif. However, for Hahn Moo-Sook, the encounter was a "discovery" of a great soul, and in the abyss of her discovery dwelled the sacredness of "God." In meeting her God, who dwelled deep in the abyss of her heart, she made an apology for her own human weaknesses through the character of Chŏng Yag-yong, while expressing her passionate fervor for God through the martyrdom of his nephew Chŏng Hasang. Chŏng Yag-yong's human foibles were human weaknesses lurking inside Author Hahn Moo-Sook, and Chŏng Hasang's spirit of sacrifice was the passion dwelling inside Hahn's religious subconscious. In other words, Chŏng Yag-yong and Chŏng Hasang represent the dual nature of their creator, Hahn Moo-Sook. The novel *Encounter* is Hahn Moo-Sook through and through. Her style is as graceful and articulate as

she was. Further, her descriptions are as sentient, spirited, and youthful as she was, even in her old age.

The author Hahn Moo-Sook, who lived a life of propriety like Sin Saimdang, Korea's ideal woman figure, and who was as aloof as the Chosŏn-dyasty white porcelain, has left the following poem of farewell to her life through the mouth of Yi Sŭng-hun as he was being martyred in her novel *Encounter*:

Though the moon disappears
from the sky,
It remains in the heavens;
Though the water evaporates on
the surface,
It is undiminished in the pond.
[translation by Ok Young Kim
Chang, *Encounter*, p. 316]

Hahn Moo-Sook, the author, explains the poem as follows:

Just as the moon is somewhere
in the sky, even if it is sunken
into the eastern mountain, my
faith is constant in my heart.
Just as the water is still in the
pond, even if it is evaporated
from the surface, my faith is
constant.

Saint Francis said the following:

Flower petals fall, but the
flowers never wither forever.

Indeed, the author Hahn Moo-Sook has died and left us. However, just as the

moon is still in the sky and the flowers
come back every year, although flowers
fall, she is still meeting us and she is
living next to us through her work

Encounter. The greatness of literature is
none other than that.

-Translated from the Korean by Young-
Key Kim-Renaud

Through the moon disappears
from the sky,
It remains in the heaven
Though the water evaporates on
the surface,
It is undiminished in the pond.
(translation by Oh Young Kim
Chang, Encounter, p. 119)

Hahn Moo-Sook, the author, explains
the poem as follows:

Just as the moon is somewhere
in the sky, even if it is hidden
into the eastern mountain, my
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LITERATURE AND EXPERIENCE

PAK WAN-SŎ

When I wrote my first work, *The Naked Tree*, I was an ordinary housewife. I had been a passionate literature lover, but I had never practiced writing or studied literature. *The Naked Tree* began as non-fiction. One day I saw a posthumous show of artist Pak Su-gun, and I found myself swept by an incomprehensible confusion. He suffered from poverty all his life, but after his death, he became the artist whose works commanded the highest prices in the ROK. During the Korean War, he eked out a living by painting cheap portraits in the PX of US Forces, and I worked there trying to talk US soldiers into having their portraits made.

In order to maintain a hand-to-mouth existence, both he and I led a life of the bottom, in which the least level of self-esteem could not be maintained. After the war, he was never free of poverty; he struggled to make a living and died at the young age of 51. When I saw that he was evaluated as the best artist in Korea and treated as such, I was swept by complicated emotions, a mixture of fury, sadness, and joy. Such feelings gradually developed into a passion that I wanted to bear witness to how he had lived. I wanted to write a good biography, which would help understand everything about him, and I wanted to shock art dealers, who were intent on making profits by trading his

works at high prices without knowing anything about how he had lived. That was how I began to write a biography, hoping to apply for an annual open competition for nonfiction works held by *Sindong-a*, a monthly magazine.

The deadline approached, but my writing did not progress. There were spurts of good writing, though, and in those moments I was elated. However, next day I would read the parts that had gone particularly well, and discover that they were the lies I had made up, not real episodes. I was not supposed to make up stories in the name of writing a biography. I had no choice but to throw them away, and I would be back to the slow-progressing stage.

In writing his biography, there was another difficulty, aside from the battle with lies. I wanted to talk about my own stories. The pictures of myself, projected here and there, made his biography impure. Not only the lies, but also the portraits of myself, which wanted to butt in, were difficult to shoo away. When I completely excluded them, I felt no enthusiasm. It was impossible to write anything without enthusiasm, whether it be pleasure or pain. I had to give up writing the biography.

However, I could not force myself to give up on the pleasure of lying—in a more elegant term, it would be a free rein of imagination—and the

desire to express myself, which I had tasted while struggling to write a biography. In particular, the stories, so far suppressed inside me, began to clamor as if they had found an outlet. That was how my first novel, *The Naked Tree*, was born.

When my imagination was harnessed no longer, more closely could I create Pak Su-gun than when I described him with only the facts, and more vividly could I create the era in which he and I lived. In elementary literature theory books, it is often said that fiction is an expression of truth through imagination, and it was the period in which I personally experienced it. I could not enter the *Sindong-a* competition, so I applied for a novel competition by *Women Tonga*, whose deadline was two months later.

Since then, I have written as if a dike has broken, but I could not write something with only my imagination. A series of works that followed *The Naked Tree*—*Near Buddha*, *Camera and Walkers*, *We Teach Humility*, *The Heaviest Denture in the World*, *Encounter in the Evening*, *Mother's Stake I and 2*—deals with a sad history of my family which suffered and collapsed with the experience of war and the division of the country. Most of these works, the mainstay of my early works, are still widely read and some of them are evaluated as good works, but I would like to take this opportunity to touch on the decisive weakness of my works on the division of the country.

A half a century has passed since the Korean War, but I am unable to push away the experiences of those days to a sufficient distance to see them in an objective light; I remember them

vividly as if they had happened only yesterday. All memories are bound to retreat with the passage of time to become distant scenery, but my memories of Korean War still follow me close on my heels. I am sick and tired of it, but I cannot do anything about it. I have to be resigned that I will not be able to write a masterpiece, which views and interprets the Korean war in its entirety, because I cannot look at the whole picture, so obsessed with my personal experience. Yet I think writing about it has had curative effects on me.

After the war, I soon married and other people might have thought I was leading an uneventful life, but I carried a secret darkness of my own. It was unhappiness, which could not be easily described. It was a sense of guilt that I had survived when others died, it was self-hatred that I was forcing myself to live with a smiling face, having the wronged spirit of my family incarcerated in my heart. By asking "why?" about the death of my beloved family, which was treated in a wholesale manner that he was just one of the millions who had died during the Korean war, and crying that each and every one of them had been an individual who had a beautiful, unique world, individualizing their deaths as unique deaths, asserting the dignity of individual life, for no life had to die such a wrongful death, I could be free of the lonely darkness, the prison of my heart, of a long time. It may be very ambitious of me, but I dream that my stories have such healing effects on my readers. I can write because I can dream.

Most of my early works were about my experience of war and the division of the country, but as I experienced the economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s, my works gradually changed into stories dealing with the times, depicting the higher class, which turned more and more snobbish with abundance, and the lives of common people, who were excluded from affluence. In particular, critics often evaluate that I am good at exposing the falsehood of the middle

class, which I believe is my limit for having been lived as a middle class member from birth up to now. The more recent works, classified as feminist novels by critics, were merely natural expressions of human conflicts I have experienced as a woman living in Korea. They were not influenced by feminism of the West, because I know little about it.

-Translated from the Korean by Yu Young-nan

TRANSLATING CULTURAL SUBTEXT IN MODERN KOREAN FICTION

BRUCE FULTON

Translation as an Act of Bridging Two Cultures

Literary translation can be described in many ways. In the first place we can think of it as *retelling*, in that we take a Korean story and tell it in English. In retelling the story we make it public. This means we have an audience, either readers of our translation or listeners of a public reading of that translation. Public readings are an important way of disseminating a translation. And in the case of Korea, readings have a special relevance. In premodern times improvised poems were often shared during gatherings of literati. Even today poetry readings are not uncommon in Korea (though readings of fiction are rare—a vestige of the greater esteem traditionally attached to poetry by Koreans?). Retelling is an especially apt approach to translation when we translate an author such as Pak Wan-sō, whose narrators often sound as if they are speaking directly to the reader.

Second, we can think of translating as an act of re-creating, in the sense that translators produce something that is recognized as literature (whatever that is—anyone who has read the first chapter of Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory* will realize how difficult it is to precisely define literature).

Translation can also be thought of as *reenacting*. Here I draw on the Lacanian

notion of retrieving a lost narrative of our life. Translators may be thought of as taking part as a silent observer, or, to borrow the title of a Joseph Conrad story, as a “secret sharer,” in the stories they reenact.

Finally, translation is a *joint enterprise* between translator and author. As such, it is desirable to have a good match between author and translator. Such a match often manifests itself as a similarity of aesthetic outlook and a shared commitment to the author's works. In this joint enterprise the translator is a kind of medium. JaHyun Kim Haboush reports, for example, that the voice of Lady Hong rang in her head for years as she translated that princess's memoirs, the *Hanjungnok*. Other translators have described this phenomenon as a merging of themselves with the persona of their author. The late Marshall R. Pihl reported having such an experience while translating stories by O Yōng-su; I myself have had a similar experience in translating stories by Hwang Sun-wōn and O Chōng-hūi. Over a period of years and in the course of many translations of the same author, translators become the voice of that author in their own language. Perhaps, therefore, it is not so far-fetched for French scholar-translator Patrick Maurus to say, in reference to a prominent Korean novelist, “I am Yi Mun-yōl in French.”

Each of these ways of understanding translation involves a crossing from one literature and culture to another.

Translating Cultural Subtext

In some nations, culture is deeply embedded in literature. Korea is an example. Korea is a nation with a rich cultural heritage that even today continues to manifest itself strongly in Korean society. This heritage differs in several important respects from the Western cultural heritage. These cultural differences present challenges to those who translate Korean literature into a Western language such as English. Two particularly difficult challenges are posed by the great amount of cultural information in Korean literature. First of all, much of that information is implicit: it is taken for granted by Korean readers and does not have to be made explicit in the text. The reader of a translation, though, usually does not have access to that cultural information, and the result is the common criticism that "something is lost in translation."

Second, a Korean story that contains much cultural information—what we might call a "Korea-specific story"—may not be appropriate for those Western readers who are easily intimidated by story material—cultural, historical, or otherwise—that is unfamiliar to them. This means that the Western translator must exercise great care in deciding which literary works to translate. In this paper I would like to focus on these two issues. I will discuss cultural subtext first.

Translation of Korean literature into English, like translation of Japanese literature into English, is generally a much more difficult task than translation of a Western literature, and especially a Romance Language literature, into English. One reason for this, of course, is that the English language shares many word roots with other languages in the Indo-European language family. This eases the lexical component of translation. A second and perhaps no less important reason is that much of Korean literature is what we might call highly culturally specific.

For example, try to imagine yourself sitting down to a meal in a traditional Korean home. You would be seated on a square cushion on a floor heated by flues radiating from a firebox in the kitchen. Of course you have taken off your shoes before entering the living quarters of the house. A low dining table is brought in from the kitchen, perhaps with several dishes already arranged on it. The rice is then served, one bowl per person, and the soup—also one bowl per person—is placed to the right of it. You may be offered an alcoholic beverage in a small glass or porcelain cup. You insist in vain that the beverage be offered first to the elders. Your hostess will then apologize for the "poor fare" she has prepared for you; in fact she and the other womenfolk in the host's extended family may have spent the better part of the day preparing this feast for you, the honored guest.

Most of this cultural information will be understood and taken for granted by the Korean reader of any story in which a meal is prepared for a guest. But if we are to

accept as one of the ideal goals of literary translation that the cultural information held by the reader of the original text should be available as well to the reader of the translation, then what is the translator to do if none of this information is explicit in the Korean text (and most likely it is not)?

Let us consider two other examples. Among Korean men there is a long established drinking etiquette. For instance, one rarely pours one's own glass but instead offers the empty vessel to another person and fills it; the favor is eventually returned. Second, shamanism figures in several Korean stories. Shamanism is a rich tradition that has long been a powerful force in Korean folk culture, but it is little known among Western readers outside of a small group of scholars. Many other examples of cultural information in Korean literature could be cited. Because drinking, shamanism, and other cultural subjects frequently appear in Korean literature, and because the references to these subjects are sometimes quite subtle, the translator must be sensitive to how all of this cultural information is to be handled.

How is the uninitiated reader of Korean literature in translation to have access to any of this information—what we might call the cultural subtext of the original work?

Because Korean culture has decidedly fewer referents in American culture than is the case, say, with European cultures, a slavish translation of a Korean story poses greater danger than a similar translation of a European story. For one thing, the reader of the translation, lacking the cultural

background enjoyed by the reader of the Korean text, may have difficulty recreating the cultural setting of the story or may simply be puzzled by certain aspects of Korean culture that appear in it. More important for the translator, who wishes to make a living from his or her work, publishers will recognize the constraints that too little, or too much, cultural information may exert on the marketability of a translation.

What the translator of Korean literature must do is walk an aesthetic tightrope between unswerving loyalty to the Korean text and egregious embroidering. Experience suggests that it will never be possible to re-create in a translation all the cultural information enjoyed by the Korean reader. Yet it seems justifiable, as long as the integrity of the target language is observed, to make explicit in the translation—but as unobtrusively as possible—at least some of what is implicit in the original.

Consider, for example, a sentence from O Chŏng-hŭi's story "The Bronze Mirror," translated by myself and Ju-Chan Fulton:

One spring day Yŏngno had flown out of the house like a nighthawk, his crewcut not quite grown out and sticking up indignantly in all directions.

An American friend who read this initial, literal translation of the sentence asked why Yŏngno's hair was sticking out. Only then did we realize that our literal translation was depriving potential readers of meaningful cultural information. We therefore emended the sentence as follows:

One spring day Yŏngno, fresh out of high school, had flown out of the house like a nighthawk, his schoolboy crewcut not quite grown out and sticking up indignantly in all directions.¹

The underscored words, though implicit in the original text, do not appear there; they are part of the cultural subtext.

Interpolation, then, if subtle, is one approach to the problem of translating cultural subtext. Other examples of its application follow:

One terribly cold day, I had stoked the firebox....

One terribly cold day, I had stoked the firebox that heated the floors of our living quarters....²

...if a girl touched her forehead with an ornamental silver knife, then looked into a round mirror on a moonless night, the face of her future husband would surely appear.

...if a girl touched her forehead with one of the ornamental silver knives that women used to carry to protect their virtue, then looked into a round mirror on a moonless night, the face of

her future husband would surely appear.³

Elsewhere I have seen the Korean word for such a knife, *ŭnjangdo*, translated simply as "chastity knife," but an understanding of this expression would require too much guesswork by the reader.

"Won't you be my first customer of the day?"

"Won't you be my first customer of the day—for good luck?"⁴

I realized then that Mother was singing the song from the chinogwi ritual that she used to perform.

I realized then that Mother was singing the song from the chinogwi ritual—the ceremony for the restless dead—which she used to perform.⁵

It was then that they heard Kang's clanging shears.

It was then that they had heard the clanging shears heralding the approach of a junk dealer.⁶

Interpolation is not without its pitfalls, however. Consider the following

¹ O Chŏng-hŭi, "The Bronze Mirror," trans. Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton, in *Land of Exile: Contemporary Korean Fiction*, ed. and trans. Marshall R. Pihl and Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 261.

² Kim Tong-ni, "A Descendant of the Hwarang," in *A Ready-Made Life: Early Masters of Modern Korean Fiction*, trans. Kim Chong-un and Bruce Fulton (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), pp. 112-13.

³ O Chŏng-hŭi, "Words of Farewell," in *Words of Farewell: Stories by Korean Women Writers*, trans. Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton (Seattle: Seal Press, 1989), p. 254.

⁴ O Yŏng-su, "Migratory Birds," in *The Good People*, trans. Marshall R. Pihl (Hong Kong: Heinemann, 1985), p. 94.

⁵ O Chŏng-hŭi, "A Portrait of Magnolias," trans. Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton, *The World & I*, October 1990, p. 446.

⁶ Hwang Sŏk-yŏng, "A Dream of Good Fortune," trans. Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton, in *Land of Exile*, pp. 118-19.

passage from Japanese author Inoue Yasushi's story "The Counterfeiter":

*Watashi wa noragi no mama no
Onoe Senzo no annai de mura de
kashite mo ii to iu
seinenshukaiju.*⁷

Here is how the passage appears in an English translation of the story:

Escorted by Senzo Onoe, who was wearing the kind of farmer's field smock that we Japanese call *noragi*, I was shown a place in the hamlet that might be leased—the Youth Assembly Hall.⁸

As Martin Holman, an American specialist on the works of Inoue, has noted, the underscored words, interpolated by translator Leon Picon, give the odd impression that Inoue is addressing a non-Japanese audience.⁹

⁷ *Chikume gendai bungaku taikai*, vol. 70: Inoue Yasushi (Tokyo: 1975), p. 447.

⁸ Yasushi Inoue, "The Counterfeiter," in *The Counterfeiter and Other Stories*, trans. Leon Picon (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1965), p. 35. I am indebted to Martin Holman for confirming my hunch that the translator had interpolated the underscored words.

⁹ The need for subtlety in the use of interpolation is suggested by the following tongue-in-cheek example, created by Martin Holman from the first paragraph of Yun Heung-gil's "The House of Twilight":

The moment we were about to cross the road, which we Koreans call *kil*, I let go of the girl's hand, known to Koreans as *son*, when I heard the blaring of what you Americans call a horn, but which is commonly referred to in Korea as a *kyōngjōk*. An ox cart, which is not the Korean word for it, loaded with sheaves of rice—called *pyō* if unhulled, as it is in this case; *ssal* if hulled but uncooked; and *pap* if it is

If such dangers can be avoided, interpolation of cultural subtext can considerably enhance the fidelity of a translation, especially in the case of a longer work. Consider Ahn Junghyo's novel *Silver Stallion*. Ahn originally wrote the novel in his native Korean. But instead of translating the Korean version, he rewrote it in English. Moreover, Ahn professes to write for an American audience. The result of this approach—a translation in which the sights, smells, and sounds of the

hot and ready to eat—that was lumbering noisily along the road, again *kil* in Korean, barely had time to pull over to the side before a convoy of army trucks, or lorries if you are in England, came speeding down the road, which is still *kil* in our Korean language, with their headlights, known to us Koreans as *ssangbul*, glaring yellow. A flock of baby chicks—which speak the same language as American chicks, I suppose, but in Korea we call them *pyōng'ari*—had been following the ox cart pecking at the grains—*narak* in Korean (see *ssal* and *pap* above)—that fell on the *kil* (I'm sorry, I mean road, but by now you know enough Korean to realize that anyway), but they scattered. The trucks, which the Japanese call *toraku*, carried a battalion that had finished fighting the communist partisans—which we call *kongbi*, but which Jesse Helms refers to as "pinkos"—in Naejang Mountain, known to us Koreans as Naejang-san, but I suppose we could call it Mount Naejang if we were speaking English—which we no longer seem to be doing in this story.

For Holman's translation of this paragraph, see Yun Heung-gil, *The House of Twilight*, ed. Holman (London: Readers International, 1989), p. 205. For the original text, see Yun Heung-gil, *Hwanghon ūi chip* (Seoul: Munhak kwa chisōng sa, 1976), p. 7.

Korean countryside come to life for the reader—are apparent to anyone with a passing acquaintance with Korean literature in translation. Here is a passage from the very first page of the English version. I would bet that at least some of the underscored words have no equivalents in the Korean version.

Old Hwang...took a bush-clover broom from the rice barn and started sweeping the courtyard. By the time he reached the stepping stones outside the gate, white streaks of smoke rose gently from the low earthen chimneys of the huts in the fields. The women inside were cooking the breakfast rice. Farmers trickled out of their homes one after another, each slinging a shovel or a long-handled hoe over his shoulder, to do some work before the first meal. This was the tranquil landscape the old man had watched from his gate at this early hour on summer days all his life.¹⁰

This attentiveness to cultural detail, if sustained over the course of a novel (as it is in the case of *Silver Stallion*), can do much to help re-create for the reader of the translation the aesthetic experience enjoyed by the reader of the Korean version.

If there are situations where interpolation may be helpful, there are also situations where it is probably best left undone. Take the case of a modest

traditional Korean house. The living quarters in such a house may consist of just one heated room. Under the same roof would be an unheated kitchen, which in cold weather would also serve as a washroom; bodily functions are attended to in an outhouse. In translations of Korean stories one will sometimes read that so-and-so "entered the room," a literal translation of the Korean *pang ŭro tŭrŏgatta*. This English expression, "entered the room," is problematic because of the article *the*. Here, *the* is not idiomatic, as it is in the case of, say, "went to the bathroom." Nor is it necessarily referential, for the room in question may very likely not have been previously mentioned. Because of the amount of cultural subtext involved in references to such houses, it is perhaps better to avoid interpolation in favor of something like "went inside" or "went in the house."

In deciding whether interpolation is a viable option, translators should also consider the currency of Korean words in English. For example, *kimch'i*—the spicy pickled cabbage for which Korean cuisine is famous—is included in the current (third) edition of Webster's unabridged dictionary (where it is spelled without an apostrophe)—one indication that it may no longer need clarification by the translator.¹¹ Likewise, the Korean

¹⁰ Ahn Junghyo, *Silver Stallion* (New York: Soho Press, 1990), p. 3.

¹¹ Translators take note: *kimch'i*, *wŏn* (the unit of Korean currency), and other Korean words appearing in English dictionaries may be treated in translations either as English loan words from Korean, or as Korean words. In the former case, the word is to appear in roman (rather than italic) and should follow the English dictionary spelling—for example, "kimchi." In the latter case, the word appears in

alcoholic beverages *makköl* and soju may eventually be well enough known to American readers that they, like sake, will need no explanation. In other words, translators, while being sensitive to the need to reproduce cultural information, should be careful not to produce a translation that will soon be dated.

There are, of course, alternatives to incorporating cultural subtext directly in the text of a translation. If the translation is published in a book (rather than a journal or newspaper), a note on culture may be added in an introduction or appendix. Footnotes serve a similar purpose, but may smack of academia and intimidate the general reader; a glossary might be preferable.

Problems of cultural subtext are often presented by the nomenclature of rooms in a traditional Korean house. Korean-English dictionaries tell us, for instance, that *könnönbang* means "an opposite room," "a room on the opposite side," or "the room opposite the main living room." The last of these definitions is closest to the mark; better would be "the room across the veranda from the main room." (The veranda—*maru*, *taech'öng*, or *taech'öng maru* in Korean—is an unheated room with a wooden floor that is opened onto the courtyard in clement weather. Conveying this information poses another recurring challenge to the translator of Korean.) But such an expression may be unwieldy in a translation. Ideally, the main room (not the "main living room," which may

elicit an image of an American living room; the Korean main room is used for eating and sleeping as well as entertaining) will already have been mentioned and can thus serve as a point of reference by the time the room across the veranda is mentioned. To be avoided is a vague translation such as "the room opposite."

Likewise, "the upper room," a literal translation of the Korean *utpang*, is both vague and ambiguous. Of two adjoining rooms, the *utpang* is the one to the rear; it is "upper" in the sense of being closer to the (usually) more elevated terrain behind the house or village (more on this in the following paragraph). It is perhaps better in translation to identify this room in terms of who inhabits it or what function it serves (in farming areas it may be used as a storeroom).

Another Korean expression whose cultural significance is often left untranslated is *twissan*, literally "rear mountain." More often a gentle hill than a precipitous mountain, this is the incline against which a Korean village, dwelling, or other building is often nestled. Since most villages are situated near at least one of these, Korean authors usually take no pains to locate them specifically. As a result, the novice translator may simply render the term literally, with no geographical anchor. A less awkward rendering would be "the hill behind the village," "the rise behind the school," or something similar.

italics and is spelled according to the McCune-Reischauer system for the romanization of Korean words—"kimch'i."

Cultural Factors to Consider in Selecting Works for Translation

Even before translators attempt to come to grips with the challenge of handling cultural information when translating a work, they must try to decide which works will have the best chance of succeeding in translation. Two of the most important cultural factors that enter into this decision are cultural receptiveness and translatability. Cultural receptiveness involves the readiness of the target audience to appreciate a translated work. In the case of English translations of modern Korean fiction, those that have been somewhat successful in the U.S.—that is, those that have been received by American readers with relative ease—are usually translations of stories that have some connection with the U.S. For example, Ahn Junghyo's novels *White Badge* and *Silver Stallion* concern historical events that are somewhat familiar to an American audience. *White Badge* is set partly during the Vietnam War. That war created deep divisions in American society. It also inspired a succession of fine American novels about the war. *White Badge*, though it concerns Koreans rather than Americans in the Vietnam War, therefore has a subject that is intensely familiar to many American readers. *Silver Stallion*, for its part, describes the catastrophic effects of the sudden appearance of UN soldiers in a small Korean village early in the Korean War. The rape of a Korean woman by two such soldiers almost destroys the centuries-old social fabric of the village. Americans, of course, made up the great majority of

UN troops in the Korean War, and by reading *Silver Stallion* Americans were able to learn more about the effects of the presence of their countrymen on Korean soil.

Another example of a modern Korean fictional work that has gained modest visibility in translation in the U.S. is Kim Chi-wŏn's story "A Certain Beginning."¹² The story is set in the New York City metropolitan area and concerns a marriage of convenience, or "green card marriage," between a Korean student and an older Korean divorcee. The green card theme is familiar to Americans, and this particular translation, after its appearance in *Words of Farewell*, was anthologized several times and even adapted for a radio performance. Reports from university instructors of Korean literature in translation tend to confirm the popularity among students of Korean stories that have an American connection, whether an American setting, as in "A Certain Beginning," or the effects of an American presence on Korean soil, as in *kijich'on* stories, that is, stories that take place in or near the area around American military bases in Korea.

In this respect, a comparison with modern Japanese fiction in English translation may be useful. Although there are English translations of Japanese *kijich'on* stories and novels, such as *Almost Transparent Blue* by Ryu Murakami and "American Hijiki" by Nosaka Akiyuki, the American connection seems to be overshadowed in importance by a certain exoticism

¹² Translated by Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton in *Words of Farewell*.

that appears in translations of premodern Japanese literature and also in modern fiction by such authors as Kawabata Yasunari (*Snow Country* and *Thousand Cranes*) and Mishima Yukio (*The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*). Exoticism can be both advantageous and disadvantageous as a factor in the translation and marketing of a work. It can be advantageous where it has a demonstrated appeal, as in the case of English translations of Japanese literature, but it may also be disadvantageous in that it offers a rather narrow view of Japanese culture. In any event, exoticism has thus far been unimportant as a consideration in the English translation of modern Korean fiction, perhaps because the aestheticism that is often directly manifested in Japanese literature tends in the case of Korea to be manifested not so much in literary works themselves but in literary criticism.

Translatability involves such elements as the style and mood of a literary work. Some Korean authors are stylistically easier than others to translate into English. Hwang Sun-wŏn is an excellent example. Hwang, whom I consider to be Korea's most accomplished short story writer, writes in a compact style with few wasted words, and his command of Korean is excellent. His fictional style is sometimes compared with that of Hemingway. Not surprisingly, his stories are well represented in English translation, and Hwang enjoys relatively high visibility among readers of Korean literature in English translation. Some Korean authors, on the other hand, are verbose, tendentious, and repetitive. Although

these qualities are considered acceptable by many Korean readers, they pose difficulties for both the prospective translator and many English-language readers.

As for mood, it is important to realize that much of modern Korean fiction concerns the tumultuous modern history of the country—colonization by the Japanese from 1910 to 1945, the Soviet and American military presence following World War II, the establishment of separate governments in northern and southern Korea, the Korean War and the subsequent enforced separation of millions of family members, a succession of autocratic governments, and the social ills produced by rapid industrialization beginning in the 1960s. While literature dealing with these historical events is considered very relevant to the Korean literature establishment, it is often very serious in tone, even gloomy, and American readers of translations of such works often find them depressing. It is likely that less serious works will have a greater appeal to an American audience. Such works, though, are often considered inconsequential by the Korean literary world. This situation suggests an important point: literary works that are successful in Korean are not necessarily successful in English translation.

Conclusion

Cultural differences make literary translation from Korean to English very different from translation from, say, French or Spanish to English. Korean literature is a highly culturally

specific literature: it contains a great deal of cultural information. This wealth of cultural detail is one of the major reasons we translate meaning and not just words. As a well-known Latin American author is said to have instructed his translator: "Don't translate what I said; translate what I meant to say."

The extent to which cultural subtext may feasibly be reproduced in a translation is something that should concern any translator of Korean literature. In this paper I have illustrated some of the options the translator may wish to consider in attempting to bridge the gap between two cultures as different as those of Korea and America. Interpolation, one of these options, is in essence a way of making explicit in the translation what is implicit in the original text. (On the

other hand, it is often desirable for the sake of economy in English to make implicit in the translation what is explicit in the original.)

The culture of Korea is ancient and deeply rooted. As a result, few Korean stories—even among those being written today—are culturally neutral, so to speak. It is therefore one of the salient challenges to the translator of Korean literature to recreate as much as is aesthetically feasible the cultural richness of the Korean text. As one reviewer of Korean literature in translation has noted, "sometimes cultural information is more important to understanding than is language proficiency."¹³

¹³ Edgar C. Knowlton, Jr., review of *The House of Twilight*, by Yun Heung-gil, ed. J. Martin Holman, *World Literature Today*, Spring 1990, p. 365.

STRATEGIES OF A NON-NATIVE TRANSLATOR

YU YOUNG-NAN

Non-native speakers of the target language are strongly discouraged from translating literature. I believe this is a very sensible recommendation, for regardless of individual abilities, it is often the case that the texts translated by such translators do not flow well. To be more exact, when I read translated works by non-native speakers, including my own, I often detect a matter-of-fact, straightforward tone, rather too serious, if not downright annoying to read, instead of the subtleties and elegance of the flow exhibited by many native translators. Of course, there are not only disadvantages in being a non-native translator. The non-native translator may grasp the original text better than the native translator, and be more aware of cultural and social implications hidden in the text. However, the main issue is the output. How do you transform the original text into its equivalent in the target language? I have been working as a freelance translator, of both literary and non-literary works, for the past 10 years, but this question hangs over me every time I begin to translate.

I ventured into this unattainable arena, fully aware of the problems I faced. At first, there was something about challenging the impossible, but I also believed there was still a need for translators like myself in the field of

translating Korean literature into English, for no other reason than that not much has been translated and there were not enough translators around to introduce Korean literature and culture to the world. I believe, though, that non-native speakers are at best transitional figures, who will fade into the shadows, when more and more native speakers of English with good Korean language skills emerge. My goal is very modest by literary standards, but very ambitious for a non-native speaker. My goal is to render my translations as readable as possible. The best response I have ever received for my literary translation was that it was "very readable." I was very pleased with that praise. I know that as a non-native translator I can never attain a higher plateau.

Once I attended a translation seminar in Korea, where most participants were Korean professors of foreign languages. They insisted that the importance of the act of the translation lies in introducing the unfamiliar to an audience, rather than making foreign literature readable. When I raised the question of stilted texts in translation, which happens mainly because of a literal translation of every pronoun and possessive in the Western language, some of them said that such devices have enriched the Korean language over the years, forcing readers to accept unfamiliar things

more readily, and making the Korean language itself more pliant. They also asserted that foreign literature in translation offers an array of cultural information hard to understand and digest for Korean readers, but that readers become gradually accustomed to foreign cultures by reading translated works. Therefore one of the translator's roles is to familiarize the unfamiliar through the act of translation. I agree with this argument to a certain extent.

I remember how I tried to read Russian novels when I was in junior high, looking up the list of characters every so often. Yet, my fundamental position differs, because as a reader, I tend to give up when the text is too confusing or the language flows too awkwardly. I believe that we cannot expect most foreign readers to trudge through a confusion of the unfamiliar. I also believe that the act of reading must be pleasurable. Here the question of the readership comes up. As a translator, this is the first question I ask myself. Who are my readers? Do they have some knowledge of Korean culture? How well educated are they? These questions are important, because if I imagine that my readers are familiar with Korean culture and they read the translation to get information quickly, I know that they would prefer a literal translation, awkward but strong with the flavor of the original.

When I translate literary works, I imagine that my readers are people like myself. They are interested in foreign literature and culture, but they are not experts in the field—in this case Korean studies. I further imagine that my readers are native speakers of

English, who have been acquainted with Korean culture or who are interested in it. I imagine that my readers read mostly for the pleasure of reading and to obtain general information about Korean people and culture through literature. The most important strategy I use as a non-native translator is the use of such readers, by incorporating their comments and suggestions into my translations. Grant-givers in Korea require two collaborators, a native speaker of Korean and a native speaker of English. Mostly I have worked with this method, but there are some problems with this system. When one translator is the leader, the other tends to do less than 50 percent of the work. Also conflicts arise from personality differences. One person may be a procrastinator, while the other a control freak. Even when I have a partner required by Korean grant-givers, I resort to my readers after the second draft. When I work on a translation, I go over the text numerous times, but I cannot ask my collaborators to do the same. They usually get fed up after two or three readings and there is little progress afterward. That is when the readers come in.

I try to get at least seven or eight readers to read my draft at various stages of translation. Ideally, they are men and women of different age groups, and they are from different regions of English-speaking countries. This is the rule of thumb I have stumbled upon after several projects. Different age groups offer different suggestions, and I would like to produce a text that is not too slanted to

a particular age group. I sometimes get comments like, "This expression is so 1960s." As a non-native speaker I'd have no other way of knowing such implications. Such differences can be found in my mother tongue as well. Some expressions are bound to a certain epoch and a certain class, but most native speakers are not interested in such aspects of language or they are not aware of it. Sometimes I think I would be a great editor of Korean texts, although I've never tried that.

Being a translator involves in large part being a hawk-eyed editor. I try to find readers from different regions, because I believe I can come up with a translation that is not too American. My concern about sounding too American stems from the fact that I've studied and lived in the States, and all I know about British English is through books. Over the years I have found that non-American readers are of great help in picking up expressions laden with Americanism. I believe translated Korean literature should sound neutral, not too American or not too British because I would like English readers from all countries to be able to enjoy my translation. I also believe that there is a happy middle in this matter.

In addition, I try to find readers whose levels of understanding of Korean culture vary; some are experts, some are somewhat familiar, and some know virtually nothing. I need experts to get their expertise. While translating a historical novel, I spent many hours looking up references, but still I had many unsolved problems. When I asked a history professor to read it, I was amazed at how he could solve so many problems in terminology in a

very short period. I need those who are familiar with Korean culture to get their informed feedback. I need those who are not familiar with Korean culture to get their response and improve the translation. Once I translated that a woman brought in a dinner table, and one reader put a question mark, wondering how it was possible. I realized that for those who are not familiar with the low, small Korean dinner table being brought into the living room for dinner, it sounds ridiculous. I changed the table into the dinner tray.

These strategies—readers of different age groups, different regions, different levels of understanding of Korean culture—are to ensure I obtain as varied opinions as possible. I usually ask this: "Please tell me anything that you think will improve the translation—the flow, the elegance, the naturalness." I find that some readers are more tolerant than others, but my ideal reader is a person who has a nit-picking tendency.

Readers' comments and suggestions can be largely divided into three areas: grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, and cultural aspects. The grammar is the easiest to handle; most readers point out mistakes in prepositions and articles, for instance. The other two areas are more complicated. Often the original text is in the head of the translator, so stilted sentences sound all right until someone points them out. One of the most difficult areas for a non-native translator is dialogue. Rendering the original narrative in a natural flow is difficult as it is, but translating dialogue

to the equivalent counterpart requires help from native speakers.

Aside from dialogue, I would like to discuss some problems I encounter frequently as I work with two languages. First, there are certain redundancies inherent in each language. The Korean language does not always specify the subject, for the context and other devices make it clear what the subject is. In Korean prose, if the subject and possessives are used as in English, it sounds awkward and redundant. Another example is this: Korean writers don't have to state who the speaker is even if there are several people talking together. The speaker is apparent through the level of respect shown in the form of speech, feminine or masculine speech, or regional dialects. When translating these sentences, the translator often needs to supply the information about who the speaker is.

On the other hand, Korean prose tends to repeat the same words, phrases, and sentences, perhaps because it still contains a strong tradition of oral literature. When English prose is translated into Korean, it often sounds terse, matter of fact, and far from elegant. By contrast, when Korean prose is translated into English, many readers find it redundant to the point of irritation. They complain that Korean authors treat their readers as simpletons, who need constant repetition to understand a point.

As a translator, this is one of the most difficult decisions I am forced to make. How far can I go in editing? If the same words are used over and over again—for example, if Teacher Kim is mentioned, he is described as Teacher

Kim throughout in the Korean text, rarely replaced with a pronoun or other devices—it is easy to conform to the Standard English usage. But when a certain word or phrase is used repeatedly, the translator has to stop and ask herself whether the author did it consciously. Sometimes I ask the authors; some say they did it for artistic reasons, but others say I can do whatever sounds better in English. The problem is many native speakers find such repetitions irritating, rather than artistic.

Another marked difference between the two languages is the way to form a paragraph. While English writers tend to develop their arguments in a linear way, Korean writers tend to proceed in a more convoluted way. It is only a feeling I have, but I think that Koreans are reluctant to declare something unequivocally. There are often many contradictions in a paragraph. Many of the sentences begin with "but," which confuses English readers. When I was a student in the United States, a professor pointed this out in my writing and told me I should make up my mind. I believe this is about more than making up one's mind, though. This also has cultural connotations. If an English speaker is happy, he or she comes right out and write so, while the Korean writer tries to hedge and sprinkle in some reservations, perhaps because culturally it is more acceptable to behave this way.

When forming a sentence, the differences in logic give birth to a strange jumble of sentences in translation. Sometimes a translator is required to move around sentences to

fit into an English narrative. To make the language flow better, it is basically necessary to combine or separate sentences, but when it comes to moving around sentences or deleting them altogether to make them fit to a standard English narrative, I have to stop and think whether this is really necessary. Recently, I translated a historical novel, and there were certain details that my readers found annoying. The author tended to butt in and supply information. For example, when a place name appears, the author explains in parenthesis that today this is called such-and-such area in Seoul. Many readers recommended dropping these parentheses them because they would have no meaning for English-speaking readers. I'm still debating whether I should follow their advice or whether I should be more faithful to the original text.

Another difference in narration has to do with different expectations on the part of the readers. This historical novel in question is written in the form of a mystery, so English readers expect a narration that flows quickly without impediments. I will give you an example. At one point the protagonist is beaten, and he loses consciousness. The author explains that this happened because a certain acupuncture point was affected. In the Korean text such information sounds rather interesting, but some of my readers thought I should delete this unnecessary information, because it weakened the impact of the event. The question as a translator is: Should I follow their advice and edit it to make it fit the modern English usage and narrative, or leave it so that the reader may be

exposed to the unfamiliar? How much unfamiliarity can my readers take, without feeling frustrated and giving up reading? Sometimes I bring up questions of this kind with fellow translators and editors, and most of them say they believe in being faithful to the original. But when it comes to practice, they often take more drastic measures.

It appears to me that most of them think one thing, but when it comes to practice, they do something else. Within a paragraph, another thorny issue is the use of tenses in Korean. The Korean storytelling tends to go back and forth between tenses without clearly informing the reader. The use of tenses itself is not strict, so the present tense may be employed to describe past events. The typical Korean narrative goes back and forth among the past, the present, and future, and Korean readers do not have any difficulty following the flow, for it is often obvious from the context. When it is translated into English, though, many readers profess confusion, perhaps because they are used to the more rigid usage of English tenses and aspects. Sometimes the translator needs to supply a transitional phrase, such as "back then," to help confused readers. Because of the frequent going back and forth in time, the translated English text tends to have many sentences in the past perfect tense.

Finally, let me briefly talk about paralinguistic aspects. In a recent translation of mine, the author used the expression, "He opened his mouth," very often to indicate that a speaker started to talk. To some readers, it was unacceptable. In addition, this

particular author used many Korean proverbs and expressions. In general, if there are equivalent proverbs in English, it might be all right to translate them as such, but sometimes it sounds too English or American, even if the underlying meaning is the same. To me, the English expression, "Once burned, twice shy" sounds very similar to the Korean expression, "Frightened by a turtle, frightened by the black lid of a cauldron." In the historical novel I am working on there is an expression: "There is no grain that does not need night soil, and there is no noble cause that is not helped along by vice." This is uttered by someone to justify his action before he orders his underling to kill off a witness. Some readers put a question mark next to this expression. I decided to add "fertilizer" after the night soil, so the translation read, "There is no grain that does not need night soil for fertilizer, and there is no noble cause that is not helped along by vice." What I notice with native speakers of English is that most of them have a hard time accepting ambiguities and unfamiliar expressions. I think most Korean readers grew up reading translated foreign literature, so they tend to accept ambiguous expressions more readily. Besides, part of learning a foreign language is about accepting ambiguities. Many readers of English demand clarity. It poses a problem when the original text contains what the author intends to be poetic. When my readers complain, "I don't understand this," I am at a loss for what to do. When I don't understand the original sentence 100 percent, I think the author meant it to be ambiguous. In that case, should I try

to interpret the original sentence and render it clearly, or should I delete it altogether as some readers recommend? How far should I go to make my translated text readable? There is no easy answer to this question.

In sum, I resort to my readers during the editing and refining process. If I were a native speaker, I would not depend on them to such an extent. One advantage of being a non-native translator is being more open to suggestions. When someone raises a question to my Korean writing, I find myself being more defensive. I generally accept my readers' suggestions for my translation, but the final decision-maker is myself. Because of this heavy burden of responsibility, I keep changing my mind, back and forth, about the tiniest details. Should I translate palace gates and halls or should I just romanize them? Should I follow established terms in translation or should I be more creative? If I accept established terms, whose terms should I adopt?

Another strategy I use as a non-native speaker is taking the time to finish the translation. I go over the draft several times leaving a certain period of time between readings. It is the method I use when I write in my mother tongue, but when I translate into English, this becomes more essential. Meantime, I try to read as much as I can in English. I believe in serendipity, because a better expression or a phrase jumps at me as I read novels, stories, and magazine articles. I also believe that reading—input—is closely connected with translation—output—at a more general, abstract level, although I cannot explain this

with any theory. As I accumulate more experience as a translator, I believe that intuition and a sense of language are

more important than any translation theory.

Translation and Interpretation

PETER CAWS

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this colloquium at the invitation of Young-Key Kim-Renaud, who has been a valued colleague ever since I came to George Washington eighteen years ago. I came down from Delaware this morning but it was only when Bruce Fulton mentioned the tour "Made in Korea" that I remembered I had been driving my faithful Kia, made in Korea—and very well made, I may say.

It is a pleasure also and an honor to meet such distinguished representatives of Korean letters and of the community of translators from the Korean. I will make just a few remarks about translation and its connection to interpretation.

My interest in translation is of long standing, and has been both practical and theoretical. On the practical side I have done some translating, and learned at first hand the pitfalls and the rewards of the trade. The rewards I must say are more cerebral than financial, which is one of the standing difficulties in the production of good translations in my own field of philosophy—they may be undertaken from love or duty but hardly from a desire for fame or fortune. (But perhaps that is true of academic work generally.)

On the theoretical side no philosopher can afford to ignore issues of translation, from Greek and German

at any rate, to speak only of Western philosophy. And in a field like the Human Sciences, in which we offer the Ph.D. here at George Washington, the dependence on translation is even more striking. In my introductory course in that field, besides Greek and German, we read texts whose originals are in Latin, Italian, and French. It would be wonderful if our students knew all these languages. They don't—but even if they did that would be only the beginning.

The great Slavic linguist Prince Nicholas Trubetzkoy, when he set out to write his *Grundzüge der Phonologie*, thought that he should work with an empirical base of not fewer than 100 languages; he seemed to think it a weakness on his part that, since he knew only thirty-three languages, he had to rely on informants for the other sixty-seven. And I don't think even Trubetzkoy knew Korean; the greatest Western linguists are often ignorant of Asian languages, and have to resort to translations if they want to read Lao-Tse or the Lady Murasaki or Yi Kwang-su.

In these cases, unlike cases of translation between languages of one's own group, the reader is *completely* at the mercy of the translator, and what I call the "Rabassa test" does not apply. Still the Rabassa test is worth a moment's reflection. I invented this term after a vivid experience twenty

years or so ago. Spanish is (or was) one of my languages, and when I travel in a foreign country whose language I know I like to take along a novel in that language for reading in the train or at bedtime or at solitary meals. On one occasion, on a trip to Venezuela, my companion novel was *Cien años de soledad* of Gabriel García Márquez. I read about half of it in my week away, but my Spanish is slower than my English and when I got home I decided to finish it in the translation of Gregory Rabassa.

The point of the story is this: that when I looked back at the novel as a whole I found it quite impossible to tell where I had stopped reading in Spanish and started reading in English. I have never had a comparable experience in any of the other languages I know. I take it that it reflected a successful effort at rendering the cultural subtext of which Bruce Fulton speaks. At all events I offer the Rabassa test as incorporating an ideal: I have no hesitation in recommending Rabassa's translations to anyone, and I would like people who are in a comparable situation to mine with respect to other pairs of languages—say English and Korean—to recommend to me translators who in their view meet a comparable standard.

Why did I want to read García Márquez in the first place? Why should I wish to read, for example, Hahn Moo-Sook? The answers to questions like this are various but sometimes straightforward: in the first case because I wanted to be exposed to the magic realism of which I had heard such tantalizing things, in the second case because I was privileged to know

the author's daughter. Whatever reasons may be given—and there are hundreds of others—the fact is that literatures in other languages enrich our experience of our world and render us more fully part of the human family—in short, more fully human.

Yet that end might be served by other activities as well. What is striking is how much text is available and how little of it we can read in a lifetime. All of us here have read a lot of books—but how many have we not read? Only marginally fewer—proportionately speaking—than an illiterate peasant. So I want now to follow a slightly different tack, as it were from the other side of the picture.

I sometimes try to provoke my students by telling them that there is no such thing as the English language—only my English language, and yours, and his, and hers; that no two people have ever read the same English text in the same way; and that most of what is written in English is not read by most English-speakers, even the best-read among them—indeed that much of it will never be read by anyone. Looked at in this light, the existence of translations appears even scandalous—why add to the store of ignorance, as it were, by accumulating even more texts to remain unread?

In an academic discipline like philosophy the answer is obvious: some of the root ideas of the field were first expressed in other languages, and we would never know them if they had not been translated. But in a more general sense the justification must surely be that there are other ways of being than "being in English," that there are "pleasures of the text," as

Roland Barthes called them, that we will never encounter if we remain within the domain of texts written in English.

Here things begin to get complicated. For it may be that in a translated text there are pleasures in the translation that were not even in the original. And this raises the question of the "fidelity" of translation. I take it that we would all agree that a *strictly* equivalent translation is an unattainable ideal, that there is always an element of that betrayal captured in the Italian proverb "traduttore, traditore." Of course in one way this cannot matter as much as might be thought, since no two readers in *either* language will have read either text, the original or the translation, in the same way. A translation can obviously be *wrong*, or culpably misleading, but that is not the issue here: the best translation, by the most competent translator, is going to fall short of—or exceed!—the ideal. Just how does the discrepancy in question come about, play itself out? Two distinct cases present themselves: one in which the discrepancy is systematic, as between the source language and the target language, and one in which it is a function of the translator's idiosyncrasy.

Except in the case of genuinely bilingual or multilingual readers the systematic discrepancy seems to me ineliminable. It follows from what I have sometimes called the "principle of contamination in first-language learning," according to which a first language is never learned *clean*, as it were, but always comes with cultural, moral, historical, and political accretions. It is a question of the

mother's milk and the mother's knee, but also of the Word of the Father and of the Other, or others, whether peers or teachers or public figures, etc. It is impossible for a child growing into a first-language community not to internalize along with the language many of the values and prejudices of the community; and, as both Yu Young-nan and Bruce Fulton have pointed out, these implicit accompaniments of the text cannot always be spelled out in translation. It is the other discrepancy that interests me more, a discrepancy that arises, as I see it, when translation becomes interpretation—as it inevitably must at any level above the most elementary.

In the chapter on the Winter Solstice Mission to Peking in Hahn Moo-Sook's *Encounter* there are several passages dealing with the "translators" who accompany the mission. For example, "Ha-sang's master, Son ... had been a translator since his youth, but judging from the fact that he had not yet reached the civil service third rank, his language proficiency was probably of dubious distinction, both in Chinese and Korean." I will not dwell for the moment on one curious feature of this passage—the idea that a translator might be deficient not only in the source language but in the target language as well—but I wish to note another curious feature, this time of the English language, that is highlighted in the account of the translators. *Encounter* was translated—or so I judge

* Hahn Moo-Sook, tr. Ok Young Kim Chang, *Encounter: A Novel of Nineteenth-Century Korea* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 231.

from the name—by a native Korean speaker. What, I wonder, is the Korean term for "translator"? For what one would normally expect in an English text about this kind of practical, mission-specific translation would be not "translator" but "interpreter."

Here then is the curious feature of English: that just the translators who are not supposed to "interpret," as that term is used in literary studies, are called "interpreters," while those who translate literary texts, an activity that *inevitably* involves interpretation, are called "translators." Interpreters, at the United Nations for example, do give "price for price" (the basic root meaning of interpretation)—give them Russian, they'll give you French, and so on—and translators do "carry over" (the basic root meaning of translation) something from one text to another, from one culture to another. But the carrying-over, and the laying-down (for "translate" is related to "transfer" as Latin *fero* to its supine form *latus*, in parallel with many other cases, "refer" and "relate," "offer" and "oblate," etc.), are not mechanical but creative activities. What is carried over and laid down, as it were on the other side of the linguistic divide, is not just the same thing in another guise but to some inevitable extent a new thing.

Here again, however, translation from one language to another is not the only literary activity in which something of the sort happens. I was struck by Pak Wan-sō's description of her first attempts at writing: she wanted, we might say, to translate on to paper the life of Pak Su-gun, but she found herself unable to keep to the original text, as it were—in

the process of translation the "lies" kept creeping in. Of course we don't want to call them lies—we recognize precisely the creative force of literature at work. In her case there was a relatively simple remedy—move from biography to fiction, where the constraints of fidelity no longer apply. The translator is not free to do this, at least not in quite as simple a way. But consider: Pak Wan-sō's fictional account of Pak Su-gun fitted him in her own words "more closely" and "more vividly" than her biographical account. And there have been cases—Ezra Pound and Robert Lowell come to mind—in which poetic "imitations" of Chinese or French poetry in English are similarly more vivid and closer in spirit to the original than more exact translations. This is interpretation on a higher level, a holistic exchange of price for price in vastly richer market than that of the interpreter engaged in simultaneous translation.

It is sometimes maintained—and these observations would seem to bear it out—that the ultimate criterion of a good translation is that it should be an acceptably good text *in the target language*. One final word though: it need not necessarily be judged by the previously current standards of the target language, and this is where a non-native translator may have a special contribution to make. A non-standard style may have a character and a pleasure of its own. For example, the translation (already quoted) of Hahn Moo-Sook's *Encounter*, which is formal and occasionally quaint, comes to lend a specific flavor to the novel. Of course my tolerance of it may just be a function of my awareness of the

cultural distance involved—I might not be as happy with such a translation of a text in a language I know well. But it has often been said, for example, that the exactitude of Joseph Conrad's style, an acquired taste but a highly satisfying one for his readers, derives from the fact that his native language was not English but Polish.

To borrow Yu Young-nan's words, it won't do for a text to be too confusing or for the language to flow too awkwardly—but enough confusion

to be challenging, and enough awkwardness to be endearing, can be stimulating and rewarding. So there can be no hard and fast rule about who may do what translation—its possibilities are as wide as those of criticism or interpretation themselves, along with which activities it makes an indispensable contribution to the practice of literature. Including philosophical literature—but that is a topic that will have to be pursued on another occasion.

SOME THOUGHTS ON TRANSLATING TRANSLATION FROM KOREA TO INDIA

ALF HILTEBEITEL

I have been very impressed by the fine papers presented on literature and translation for this colloquium: their emphases on passion, encounter, and discovery, to begin with. I'd like to define as my task for these brief comments the following: to offer some thoughts on translating translation itself, as a project, from Korea to India, which is where most of my translating work has been sourced, and, to a certain important extent, also targeted, since, unlike many Koreans, many Indians, and not only Indian intellectuals, have grown up for a few centuries learning to read, speak, write, and translate into English. I was particularly drawn to take this line in reading what Bruce Fulton had to say about choosing works to translate from Korea and Japan: the contrastive point that cultural receptivity, at least in America, for Korean fiction hinges not on exotica but on whether the stories have some connection with the U.S., whereas American readers apparently still like to find Japan to be exotic and perhaps take connections with the U.S. to be familiar enough to make fiction about it less interesting. I'd like to also pick up on Ch'oe In-ho's linking of Hahn Moo-Sook's modern novel, *Encounter*, with two great works from classical Korean literature and thus comment not only on the axis of the

exotic and the familiar, but on that of the classical and the modern.

Asking you to keep in mind that my main work has been on India's huge classical Sanskrit epic, the *Mahābhārata*, and that that work has been primarily scholarly and not translation—although you can expect me to qualify that statement—here are some of the differences I see between translating from Korean and translating things Indian. In brief, it would appear that it is the Indian exotic that has fascinated and sold. But it is especially the classical exotic that has attracted the translators: Sanskrit first, and then classical Tamil and medieval Kannada, the last two, both thanks almost entirely to the work of one extraordinary translator, A. K. Ramanujan, who is also a poet in Tamil, Kannada, and English. But what are these works really about? Well, some of them are about different things, but let me borrow a phrase to make the point of what I think some of the most interesting and successfully translated ones are about. They are about "love in a dead language," to borrow the title of Lee Siegel's new novel about a professor who, while translating the *Kama Sutra*, falls in love with his thoroughly Americanized Indian-American student "Lalita," determines to help "Lalita" recover her

Indian heritage with the aid of this manual on exotic erotica, and dies when his huge Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary falls out of his bookshelf and knocks his head into his desk—a novel replete with footnotes, index, and a cleverly false bibliography. As to Ramanujan's translations from Tamil and Kannada classics, what he is translating are poems about human love and love of God. And the Indian epics are also very much about this subject, especially along with being about grief.

On the contrary, there have been very few translations of modern works from Indian vernaculars to have had any success in the west, one small exception being, again, the same A. K. Ramanujan's translation of K. Anantha Murthi's Malayalam novel *Samskara*, another love story, whose mainly academic success can be explained more by the renown of the translator than by the still considerable appeal of the novel.

Yet the modern India made familiar through contact with British and American people also sells—and indeed does so to much wider audiences—but no one needs to translate it since it's in English: Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Forster, R. K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, and GW's own Vikram Chandra, to name some the best. Every one of them is of course "translating culture" in an interlingual situation as rich as that of any translator who translates directly from a work in one language into that of another. Since Rushdie put his foot in his mouth once again in a New Yorker article a year or two ago, saying that

the best fiction in India is being written in English, and that fiction in the vernaculars is stagnant, there has been an enraged reaction, and the main form it has taken is to charge that all Anglo-Indian writing in English is simply marketing the exotic, that is, a false India, and is thereby untrue to the "real India." Ironically, the charge is being made most vociferously, as Vikram Chandra tells me, by a literary critic from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, Meenakshi Mukherjee, whose writing and international audience are entirely English, although let me add that she has also translated Bengali poetry and fiction into English.

Against this background, let me turn to some comments on translating the *Mahābhārata* into English. First, there have been three attempts to translate the Sanskrit text itself, and though it would be nice to speak about the translative ploys of Peter Brook's drama and film versions of the epic, and Shashi Tharoor's fusion of the *Mahābhārata* and the Indian Freedom Struggle in his novel titled *The Great Indian Novel*, the three translations will have to suffice. The first, which I will focus on shortly, is the 1884-1896 translation by Kisari Mohan Ganguli, who labored anonymously, leaving the credit for the work to its patron, fundraiser, publisher, and spokesman Pratap Chandra Roy. The second, by Manmatha Nath Dutt (1895-1905), did little more than shamelessly crib from the Ganguli-Roy translation. It changed nothing substantial, and, quite gratuitously, did no more than try to improve the English. Ganguli, Roy, and Dutt were all Bengalis, and we may place their work in the setting of the

so-called Bengal Renaissance, which occurred while the capital of the British Empire was still in Calcutta, that is, in Bengal. Finally, the third translation, which can be called the Chicago translation because it is STILL being published by the University of Chicago Press, was launched by J. A. B. van Buitenen with three volumes from 1973-78 until he died with not quite 1/3 of the text translated, and has remained dormant till now, as we await a new volume that will finally come out next year translated by James L. Fitzgerald, who has been serving since the early eighties as the Chief Editor of what has evolved into a three-person translating team that intends to complete the project probably some time in the next decade. I have organized a panel called "Celebrating the Resumption of the Chicago Mahābhārata" that will toast these translators next month at the American Academy of Religion, and give them all, and myself as well, a chance to talk about this resumption: what it means to resume someone else's translation after over twenty years; how three translators can work together; what it will mean that readers will pick up the translation in the middle of a huge didactic book that differs markedly in tone from the more "epical" books that van Buitenen translated, and so on. I know the three well enough to say that they will all do some different things.

Fitzgerald, in his Editorial Introduction to the new volume, titled "General Introduction: The Translation Resumed," defines his task as follows:

"My main goal in this translation is to make the *Mahābhārata*,

particularly its post-war didactic anthologies, as easily accessible and intelligible as possible for serious general readers of contemporary American English, whether they are students of ancient India or not." Further, "I always strive to find the most clear and energetic English syntax that verbal accuracy and fidelity to the meaning permit, and I try to avoid the opposite temptation to inject energy into the English translation when the Sanskrit simply is dry or pedestrian, which often it is." He acknowledges his debt to van Buitenen, who by the way taught both of us, but he sees it as "a hopeless prescription for disaster . . . to try consciously to emulate another translator's style." And he notes that each of his co-translators will be finding his or her own translating voice as well.

Fitzgerald offers one good justification for all this: the *Mahābhārata* itself is probably the work of many hands. But let me just say this: He tends to flatten things out. Even though more prone to make obvious errors, van Buitenen was more playful. Fitzgerald's co-translators probably will be so too. In translating for general readers who may or may not know ancient India, he goes for energy of syntax, true, but risks little when it comes to the epic's enigmas and its multiple meanings (note how he speaks of meaning in the singular). I will close with two examples.

But first let us look back at the Ganguli-Roy translation, which for all its Victorianisms, remains for me the landmark translation for its passion, insight, sustained consistency, and its unabashedly Indian spirit. It was Roy, the publisher, who usually spoke for

the project. He hoped that the epic's publication in English would encourage the "patriotic hearts" of his countrymen by deterring them from the "sensational literature of the present day in which, under the pretense of improvement, the plots and situations of fifth-rate French novels are introduced, vitiating the manly Aryan taste." Rather, it should turn "them to contemplate the purity of Aryan society, the immutable truths of Aryan philosophy, the chivalry of Aryan princes and warriors, the masculine morality that guides the conduct of men even in the most trying situations..." "The age is past when Indian students used to spout Byron over dishes of beef with the glass circling round in quick succession. Under influences more wholesome and due to a variety of reasons, the English-educated native of India has learnt to respect his ancestors." Roy envisioned the translation as serving not only the national aspirations of Indians, but the British Empire in understanding those aspirations. Roy considers it "providential" that England with its dim past and bright present and future has linked up with India. Although there are "lapses" of "repression" by some who are "untrue to the traditions of Empire and the instincts of their own better nature, the "Queen-Empress . . . enunciates the noblest principles of government, and confesses to her determination of founding her rule upon the love and gratitude of the people." Near the end of his life, Roy mentions that "Some years ago I received permission to lay before Her Majesty, for her gracious acceptance, a copy of the English translation...."

Yet Rudyard Kipling, writing in 1886, typically belittles the *Mahābhārata* in this Ganguli-Roy translation for "its monstrous array of nightmare-like incidents, where armies are slain, and worlds swallowed with monotonous frequency, its records of impossible combats, its lengthy catalogues of female charms, and its nebulous digressions on points of morality." Noting that the other Sanskrit epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, had also been recently made available in English translation, Kipling continues: "the two national epics have their own special value, as the *Rig Veda* has for students of early forms of religions belief; but the working world has no place for these ponderous records of nothingness. Young India, as we have said, avoids them altogether. . . ; the bare outlines of their stories are known and sung by the village folk of the country-side as love ditties; but as living forces, they are surely dead and their gigantic corpses, like whales stranded by the ebbing tide, are curiosities to be regarded from a distance by the curious, and left alone by those who look for any solid return from laborious reading (Thomas Pinney, Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884-88 [Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986], 177-78). Although he makes it sound like he has full translations before him, writing by 1986 Kipling could have read no further into the *Mahābhārata* than its fifth book (which is incidentally where van Buitenen left things off), since that is as far as the Ganguli-Roy translation had proceeded to that point. Two years earlier Ganguli anticipated such a reaction in his anonymous "Translator's Preface":

"In regard to translation from the Sanskrit, nothing is easier than to dish up Hindu ideas so as to make them agreeable to English taste. But the endeavor of the present translator has been to give the following pages as literal a rendering as possible of the great work of Vyāsa. To the purely English reader there is much in the following pages that will strike as ridiculous."

For my taste, I still say "hats off" to a translator whose first priority is his passion for the text rather than the tastes of his audience. But that is a luxury many translators cannot afford. But a scholar can afford it, and this is one of the reasons why I rejected an offer to be part of the *Mahābhārata* translating team some years ago. To me, translation of the *Mahābhārata* is not very interesting if it does not risk interpretation. The text declares itself to be ambiguous, to delight in subtlety, to pose enigmas. One of these is its portrayal of its author, Vyāsa, who is also a character in his own work who mysteriously comes and goes in and out of the action, and the thoughts of his characters, from a place designated as the *prishṭha* or "back" of a mountain—or, more accurately, of several different mountains, where he is said to have his "hermitage." The translators have all tamely taken *prishṭha* as the "top" of the mountain, but there are many

words for "top" or "peak," and *prishṭha* is not one of them. In fact, we would understand more about "the back of the mountain" if we began with the Korean "rear mountain," or "the hill behind the village" mentioned by Bruce Fulton. But the mountain that Vyasa comes from behind is variously the god Shiva's Mount Kailasa, the Himalaya as the earthly cosmic mountain, and Mount Meru as the mountain at the center of the universe.

Finally, as to the subject of love, let me just mention a few things about Draupadī, the heroine of the *Mahābhārata*, who is married to its five chief heroes, with each of whom she has her different passions. One of the ways the poets choose to mark some of her most passionate exchanges is by emphasizing her epithet "*Pāñchālī*," which can mean "puppet" or "doll." It seems no translator has appreciated this, and none, at least, has brought it into the translation. The heroine, however, could be the doll who defies her puppeteers, who also once complains, after she has been outrageously molested, of a God who treats humans as puppets, which her most righteous husband castigates her for as "heresy." I do not know how one would translate these things unless through scholarship, and unless scholarship is another form of translation.

AUTHORS AND TRANSLATORS

YOUNG-KEY KIM-RENAUD

Today, I am very moved to be part of this Colloquium established in memory of the late Hahn Moo-Sook, who happens to be my mother. Seeing two Korean novelists, both of whom knew Hahn Moo-Sook and shared mutual affection and respect with her, I feel my mother came together with them. As the author Ch'oe In-ho says, she is here with us.

Author Pak Wan-sō's recounting of her experiences that compelled her to write mesmerizes me. She is the very emblem of the Korean aesthetic: that beauty and truth are what comes from deep within one's heart. Though this notion of art is very Korean, it probably could be understood across the linguistic and cultural differences. When Beaudelaire says, "Or un poème ne se copie jamais: il veut être composé (But a poem is never copied; it wants to be composed.)" (Pichois 1976: 660), he speaks to our heart. Ms. Pak appeals to countless readers, not only through the passion and intensity of her words, but also by her lyricism. Although, as Peter Lee (1998: 9) says, the word "lyrical" did not even exist in Korean vocabulary until the arrival of Western literature, Korean literature has a strong foundation in poetry and songs. Good prose in Korean literature is poetic, and Pak's work is much more powerful because of this character than

her equally endearing story-telling style.

The urge to write often originates from an intense emotional experience such as Pak's. Many have made similar emotional voyages and have been fixated by an equal or perhaps even stronger desire to tell their stories. Few, however, have become writers of any merit. In short, experience is often a huge motivating factor in literary work. However, great literature is born only when the author goes beyond the realm of his or her own experience into the world of imagination and creativity, as Pak guides us through the path of her creation in such an elegant way.

When I approached the two Korean authors, Wan-sō and Ch'oe In-ho, to come to talk at our Colloquium, the first question both of them raised was whether the Colloquium carrying the name of Hahn Moo-Sook was to discuss her and her work. I unequivocally said no. I made the same point to the other participants, including Bruce Fulton and Yu Young-nan. However, Author Ch'oe kept hearing otherwise. It is as if something made him want to talk about my mother.

The novel, *Encounter*, has received many reviews, both in Korea and abroad. I have not read any of the numerous Korean reviews except for one or two. On the other hand, I

believe that by now I have read all of some dozen reviews or book notices published in English by foreign readers or by Koreans living abroad. When I received Mr. Ch'oe's text, I was shaken. For the first time, I got the impression that this man did indeed encounter my mother. He was not unlike a good translator. He began by reading her work and by the end of his exposé, my mother was present in Mr. Ch'oe's own writing.

Good translators are not too different from good authors. As Gregory Rabassa (1984b: 35) said, translators are not technicians but are writers. The author Ch'oe tells us the essential nature of encounter and discovery in the creative process. The authors meet their characters through their imagination, and as their creations become alive, they are even driven by them. Authors then become part of their created world. Translators not only meet the creation of the original author, but also meet and discover the author in the process of translation, eventually becoming the author's alter ego. How resounding it is when Patrick Maurus says "I am Yi Mun-yŏl in French."! (Fulton in this volume: p. 9)

There probably is no book or conference on translation, which does not mention, at least once, the famous Italian expression, *Traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor). Interestingly and rather unusually, its equally often mentioned Korean equivalent, *Pŏnyŏkcha, Panyŏkcha* (translator, traitor), carries not only its meaning, but also the quasi-pun of the two words. This maxim (or proverb or cliché depending on the point of view) seems to be based on two kinds of

problematic. The first is that there is such a thing as an ideal translation. The second is that such an ideal can never be achieved. That is, translators presumably are special breeds, engaged in futile effort and distortions, as their goal is unattainable.* However, in spite of all sorts of prejudices against translation and translators, all must agree with Gregory Rabassa (1984a: 21) that translation is almost as old as language, surely as old as the contact of a language with other languages.

Here, one may try to apply how linguists approach the study of language to how one should do translation. It may not be harmful to think that there is such a thing as an ideal translation, just as the language of an ideal speaker/hearer which Chomsky and his contemporary followers have assumed, exposing themselves to severe attacks by those who are impressed by language variation. What fascinates modern linguists is the fact that all human beings become a native speaker of some language, regardless of its kind or place in which it is spoken. What linguists are therefore trying to do is to make the best hypotheses about what must

* Counter opinions—albeit much rarer—exist. I remember once my mother saying with confidence, although she did not know any German, that Japanese translation of Goethe by a famous translator was said to be more beautiful than the original. Another apt cliché is betrayed by Donald Keene, a great translator of Japanese literature: He reminisces of his initial contact with Japanese literature through Waley's translation: "... delighted as I was with every word of Waley, I longed to read the originals, feeling somewhat contradictorily that they must be even superior to the best translation." (Keene 1970: 54).

be going on in the course of language acquisition and cognition. Human beings, children in particular, make the best possible hypotheses under their given circumstances. As more data become available to them, they keep revising those hypotheses.

I do not have as extensive an experience in translation as many of my illustrious colleagues participating in this Colloquium. My experience with translation is limited to rendering some linguistic works written in English into Korean, and some of the literary works by Hahn Moo-Sook into English. From my brief trials, however, some things have become particularly noticeable to me. I remember translating an academic article by and an interview with Noam Chomsky from the English original into Korean, my native language, rather fast and without too much pain. Of course, I had difficulty sometimes to come up with good equivalents for technical terminology, but I do not remember agonizing on how the whole sentence or paragraphs should sound in translation.

In the area of literary translation, I have almost exclusively chosen my mother's works, except for a short piece by my aunt Hahn Mal-Sook. This choice is not really from my wish to fulfill my filial piety, but from my subconscious — perhaps false — confidence that I might be able to carry her voice fairly well, as her daughter and an admirer of her works.

At my first attempt at literary translation, it became immediately clear that to translate literary works, at least three things are needed. First, one needs to clearly understand the

original. Because I thought I knew my mother so well, I was surprised to realize, in the course of translation, how my understanding of her work had been superficial. I remember spending a whole summer just to translate two short stories by my mother, making frequent phone calls to Seoul to verify things. Second, one should be a good writer. If reading for translation has turned out to require much more effort than in usual casual reading, writing in English, is a formidable task, especially for most non-native speakers, for writing is at a higher realm than simply being able to convey the basic meaning of the original. Finally, one should see and feel the aesthetic sense of the original writer and that of the target language. A good translator is one who makes his or her own voice as well as the original author's heard in a way that touches the heart of the reader. It is exactly such impetus that makes literary translation ten thousand times more exciting as well as agonizing than so-called "scientific" — academic or technical — translation.

An ideal literary translator would be someone who is *completely* bilingual and bicultural especially in *written languages*. In this view, being "completely" bilingual and bicultural may not necessarily mean having physically lived in two relevant linguistic and cultural communities or even being totally proficient in all aspects of the two languages and cultures. A literary translator may be considered "completely bilingual" in written languages, even if he or she has no oral/aural proficiency in one of the languages. Arthur Waley's translations

of Chinese and Japanese literatures are said to be unrivaled. However, Waley did not bother to learn spoken Chinese and Japanese (Morris 1970: 70). Even more surprisingly, he has never set foot in that part of the world from which his life's passion originated (Morris 1970: 80). It is clear that Waley has experienced, even though not physically, the languages and cultures of the literatures which fascinated him in a much deeper level than merely having grown up and studied somewhere in East Asia. According to Morris, Waley said he "'invincibly set against *déplacements* of any kind'. Yet until the very end he eagerly sought intellectual *déplacements*" (Morris 1970: 81). As a consequence, Waley was judged as "uncannily accurate in evoking its [the 'Far Eastern'] atmosphere" by those readers who knew the region (reported in Keene 1970: 54). It is not enough for a translator to be just familiar with the two languages and cultures. A literary translator must be someone who has a tendency to seek and profoundly appreciate and carry deep feelings expressed by others. They make these feelings their own and finally express them as if they were their own.

By the word, "culture," we need to distinguish between the so-called "big C" and "small c" readings of the word, the former referring to the culture of literary classics and artistic achievements, and the latter referring to the culture of "four F's," foods, fairs, folklore, and facts (Kramsch 1989). In translation, many small-c culture aspects are initially a stumbling block, like the porcupine hair of a once-upon-a-time high school boy mentioned in

Professor Fulton's presentation. Bruce and Juchan Fulton have been very successful in this respect, because they have paid a great deal of their attention to such cultural aspects in their translation. Their translation, both clear and beautiful, has been quite reader-friendly, in a way proving that such devices as interpolation in bringing out subtexts may easily overcome these kinds of cultural barriers. However, too much interpreting may undermine the original intent of the writer, who might have wanted to simply suggest certain things rather than giving everything away, as a literary device.

At any rate, the situation is much more problematic, when a particular literary genre is appreciated as a culturally specific big-C aesthetic. For example, Professor Fulton talks about some Korean authors being stylistically easier than others to translate into English. He mentions "Some Korean authors [in comparison to Hwang Sun-wŏn] are verbose, tendentious, and repetitive." These characteristics may be exactly the qualities of Korean aesthetic. For example, in Korean language and other behavior, being cuttngly simple is emotionless, dull, and sometimes downright rude and tactless. It is an aesthetic that appreciates the so-called "yŏun," i.e., the ripple or the sound that remains after having been uttered, sung, or played on an instrument. Repetition is one way of expressing one's intense emotions. And I think this particular characteristic is again in the lyrical origin of all forms of Korean literature. Newly popular Korean authors with simple, staccato style are

clearly influenced by modern Western literature.

There are of course many other challenges a literary translator must face. A great deal of culture-bound expressions seems to be just impossible to translate or possible only at the expense of tantalizing loss of literary quality. One good example is sound symbolism in Korean. Typically, sound symbolism, other than in the case of onomatopoeia, is highly language-specific. Should one worry more about the sound or the meaning? Again there can be different approaches to this, but one way of dealing with this may be to give both, one by simple romanization followed by the best English approximations in meaning, hoping the readers will get a sense of how the original might be.

Another language-specific characteristic in Korean is honorifics. One clear usage of honorifics as literary device is the change of honorific marking to indicate the change in interpersonal relationship. Such a shift cannot be easily caught in a target language, where such forms are not grammatically encoded. Let us also talk about the class or regional variety of language. Again, Gregory Rabassa convincingly tells us, "Rustics are rustics the world over, but it is absurd and outlandish to have a Brazilian *sertanejo* talking like an Appalachian mountain man. Even black English is poorly served by translation into black Spanish." (Rabassa 1984: 24) Translators often realize also, as some authors have been concerned about, how "an environment that is commonplace in one culture becomes exotic in the other." (ibid)

Toward the non-native speakers of the target language doing the translation, including herself, Dr. Yu may be overly critical or modest. Non-native speakers, like native speakers, are not a homogeneous set. Some of the most beautiful pieces of English translation from the Korean original have been done by non-native speakers such as Peter Lee, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Suh Ji-moon, and Chun Kyung-Ja, and of course Yu Young-nan herself. In the final analysis, their degree of success has each time had to do with the meticulous attention each of them has given to their task, and the pride they have taken in their role as translators. Because each of those individual translators is to a varying degree insecure about their English, they have put themselves under more scrutiny than any native speaker might. My experience with native speakers of English clearly leads me to conclude that being a native speaker does not necessarily make a literary writer.

I am impressed at the number and kinds of native speakers to whom Dr. Yu asks to read her initial translation. And I wonder if her effort to please everyone would be necessary. Even within the same linguistic and cultural communities, readers are not uniform. Plus, things change. The porcupine haircut and the outhouse will soon be things of the past, and in fact already are in Korea. Even aesthetic values will change as cultures come increasingly in contact with others, and it would be only natural if new literary styles are appreciated. What might be necessary is for the translator to find a voice that he or she feels can best express the original work. I agree with

Peter Lee (1998: 8) that a translator should "recreate in a new language an equivalent beauty, equivalent power, and an equivalent truth" which will carry the voice of the original author. So long as translation is a creative activity pursued within such clear constraints, a translator is more than a re-creator. A translator is someone who lives in two worlds seeing the beauty that exists in both.

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THE LONG PATH HOME: FICTION, TRANSLATION, AND ANATOLY KIM'S REDISCOVERY OF KOREA

PETER ROLLBERG

Deeply touched by the honor of having been invited to speak at this colloquium, I would first like to commend its organizers for the benevolent spirit of cultural appreciation that has permeated this annual event since its very inception. Far from the troubling notions of ideological divisiveness and methodological separatism in the Western humanities of our time, the Hahn Moo-Sook colloquia harmoniously blend linguistics and history, religion and literature, philosophy and cultural anthropology. And the colloquia's inclusiveness goes even farther—in an outstanding manner, they generously open the academic discourse to an interested public.

Without knowing the Korean language, and knowing shamefully little about Korea's history and culture, I do, nevertheless, feel a personal connection to the plight of this country which has been divided for decades—as was my native Germany, for forty years. Yet my participation in the colloquium can be justified on a professional level, too: For several years, I have been researching the *oeuvre* of Russian-Korean author Anatoly Kim (b. 1939). I wrote articles on Kim, conducted and published interviews with him, and edited two volumes of his works in German. For one of these volumes,

White Mourning (1989), I translated a number of short-stories. Therefore, Yu Young-nan's and Bruce Fulton's thoughtful contributions about the difficulties of adequately translating cultural specifics found an eager listener in me.

At today's morning session, literary creation has been compared to "a voyage in search of a new continent" and an "encounter" (Ch'oe In-ho), but also to the "free reign of imagination" and, more bluntly, "the pleasure of lying" (Pak Wan-sö). The spatial and epistemological commonalities between these metaphors are obvious, and they can fully be related both to writing and translating (that is, viewing the translator as someone who follows an earlier voyager's path, or as someone who retells pleasurable lies told by somebody else...). Clearly, the words "creation" and "re-creation" that are contained in the colloquium's title point first and foremost to the author and the translator. But we should not forget that a translation turns *the reader* into a re-creator, too, and does so to a greater extent than in literature written in one's native tongue. In other words, the translator acts as an *enabler* without whom most readers would not be able to even begin "recreating" in their minds a work of verbal art. It is the translator's noble task to enable the

reader to experience aesthetic delights that would otherwise be closed to him.

In related ways, the literary critic and the teacher of literature also are enablers who can help readers in decoding aesthetic systems formerly alien to them; at their best, they are mediators between cultures. I, therefore, passionately disagree with George Steiner's radical concept in his provocative book-length pamphlet, *Real Presences* (1989) which states that art, including verbal art, must be perceived in unmediated ways, "purely," in order to be adequately relished. Similarly to the function of the literary translator, the "statements of personal intuition" (Steiner) that both scholars and teachers of literature and culture produce can play the same eye-opening role with regard to a work of art that the work of art does with regard to the world...

Due to historical and personal circumstances, writers such as Joseph Conrad and Vladimir Nabokov experienced transitions from one culture to another not on a theoretical level but in their own biographies. The technical challenge they were facing—to appropriate a foreign culture on such a high level that it would allow them to create verbal art in the foreign language—is still the aspect most impressive to common readers. Equally challenging, however, was their immersion in a new culture, a dramatic process which they customarily thematized in their fiction. A characteristic effect of such a transition was that it freed these writers from the usual cohesion with a location: a country, a city, a landscape. In Nabokov's case, this loss of local gravity led to a sometimes cynically

presented exchangeability of characters, peoples and settings. In Conrad's, it opened the path to a universal embracing of humanity in her entirety.

Anatoly Kim lost this local gravity twice, and both times years before he was born. For him it was a trauma (I called it the "prenatal author's trauma" in one of my articles—as opposed to the actual personal or historical traumas such as Pak Wan-sō's experience of the Korean war). As the offspring of the Korean minority on the Far Eastern island of Sakhalin—several hundred thousand people whose ancestors had once fled Japanese troops—Kim knew about Korea only from his family members. But in the fall of 1937, Stalin's government decided to deprive this minority of their newly acquired homeland of fifty years. Supposedly because of a possible fraternization with Japanese military in the pending war, those hundreds of thousands of people were ordered to leave their homes on Sakhalin overnight; they were handed out coupons for the harvest that they had just gathered—those coupons later turned out to be invalid—and loaded on trains that took them to Kazakhstan, thousands of miles away. Those without college education were dropped off in the middle of the steppe where thousands died in the first rough winter. The more privileged ones—Kim's parents among them—were given permission to settle in Kazakh towns.

Until the age of eight, Anatoly Kim spoke only Korean. Then he learned Russian and unlearned his

native language forever¹. Studying painting and later literature in Moscow, Kim's short stories and novellas have as varied geographical backgrounds as his own life. In some narratives, Kim alluded to the Korean community on Sakhalin or in Kazakhstan, but he never told of the horrible events of 1937. And only when he was in his fifties—after the Soviet Union crumbled—could he visit Korea for the first time. This voyage, as well as his subsequent stay there for a number of years as a professor of Russian, proved a veritable revelation. For Anatoly Kim's discovery of the *real Korea* was that same "voyage in search of a continent," only that it was not an entirely new one. It was the continent of his roots.

"I am deeply convinced that the landscape of a country, its typical climate and the weather conditions in a region are fully reflected in the psychological features of the people who were born in this country," Kim wrote. In his "Letters from South Korea" (1994)², the author acts as an explorer and a cultural mediator: loosely connecting travelogue, anecdotal observations and philosophical reflections, Kim tells Russian readers about a culture of which he himself had known solely

from hearsay, and from fairy-tales and ghost stories told by his grandmother. Years later, in his "Letters," Kim's stated goal is to comprehend the *nation's soul* of a people to which he belongs ethnically but hardly culturally, and to interpret it through the prism of the Russian culture, which had become his haven. Thus, in Korea he is both foreign visitor and native, creator and translator.

His first discovery relates to nature. Which season, Kim asks his students, do they like the most? Their unanimous answer is: spring. Kim generalizes that the psychological essence of Koreans can be compared to blossoms in spring, and he finds the expression of this seasonal preference in various Korean celebrations. During spring, the author muses, the Korean soul is most happily congruent with itself, whereas Russians, in Kim's view, have been shaped by the spirit of winter, a time when they feel most euphoric and congruent with themselves. Kim links the Koreans' fascination with spring to their attraction to beauty and the ability to openly and seriously express their enthusiasm for somebody beautiful. Kim's unexpected and rather poetic approaches, as well as his speculations about popular Korean aesthetics may appear somewhat bewildering, but they make perfect sense when related to major themes in Russian culture, physical beauty and the link between nature and culture being two of them.

In "Letters from South Korea," the chain that leads from the seasons and spring to beauty is then continued with the significance of the ever-present Korean mountains which also "teach

¹ In 1996, Sim Min Ja defended a dissertation on Kim at the University of Chicago, the only thesis dealing with this writer in the United States of which I know. Sim Min Ja also translated several works by Kim into Korean, for example, the novellas "The Herb Gatherers" and "Nightingale's Echo."

² Kim, Anatolii. "Pis'ma iz Iuzhnoi Korei," *Druzhba narodov*, 1/1994, pp. 187-200. All translations are mine—P.R.

beauty," as Kim puts it. He hypothesizes that "the entire subtle aestheticism of the Korean character, in other words, the universal sense of beauty that is inherent in all Koreans, emerged in them from those lessons in grace which their mountains taught them." He finds Koreans less disposed to bartering than other nations, but regrets that the young Republic has nonetheless become part of the "total war of universal commercial exchange in which everybody is forced to participate." Yet the most drastic discovery for the Russian writer is Koreans' attitude toward pain, in particular, toothache (not a trivial matter at all — as a motif, toothache played a central role in Dostoevsky's "Notes from the Underground," 1864). Having suffered his entire life from episodes of aching teeth, Kim now confesses to having tried to rationalize the inevitability of pain in ways that corresponded with Russian cultural traditions, namely that suffering and pain are preconditions of happiness and must be accepted.

Because of his "Russian" conviction that "toothache is eternal, like the world," Kim undergoes a moment of physical and spiritual awakening when the dentist Dr. Ha demonstrates to him for the first time that much-feared procedures can be performed completely without pain. And it is in Dr. Ha's tiny clinic that the Russian-Korean author Anatoly Kim arrives at an astonishing conclusion: suffering is unnecessary. As banal as the pretext to this epiphany may sound, the relevance of the writer's conclusion should not be underestimated. In a moment of beautiful clarity and insight, Kim's intercultural voyage—as much a voyage to himself as a voyage home—ends at a point where experience, humanity and humane spirit become one.

I happen to believe that all our efforts: of writers, translators, critics, teachers, readers, are meaningful only insofar as they lead us to that same spirit. Today's colloquium has strengthened this belief in me once again.

Contributors



Peter Caws is University Professor of Philosophy at GW, a position he has held since 1982. In addition to his

seven books and over 100 articles in the field of philosophy he is the translator of I. M. Bochenski, *Die zeitgenössischen Denkmethode*, as well as of shorter works in French.



Ch'oe In-ho is an imaginative writer who attained early critical acclaim for his short fiction. He has since become one of

South Korea's most popular writers, as well as a screenwriter of note. Also a recipient of the Yi Sang Award, he is anthologized in *Ten Korean Short Stories* ("Another Man's Room") and *Land of Exile* ("The Boozer") and is featured in *Korea Journal*, Winter 1995 ("Deep Blue Night") and *Moonrabbitt Review*, 1:1 ("The Poplar Tree")



Bruce Fulton is the co-translator of several anthologies of Korean fiction, most recently *A Ready-Made Life: Early Masters of*

Modern Korean Fiction, with Kim Chong-un (University of Hawai'i Press), co-editor of the forthcoming

Columbia Anthology of Modern Korean Literature and Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature, and the recipient of a 1995 National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship. He received his Ph.D. from the Department of Korean Language and Literature, Seoul National University, writing his dissertation on the short fiction of Hwang Sun-won.



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Alf Hiltebeitel is Columbian School Professor of Religion and Human Sciences and directs the Human Sciences

Program at GW. He has written widely on Sanskrit literature, often translating from the Sanskrit epics and purāṇas, and has worked on Tamil texts with translation assistance. He has also translated books from French by Georges Dumézil (now *Destiny of the*

Warrior and Destiny of a King) and Mircea Eliade (*The History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 3, co-translated with Diane A. Cappadona), and has just finished a retranslation of a translation from French of Madeleine Biardeau's *Histoires de poteaux: Variations védiques autour de la déesse hindoue*.



Young-Key Kim-Renaud is Professor of Korean Language and Culture and International Affairs, and a co-

convener of the Hahn Moo Sook Colloquium in the Korean Humanities at GW. She has published extensively on Korean linguistics and cultural history, and has translated literary and linguistic works. She translated her interview with Noam Chomsky, which appears as an appendix in her book *Studies in Korean Linguistics*, as well as one of his articles. Kim-Renaud has also translated Hahn Moo-Sook's works including the novel, *And So Flows History*, and is compiling an anthology of Hahn's short stories translated by various translators.



Pak Wan-sö is one of the elder stateswomen of modern Korean fiction, renowned for her engaging colloquial style. She is the author of *Namok* (trans. Yu Young-nan, *The Naked Tree*, Cornell East Asia Series) and several other award-winning

novels and stories, many of them based on her experiences during the Korean War. She is the recipient of the Yi Sang and Tong'in awards, South Korea's two most prestigious prizes for short fiction. She is widely anthologized in English. A collection of English translations of her stories has been published by M.E. Sharpe (1999).



Peter Rollberg is Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Chair of the German and Slavic Department at GW. He has published extensively on 19th and 20th-century Russian literature and philosophy, as well as Russian and German film history. He has translated literary and scholarly texts from Russian into German and English. His translations of short stories by Russian-Korean author Anatoly Kim were published in book form (*White Mourning*, 1989) and in various literary journals.



Yu Young-Nan is the translator of Pak Wan-sö's *The Naked Tree* and, with Julie Pickering, Han Söng-wön's *Fathers and Sons*. She is currently translating Yi In-hwa's historical novel *Yongwönhan cheguk* (*The Everlasting Empire*). Her Ph.D. dissertation was translated into Korean and published as a book entitled *What is Translation?*