The Colonial-Imperial Regime and Its Effects: *Writer Kim Sa-ryang as an Ex-ception*

CHA Seung Ki

Abstract

This paper attempts to contemplate the objectification and deobjectification of former colonies. It contains a critical examination of the three broad perspectives on this issue: the theory of colonial exploitation, colonial modernization, and colonial modernity. It also introduces the concept of the colonial-imperial regime, understanding the regime as an unequal and asymmetrical one in which discrimination and oppression were internally structured. The regime is not a single simple structure characterized by the relations between the controlling and the controlled, but a compound structure in which subjectivity is formed by organizing and arranging life, behaviors, and knowledge in a specific manner. Based on these concepts, this paper focuses on the peculiar case of writer Kim Sa-ryang. By studying his case, it is possible to learn how the colonial-imperial regime strove to segregate citizens from non-citizens and humans from non-humans so as to turn the latter two types into nonentities. The abject subject unveiled by delving into the person and works of Kim Sa-ryang can be described as a personage who is a living testimony to the sociopolitical order that affected segregation along those splitting lines while at the same time personifying a character who is the product of resistance against the forms of subjectification imposed by rulers.

Keywords: colonial-imperial regime, *dispositif*, immigrants, singularity, subjectification, bare life, the abject, example, ex-ception

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"Thus I'll always travel between Korea and metropole Japan
like a migratory bird."

– Kim Sa-ryang, "Kokyouwo omou 故郷を想う" (Nostalgia for My Native Village), *Chisei* 知性 (Intelligence), May 1941

Crossing over to Another "Country"

What significance does it have for us to describe the history of colonial Korea today? What does a colony mean to us when we talk about it as something that has already passed but also as something that still affects us? What do we want to see in it and ask about it? What do we want to link it with or sever it from? Innumerable stories in diverse genres have been told about the events and achievements of Korea's colonial period. Before adding another to the litany, I will attempt a fundamental self-reflection on the attitudes we have taken in making observations on the colony.

Whether objectified as something with finality or something that continues to influence us, the colony undoubtedly belongs to the past. But is the colony indeed a being of the past, something that can be objectified with a sense of maintained temporal distance? Isn't the colony perhaps separated from us not only temporally but also *spatially*? Can we say that the people who lived on the Korean peninsula in the 1930s and in current times belong to the same country? Could they and we have imagined the future of one nation together? Wouldn't it be more correct to say that "the past is a foreign country," as David Lowenthal's book is titled? (Lowenthal 2006) Such a perception is applicable beyond its metaphorical effectiveness. For the Korea subsumed as a colony by imperial Japan and the Republic of Korea today are objectively different countries. Emphasis here should be placed not on "different" but on "countries."

There exist significant gaps and ruptures incomprehensible in chronologically temporal terms between colonial Korea and the current nation-state. What we should not forget in discussing the colony

is the fact that the story overcomes these gaps and ruptures and the story not only links the past with the present but also links different countries. In temporal terms, Korea was divided into two different states of the North and South upon liberation from Japan, and subsequently underwent a fratricidal war. When considering spatial differences, however, we have transformed into a nation-state established in the southern Korean peninsula away from a regional regime in which Japan and Korea—as well as Taiwan, Manchuria, and some Southeast Asian countries—were entwined. Hence, all present-day Koreans can be called descendants of immigrants who crossed national borders.[1]

In trying to understand the notion of the colony, it is important not to forget the perspectives of these immigrants. When we forget such perspectives, all things can be taken as matters of course in history. The perception that this land is foreign to us lies at the threshold of each segmented spot in our history. Attesting to this is the fact that each regime transition, small or large, demands the creation of a new historical description. Thus viewed, history may be an act that translates into necessity the eventness that our people have indeed settled not elsewhere but here, a foreign place, because we have had to survive. However, if the perceptions of immigrants are forgotten, only voices pretending to have originated from the beginning of the world and the natural boundaries of this land will be left behind.[2] On the contrary, remembering the perceptions of the immigrant means realizing that the voice of this master is as fictional as the existence of a being preceding the place. In describing history, particularly the history of a colony, we should not forget that such description consti-

1. The metaphor "immigrants and their descendants" is not a simple one. Given that a large portion of about six million "Korean expatriates" and their descendants have failed to immigrate to their motherland, breaking away from the regional regime of the colonial era, it can be said that the majority of the population of North and South Korea today have, in a sense, succeeded in their immigration.
2. In this regard, though it is not directly related to the question of describing history, we may note the perceived hospitality Satoshi Ukai exhibited when he attempted to reverse the master to the guest while critically reviewing problems that arise when a particular community deals with a minority (2010, 29-33).

tutes an act of crossing over to another country above anything else.

This paper contemplates how to objectify and deobjectify the colony while being conscious of such two-way population movements. An act of crossing over and then back across a border demands an action separated from one that merely adjusts epistemological distance intersected by prescribed gaps. This type of action is an act of constructing historical objects out of the incommensurable past, while preserving the things that are ontologically different from such objects or are impossible to objectify in the realm of potentiality. To clarify the direction of this action, a brief review of the various formulae posited for the understanding of the colony is needed.

Beyond the Confrontation between Colony and the Modern

Research papers on colonial Korea keenly conflict with and confront one another, depending on the authors' standpoints on Korea's modern times. This article does not allow me to review all the numerous publications and examine their features, limitations, and potentiality. Judging and evaluating individual publications that attempt to make historical sense of the colony based on different methodologies arising from diverse academic grounds such as the theories of inherent development, colonial exploitation, colonial modernization, colonial modernity, people's history, or culture not only exceeds my capabilities but is also incompatible with this paper's intention of presenting an experimental approach to correct the attitude of looking at colonies in a foreign and strange way. Nonetheless, it is necessary to grasp the basic stances of these publications, rough as any such assessment may be, in order to contemplate how to objectify and deobjectify colonies.

Standpoints on colonies and confrontation over how to describe the history of colonial Korea were at the forefront of the academic community in the 1980s and, seem to have been bisected largely by the theory of colonial exploitation and that of colonial modernization. The term "bisected" is no doubt somewhat exaggerated. It

would be more accurate to say that the inherent development and colonial exploitation theories emerged as a dominant frame of interpretation in the latter half of the 1960s as they overcame the remnants of positivistic historical science and colonial history. The theory of colonial modernization, which reevaluated the level of modernization achieved in the colonial period, advanced mainly from economic sociology circles and refuted the nationalistic prejudice of colonial exploitation theory. These camps can nevertheless be largely put into two categories because they represent opposing standpoints in the understanding of the relationships between a colony and the modern.

Colonial exploitation theory can be summarized as a stance looking at the colony and the modern in a confrontational way. It holds that Korea's modern era did not arise from imperial Japan, but grew out of the inherent roots, which come from the later years of the Joseon dynasty, and that the inherent potential for modernization under colonization underwent a process of abnormal deviation in that natural modernization had been suppressed, delayed, and distorted. According to this theory, a colony is thus a special historical concept that is not directly compatible with Korea's modern development, as imperial Japan's policy toward colonial Korea was basically exploitative.

In contrast, the theory of colonial modernization, which regards modernization as a universal and inevitable process, holds that the modernization process took place in colonial Korea without fail. Moreover, it holds that the legal and institutional reforms achieved under the leadership of the Government-General of Korea expedited the dissolution of feudalistic customs as well as the advent of modern changes and capitalist development in Korea.

It has often been noted that these two standpoints, while apparently extremely contradictory to each other, share a common ground in that they both see the modern as a stage that must be naturally attained. It goes without saying that the colonial modernization theory supposes the modern as a universal route. The colonial exploitation theory also idealizes the modern as a natural and world histori-

cal premise, one that cannot be identified with the specific modern adaptation of Japan that achieved modernization first in East Asia and pursued a policy of imperialism. Colonies are thus posited as existing farthest from the "normal" modern, and exist instead within a sort of Platonic ontology.

Such observations were raised from another standpoint of critically probing into colonial modernity, holding that colonies and the modern constitute neither a relationship of simple confrontation, as asserted by the colonial exploitation theory, nor a relationship of unilateral superiority or inferiority, as maintained by colonial modernization theory, but are related to each other in a complex and multifaceted way.[3] The third stance, theoretically grounded in postcolonialism, attempts to expound the singularity of colonial modernity, keeping in sight a world system in which colonies and the modern restrict each other instead of the modern being realized in colonies. Emphasis is placed either on colonies or the modern in each individual research study, but the studies based on this stance seem to attempt to undertake research on colonies as an action criticizing the modern, considering colonies and the modern as two sides of a world system that have grown from the same root.

The above-mentioned features appear when differences in the methodologies of understanding the relationship between colonies and the modern are used as the criteria. When the differences overlap with the relationship between colonial Korea and Japan, however, similar but classifiable features are revealed. The relationship between colonial Korea and its colonizer, Japan, run contrary to that between a colony and the modern on the one hand, but overlap with each other on the other. When attention is paid to the relationship between a colony and the modern, a discourse is liable to return to those of things individual and general and eventually move toward

3. On articles attempting to establish colonial modernity as problematic, while criticizing the limits of both colonial exploitation and modernization theories, refer to Cho (2006) and Kong and Jung (2006). On articles examining the trend of recent colonial studies, including the theory of colonial modernity, refer to Hur (2010).

expounding the particularity of colonies. But a colony is naturally inseparable from its home country. If we review the above-mentioned publications, focusing on the methodology of understanding the relationships between colonial Korea and its colonizer, we can catch the differences in the way of understanding the relationship between nation and state and further between life and forms, which goes beyond the relationship not of individual and general things, but of nation-states themselves and further of life and form.

In the theory of colonial exploitation, it goes without saying that colonial Korea and the colonizing country of Japan are distinctively classified as the object and subject of exploitation. This can be considered the basic principle of the theory of colonial exploitation in understanding and judging the relationships between a colony and a colonizer. Under this principle, a line can be drawn dividing pro- and anti-Japanese acts and collaboration and resistance. The acts of meeting or cooperating with the policies of the Government-General of Korea or the Japanese government constitute participation in acts exploiting the Korean nation, and accordingly the concept of national crime can be established. When nations fall under the relationship of the ruling and the ruled, an act of a member of the ruled participating on the side of the ruling or enjoying its privileges naturally helps perpetuate the relationship of ruling and being ruled. Though this can be understood as a clear criterion in the principle of passing judgment, it is a principle hard to apply when seen from the dimension of individuals' lives in a colony that change in relation to specifically formalized or regularized routes. This does not mean that we should reserve ethical judgment on routinized colonial violence, but is important to mention because human lives are filled with more routine and prosaic hours than dramatic moments. The colonial exploitation theory and the collaboration-resistance model, when the prosaic hours of a colony are not taken into account, are liable to become excessively political or apolitical. For instance, the life of a person involved in a politically significant incident can be understood in the historical meaning of the incident by one camp, while the opposing camp, by employing the logic of survival, may make it apolitical by

neutralizing any acts outside of evident and deliberate collaborations. We must keep in mind that ethical judgments can be moralized even when ideologically defined modes of living are not considered,[4] and that the situation under which Korea and Japan were linked as a colony and a colonial mother country had aspects that can hardly be classified and deployed by the power of an imagination formed after the emergence of the present nation-state.

On the other hand, modernization theory, based on the monism of capitalist civilization, understands colonies as the first stage of an inevitable process of civilization in which modernization is equated to capitalism. Thus viewed, colonial Korea and the colonizing country of Japan are nothing but units taking part together in one process of historical development now dubbed capitalist civilization. The theory maintains that capitalism was introduced into and developed in Korea under the premise of socioeconomic rationalization and institutionalization by Japan. Attesting to these claims are economic indices showing increased population and production. Life viewed through such economic indices can be living reduced to a minimum life-line. Such reduction, by using minimum economic conditions needed for living as the criteria, gives rise to the assumption that a better life is uniformly guaranteed. Structural discrimination between a colony and its home country, systematic differences in production and distribution, and conflicts in the system and life can be dissolved into the dimension of bare life. When we ground our discussion on these essential conditions existing "not only inside myself but also inside all others," a "consideration for the world" cannot help but vanish,[5] and all varying strata of life are woven into the world of

4. In this article, "moral" is used in the sense of following objective working rules the community imposes on individuals, and "ethics" in the sense of the self-reflection and judgment individuals make on morality. A judgment of forms of life to which no identical "moral rules" can be applied; therefore, reflection is demanded not only of the form of that life but also of the form of life to which one making a judgment belongs.

5. Hannah Arendt notes that "interest in life" emerges to replace "loss of the world" or "alienation from the world." For more on this, refer to Saito (2009, 67).

quantitative identity by force. Accordingly, modernization theory cannot but be insensitive to the violence ever-present in the contemporary world, let alone the asymmetrical relationships between Korea and Japan as well as between colonial Korea and the Republic of Korea.[6]

Studies into colonial modernity, which emerged to criticize the two theories mentioned above, attempt to subtly capture the complicated strata of the colonized people's lives under conditions in which Korea and Japan were entangled with each other while paying attention to the inter-confinement of colonies and the modern. The complicatedness of the colonized people's lives lies essentially in that colonial modernity is entwined with aspects that brought about new opportunities to their lives along with those that placed figurative yokes around their necks. Accordingly, inquiries into colonial modernity step beyond the nation-state schema and attempt to pay attention to the interdependent relationship in which Korea and Japan, a colony and its colonizer, define each other and are defined in terms of each other as a unique aspect of modernity, or perhaps in terms of some core characteristics related to fundamental aporia.

It is difficult to consolidate studies on colonial modernity in a unified standpoint as they deal with diverse areas and trends. But their most basic direction seems to be focused on explaining the true nature of a special object dubbed colonial modernity, instead of colonies and the modern. By introducing the concepts of hybridity, translation, and border crossing, they mainly attempt to identify the unique phenomena of modernity and the rupture points that existed in the daily life of colonies and from there deduce the possibility of postcolonialism. The studies attempt to redraw diving lines in diverse dimensions such as disciplinary power, hegemony, everyday life, gender, geopolitics, diglossia situations, and biopolitics—which

6. Another feature of the modernization theory disclosing its universalistic monism is that it takes colonial Korea to be an independent economic unit (Huh 2005, 23-24). This view is also related to the theory's historical perception that the socio-economic infrastructure of colonial Korea was inherited by the Republic of Korea when the nation was liberated from Japan's colonial rule.

could never be diminished by national discrimination and hostility between colonial Korea and its home country Japan—and to discern compound and multilayered forms of life, which can hardly be classified into clear resistance and collaboration. This is an effort to examine the possibility of postcolonialism in a colony as well as to expose the colonial unconsciousness that is still effective today in a reflective manner.

The Colonial-Imperial Regime as *Dispositif*

As of now, the trend of critically probing into colonial modernity appears to play an important role in determining the basic way we describe colonial Korea. But colonial modernity studies have reached the necessity to develop a new methodological approach in dealing with not only issues involving the relationships between colonies and the modern but also those between colonial Korea and Japan, its home country.

First, a basic probe must be made into the nation-state schema that recurs both consciously and unconsciously. If the exploitation theory makes so-called "national contradictions" the central axle in understanding colonies by observing colonies through the nation-state framework, the modernization theory removes the threshold between the colonial past and nation-state present from the standpoint of a monolithic capitalistic civilization. On the other hand, colonial modernity studies expose the plurality of the modern through colonies or denounce the violence of the modern. In the process, they reveal that nation-state formats today are entwined with colonies in a complicated way.[7] This clearly de-naturalizes the nation-state format, but this de-naturalization may paradoxically hide the inconvertibility between the order of past remarks and those of their current counter-

7. For example, studies designed to explore the colonial origins or mixed origins of "Korean Studies," "national history," and "national literature" fall under this category.

parts. How can we build a bridge between the colonial past and the current nation-state without forgetting the difficulties involved in two-way population movements?

Second, research on the singularity of colonies must be conducted. While colonies are defined as countries that deviated from the normal process of modernization under the exploitation theory, colonies are always placed in the process of universal capitalistic modernization according to modernization theory. Colonies considered in terms of modernization theory are nothing more than particularities in which universality is realized into individuality. On the other hand, exploitation theory exposes surplus aspects of colonies not in accord with universality by describing colonies as frustrated modern times. In the respect that the theory premises the idea of "genuine modern times" as its alter ego, however, exploitation theory is never able to describe colonies in anything but negative ways. Studies on colonial modernity, unlike the former two, capture the peculiarity of colonies by attempting to identify irreducible events that took place in colonial modernity. But it is necessary to expound the singularity of colonies by probing into the singularity of colonial modernity through the unique and proper examples offered by the colonies' history. Such singularity involves clarifying how historical raw materials on colonial times have been structured into a history, focusing on its ultimate difference from the truth.[8] A step forward must be taken from critically objectifying the modern through colonies to seeking the historical conception and understanding of colonial frameworks.

Third, it will eventually be necessary to probe into the formation of subjects in colonies. Subjects are formed not merely by ideology but through the historical *a priori*. The formation of subjects, being related to conditions for possible experiences, transcends beings that are formed merely by adopting or resisting ideologies of domination.

8. On the concept of "singularity" referred to by Michel Foucault, see Veyne (2009, 17).

The idea of a historical *a priori* can be said to be a kind of regime of truth that is imposed not only on the ruled but also the rulers themselves. This regime, in which living individuals become subjects, constitutes the notion of historical positivity. Probing into forms of subjectification requires explaining how this positivity functions. Historical positivity is conquered or replaced by other forms of positivity and forms of subjectification change accordingly. What one should aim to identify by tracking two-way population movements is neither the nature of the specific subject to be found in the other country nor the possibility of bringing that subject into this land. Rather, it should be the raison d'être for the formation of that subject. The technology that molds living individuals into specific subjects, rather than creating the substance of a specific subject, can serve as a bridge between here and that country.

Based on such interpretations, this article presents the concept of the colonial-imperial regime for the sake of a methodological shift in colonial modernity studies. A colony and an empire as the former's home country are correlated and mutually dependent ontologically, legally, and politically. Accordingly, an attempt should be made to keep both in sight. The situation in which the two are linked with each other is always unequal and asymmetrical. A colony and an empire, structured so that they cannot avoid discrimination, oppression, and violence, always have gaps and discords between them. But the gaps and discords do not represent an empire's unilateral domination of a colony. In precise terms, it would be more correct to say that a colonial-imperial regime is inherently structured to exercise discrimination against a colony. When we discuss a colony versus an empire, we may suppose that the two face each other on a one-to-one basis, but we should never misunderstand the fact that colonies exist only within an empire's ontological, legal, and political determinations. This is the nature of inequality and asymmetry. In other words, colonies can deal with an empire only through the medium of the relationships predetermined by the empire, though they may perceive the empire as their counterpart and though an empire can be such only when it possesses colonies. We should not forget that the very

power of classifying a colony from an empire resides in an empire.

Modern changes in colonies and diverse forms of resistance on the part of the colonized are conditioned to be addressed and triggered by empires. Legal and political subsumption and the divisions of colonial territories and peoples precede modern changes and resistance. Even if the legal and political subsumption and division overlap with the process of modern rationalization and resistance against them can suggest an antimodern trend or an independent nation-state vision, what should be considered first is that imperial languages are soaked into the entire process, both affirmatively and negatively. To examine how they function and are dissolved, a colonial-imperial regime should be supposed as a basic precondition of understanding. Talks about liberation without being conscious that it is spoken in the language of the master may always end up in the oblivion of slavery.

Then, what constitutes a regime? The regime referred to here does not mean only the political and legal institution, but subsumes "the world of meanings shared by individual agents." It is one of the structured systems that guide the habituated patterns of behavior of the social agents and influences the formation of social actions.[9] In other words, devices constituting subjects that function transcendent to the schemas of soul and body, spirit and material, and upper and base structures, and structures that have historically singular regulations can be called regimes.[10] In a more direct sense, the regime referred to here has something common with the *dispositifs* or devices discussed by Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. According to Foucault, a *dispositif* is a heterogeneous aggregate containing all things lingual and nonlingual and their networks, has a strategic function of developing and blocking all power relations into a par-

9. The concept of "regime" used here is related to "mind regime" presented by sociologist Kim Hong-jung. For more on this, refer to H. Kim (2009, 22-23). A regime, as to be discussed in a minute, however, has the nature of "dispositif," not restorable as an object of social psychology like "the regime of collective psychology."
10. Refer to Guattari (1996, 95-96).

ticular direction, and regulates the mutual functions of power and knowledge.[11] In other words, the collection of all strategies that make all agents lead their thoughts and acts to a specified direction or prevent them to do so can be called dispositif. Giorgio Agamben, further generalizing this concept, attached the name of *dispositif* to "creatures' gestures, behaviors, opinions, and all things capable of capturing, leading, regulating, blocking, structuring, and guaranteeing discourses" (Agamben 2010, 33). Dividing beings into two big groups or categories, he said, "lives (or substances) exist on one side and *dispositifs* that incessantly capture them on the other" (Agamben 2010, 33).

This article, accepting Agamben's generalized concept of *dispositif*, understands the colonial-imperial regime as a relationship involving *dispositifs*. The colonial-imperial regime is a ruling structure on the one hand and a world structure on the other. It can be said to be a structure not defined by mere monolithic relationships between the oppressive rulers and the ruled but a complex structure that forms subjectivities by organizing and deploying lives and actions in a specified way. Ceaseless conflicts and struggles arise between living individuals and *dispositifs* in the capturing process, and subjects are what result from the struggles.

When the colonial-imperial regime is viewed in terms of such *dispositifs*, it is expected that a methodological shift in colonial modernity studies will be achieved in that we can discuss colonies by thoroughly objectifying them beyond the nation-state schema and reveal the singularity of colonies along with their subjectified forms.

This complex network is not organic and, therefore, it is always possible for partial rationality to lead to the irrationality of the whole. Mutually different subjects are formulated, crash and conflict with each other within and between innumerous devices in the *dispositif* called the colonial-imperial regime, including prison, school, factory, hospital, and judicial measures discussed by Foucault and writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, fashion, ritual, and language men-

11. Refer to Foucault (1991, 235-236).

tioned by Agamben.[12]

Thus viewed, it can be deemed that recent discourse about colonial publicity must be redirected to inquiries into the arena of conflicts formed between *dispositifs* and living individuals. Yun Haedong recently attempted to reestablish the concept of colonial publicity as "a metaphor for criticizing colonial countries or colonial nation-states" (Yun 2010, 27), and to find "things political" in colonies in "public values or public sphere created for the purpose of realizing public understanding by means of reflecting private interests" (Yun 2010, 29). Though he attempts to uncover "aspirations for freedom" (Yun 2010, 29) on the part of the native people of a colony in a fluid public sphere, it must not be forgotten that the public sphere he attempts to uncover can be imagined only after drawing the dividing line between private interests and public understanding. It must be taken into account that there exists the possibility that even "aspirations for freedom" can be an effect of *dispositif* classifying private from public. The moment when one supposes s/he has caught a scene in which an aspect of imperial rule is frustrated or faces contradictions through the concept of public interests may perhaps be the moment when the colonial-imperial regime functions most dynamically.

Let us consider a negative example. It is well known that the Government-General of Korea promptly denied the relationship between rights and duties when the enforcement of a conscription system was announced in colonial Korea on May 9, 1942. Governor-General Jiro Minami, under a directive of the Ministry of Home Affairs, simultaneously issued a guidance that the draft system "should not be linked with suffrage" (Asano 2008, 505). Governor-General Hideaki Koiso, who succeeded Minami, however, requested to the home government that the Diet accommodate representatives from colonies; the Hideki Tojo Cabinet drafted a plan to select Diet representatives from Korea and Taiwan, and tentatively decided to implement an

12. Refer to Agamben (2010, 33).

election law in Korea for that purpose (Asano 2008, 506).[13] The imposition of a draft system in Korea gave rise to various demands of the colonized including suffrage. This development demonstrates the limitation that the objectives of the home government and colonial authorities were bound by the urgency of mobilizing the native people of colonies for war on the one hand, and stimulated the aspirations of the native colonial people for an escape from discrimination and resulted in the concept of "Japan and Korea as one body" (*naisen ittai* 內鮮一體) on the other. But between provision and deprivation of rights, which would have been more related with the maintenance of a secure colonial-imperial regime?

When we attempt to study political areas where publicity is formed between the ruling and the ruled, we should not overlook the possibility of failure to notice that the colonial-imperial regime adjusts and controls the relationships between the ruling and the ruled as *dispositifs*. It is because *dispositifs* are potentially capable of capturing and subjectifying the colonial native people's aspirations for happiness, which are manifested in public sphere, in a certain divided area.

Kim Sa-ryang as an Ex-ception

As writer Kim Sa-ryang will be discussed here as an exceptional being in an attempt to examine a part of the way in which the colonial-imperial regime functioned as *dispositif*. Colony-empire literature circles, where Korean literature met its Japanese counterpart, emerged in a period during which the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars began. This exceptional change involved the possibility in which the exceptional status of being a highly-developed military state was converted into a normal status. Kim Sa-ryang, a member of

13. Refer to the Uemura Draft, councilor Uemura prepared in January 1944 and testimonies given by Foreign Minister Sigemitsu Mamoru of the Hideaki Koiso Cabinet (July 1944–April 1945).

the minority migrating between a colony and its home country, was in a peculiar position of possibly becoming a part of that routine even though he was an exceptional being.

In the process of changes in colony-empire relations caused by war, the literature of colonial minorities was classified as "regional literature" within the category of "Great East Asia literature." As integration meant a unilateral transformation of minority languages into Japanese, colony-empire hierarchy and inequality were bound to be reinforced internally. As a result, the literary circles of the home country and colonies were outwardly readjusted into central and regional literary circles. However, the readjustment was based on an unequal language-power relationship qualitatively different from the central and regional hierarchy of a country. Accordingly, writers who were born in colonies but conducted literary works in Japan and in the Japanese language found themselves in an exceptional position that is between, neither inside nor outside, the internal hierarchy of an empire or "Great East Asia."

Kim Sa-ryang, like other bilingual writers, was an exception in both Korean and Japanese literary circles. Feeling the fate of "always traveling between Korea and metropole Japan like a migratory bird" (Committee for the Compilation of the Complete Works of Kim Sa-ryang 1973), he settled into neither country. Structural changes in the colonial-imperial regime caused in the onset of the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars started shifted these exceptions, writers who were dubbed "migratory birds," into a routine.

Kim Sa-ryang gained recognition from Japanese literary circles when his short stories were published in the monthly *Bungei shudo* 文藝首都 (The Capital of Literature) after his short story "Hikarino nakani 光の中い" (Into the Light), written in Japanese, was nominated for the Akutagawa Literary Prize. He subsequently attracted continuous attention by publishing a series of short stories, including "Tenba 天馬" (A Flying Horse) and "Kusabukai 草深い" (The Grasses Are Tall). Such recognition is no doubt ascribable to his distinction. But the distinction was not entirely inherent in his works. Haruo Yamada, one of the judges commenting on "Into the Light," said, "we can perceive

a nation's pathetic fate" (S. Kim 1940a, 104). Because the lives of a biracial man by the name of Haruo Yamada and his mentor Minami 南 in a discriminatory milieu were graphically described in excellent Japanese, it marked the work as being exemplary on an aesthetic level. Yet another perhaps even more important reason was that the sociopolitical situation in Japan at that time was giving rise to an increasing public interest in literary works by Korean writers written in Japanese.[14] In passing, it is noted that Jang Hyeok-ju also benefited from the changing circumstances. He rode on the back of colonial literature that was debuting in Japan as "works of a kind of lower literary genre" after the Japanese proletarian literature had been driven into a dead end.[15]

Prior to this, Japanese and Korean literary circles had little effects on each other except in exceptional cases. However, due to such factors as Japan's national vision, interest relations of publication capital, and searches for literary outlets, writers and translators on the borderline like Kim Sa-ryang and Jang Hyeok-ju emerged as new literary personages and played the role of a bridge between the colony and its home country. The home country's interests in practically subsuming its colonies, in particular, were in active need of exceptional beings to serve as this bridge. Accordingly, they occupied a unique position of being realistically exceptional as a minority migrating between the home country and its colonies and possibly even being part of the routine.

But what problems arise when exceptions become part of the routine? When changed relations between Korean literature and Japanese literature are taken into account along with an ex-ception of writer Kim

14. Such interest of the times can be seen in an unusual happening in which a Japanese writer's short story that won the Akutagawa Prize and Kim Sa-ryang's short-story "Hikarino nakani," which was nominated as a candidate, were both published simultaneously. To learn more on this, refer to Kwak (2008, 200).
15. Refer to Nakane (2008, 314-315). Ko (2009) discusses the discovery of Jang Hyeok-ju. It is well known that Jang Hyeok-ju's debut in Japanese literary circles through the monthly *Kaizo* prompted many Korean and Taiwanese writer aspirants to contribute their stories to Japanese journals in an attempt to join Japan's literary circles.

Sa-ryang, the problems arise because of several paradoxes.

First, there was the vague borderline between irreducibility and reducibility shown by translator-writers like Kim Sa-ryang. Such translator-writers emerged in response to a demand for a singular Japanese literature by integrating colonial literature into that of the home country. Paradoxically, however, they depended on the impossibility of realizing a singular Japanese literature. Positioned in between, they could only distinguish themselves as long as the two beings they linked existed separately. If colonial literature and that of the home country existed separately, however, they always remained exceptions. Accordingly, Korean literature would be merely exceptional even if it was left as Korean literature and even if it was completely subsumed into Japanese literature. In short, writers could be routine only when Korean and Japanese literature were linked to each other with the gap between them left intact, and under the tension that a complete subsumption of the former eliminated to an extent the need to mediate the gap of possibility. What name can we give to these uneasy translators, who can exist only when irreducibility is replaced by reducibility and writers who can exist only when they were potentially irreducible?

Second, there was the vague position of Korean literature as minority national literature within "empire literature." Kim Sa-ryang, in a dialogue with Kunio Kisida, the culture department head of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (Taisei Yokusan Kai 大政翼贊會), refuted the authorities' demand that Korean writers write novels or short stories in Japanese by claiming, "English literature is great because it has subsumed Irish literature in Keltic" (Kim and Kunio 1941).[16] He criticized the policy calling for the use of Japanese as the mother tongue under the logic that an empire's regional literature can maintain its uniqueness only when it is based on its native language, preserving its proper "sensation and feelings" (1940b), and that empire literature can be enriched when the uniqueness of colonies

16. Kim Sa-ryang's comparison of English literature with Irish literature also appears in Kim Sa-ryang (1940b).

is maintained. He went so far as to call it "a disaster" (1939), saying that "when we attempt to write stories not in our mother tongue but in the language of the home country, works, however hard we may try, are dragged by Japanese feelings and sentiments."[17] Nonetheless, Kim Sa-ryang attempted to settle in "the language of the home country" out of an "an absolute and urgent psychological motive" (1940b). What does it mean that translator-writers wrote in Japanese while advocating the uniqueness of Korean language and literature? This is a paradoxical act attempting to affirm the existence of Korea, the Korean language and Korean literature and place it in the arena of its home country. Minority (national) literature indeed can be objectified as such only within the arena of majority or dominant literature. Kim Sa-ryang appears to have attempted to voluntarily assume the role of a witness of minority (national) literature and tried to take a dual attitude of seeking and negating communications within the dominant literature arena. How can we identify this paradoxical subject who attempts to avert subsumption by being subsumed?[18]

Third, there was the problem of representation and monopoly emerging on the borderline between Korean and Japanese literature: translator-writers during that period, irrespective of their own wills, grasped a privileged route through which they could write articles and stories in the language of their home country in literary circles, while facing the danger of easily becoming the subjects of "representation" on the bridge linking the colony with its home country. As Sato Haruo commented that he could perceive "a nation's pathetic fate" in Kim's "Into the Light," Kim Sa-ryang's short story was fated to be easily

17. Even if we understand the background based on which Kim Sa-ryang emphasized the essential relationship between language and literature, with Korean literature in mind this way, we face a difficult situation of being dually bound. If our mother tongue can be replaced by Japanese, we can no longer assert the uniqueness of Korean literature as a minority (national) literature.

18. Kim Sa-ryang disclosed several times his aspiration to introduce Korean literature to not only the home country but also to the Orient and the world. To that end, he proposed the establishment of a translation agency.

objectified as representing the Korean nation.[19] In addition, they were always exposed to the danger of internalizing the gaze of "insiders in the upper echelon" between colonial literary circles and those of the home country, structured by fundamentally unequal power relations. In short, they embraced the possibility of becoming subjects of discrimination and hierarchy existing between a colony and its home country. Kim Sa-ryang, in particular, apparently was keenly conscious of this dangerous fate and trembled with fear even as he navigated within it. It must have been linked with this fear that he told himself over his own work "Into the Light" that "It's a lie. I'm still telling lies," that he entertained "fearful thoughts" when he attended the Akutagawa Prize ceremony and thought he would be able to write stories in the home country (1940a, 104), and that he noticed the "trembling hand" of Taiwanese writer Long Yingzong, who was treading a course identical to his (Shimomura 1994, 211-212). What kind of a name can we accord to those subjects who voluntarily undertook the difficult positions in which their individual sublimation could be taken away by the tastes of some groups behind the scenes, and accordingly could be utilized or alienated at any time?

If we can give translator-writer Kim Sa-ryang, standing on a vague place between irreducibility and reducibility, between minority (national) literature and dominant literature, and between representation and alienation, the status of subject, it will perhaps be the abject subject.

According to Julia Kristeva, the abject is the vestige of the expulsions that were mandatorily required for the body, language, and identity to construct a stable order in the course of forming the self. And yet, the abject, which is often experienced in feelings of disgust, cannot be nor should be completely expelled. It may be regarded as the fringe of a world that has been expulsively subsumed.[20] After all,

19. On Kim Sa-ryang's works in Japanese being entwined with the problem of representation, refer to Kwon (2009).

20. Refer to Kristeva (2001, 23-31). Abject things related to the body, for example, include blood, excrements like urine and feces and the dead body. The idea of linking "the abject," discussed by Kristeva, with bilingual writers of a colony origi-

the abject is a being that rejects or exceeds belonging while navigating along a vague border between being and non-being, meaning and meaningless, and inside and outside, because the world of existence, meaning, and inside is indeed the home of and maintained by the abject.

Bilingual writers or translator-writers who emerged in the era when the colonial-imperial regime underwent changes from war and when a policy of converting Koreans into the Japanese emperor's subjects was enforced in diverse areas of life may be described as "abject subjects" who could belong to neither the colony nor its home country.[21] These abject beings are not only incapable of belonging to the order and community of colonies, but also are incapable of belonging to anyone or anywhere. The people of the colony and empire alike could not remain safely behind a border when the structure of the colonial-imperial regime changed so rapidly and the policy of converting Koreans into the Japanese emperor's subjects was enforced amidst the violence of war, and when a broad area order dubbed the "Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere" demanded changes in the empire. Kim Sa-ryang, keenly conscious of the changes under which family separations, escapes, interracial marriages, and border crossings, coupled with not only the policy of converting Koreans into the Japanese emperor's subjects but also the will to survive, were being routinized, attempted to look into the wounds caused by the violent order of the colonial-imperial regime by describing abject lives in his works.

Discrimination structures were routinized and internalized under the superficial scheme of integrating Japan and Korea into one entity. Haruo Yamada, the hero of "Into the Light," who had to deny the blood of his mother under such circumstances; Kaya in "Gyoushuu 鄕愁" (Nostalgia), who defected to China together with her husband

nates in Kwon (2009).

21. Though the adjective "abject" is often translated as "miserable," evaluation of the particular moral value of the term must be understood in parentheses. Identifying and valuating vague objects that exist in this border as the abject is a philological order that can be maintained by having the objects belong to a particular moral and ideological hierarchy.

after joining a nationalist movement and engaged in opium trafficking and lived as a prostitute under severe distress from war and economic difficulties; Hyeon-ryong in "A Flying Horse," a magromaniac who attempts to become Japanese; and Count Q, the hero in "Q hakushaku" (Count Q), who often transformed himself into various identities ranging from an anarchist to a vigilante are all beings who are damaged or have nowhere to belong. They are damaged or their belongingness is deprived in the process of change of the colonial-imperial regime's structure on account of war, or more specifically in the process in which the home country attempted to subsume its colony for the sake of war. Haruo Yamada, neither Korean nor Japanese, betrays his motherland but sends his son to the Japanese Army. Kaya, who makes Chinese citizens into opium addicts in her role as a drug trafficker, cannot be accepted in Korea, Japan or China. Hyeon-ryong, who changes his name into a Japanese one and explicitly displays his aspiration to work in Japan's central literary circles, draws derision and hatred from both the Japanese and Korean literary communities. Count Q, who frequent prisons and mixes Korean and Japanese in an awkward way, seems to be a merry braggart, but he wails aboard a train bound for home.[22]

These abject beings testify to the violence of the order that spewed out and destroyed them, attributing their distress and solitude to the violence. The order of realities shows its mighty force as if it is natural, the only reality outside of which nothing else exists. Those abject beings who failed to enter the order are forced either to enter it through self-purification or are considered exceptions that can be ignored. Structural changes of the colonial-imperial regime at the time, however, resulted in a situation in which exceptions became routines. This does not merely mean that the number of people who were separated from their families and who attempted to join the Japanese Army increased. A highly militarized country, seeking inter-

22. Hwang (2008) analyzes "Count Q" by portraying Kim Sa-ryang, a Korean writer writing novels and short stories in Japanese, and Long Yingzong, a Taiwanese writer doing the same, as "beings resembling Lu Xun."

nal security through an effective enforcement of a war, operates under the politics of sovereign power that basically discerns enemies from friends. Accordingly, anyone could be uprooted from a traditional foundation and redeployed or placed where they are left to die at any time. These abject beings reveal that the order in which examples become or produce exceptions is a violent fiction.

Because he vacillated between example and exception, Kim Sa-ryang was able to listen to the solitary screams of abject beings and sensitively respond to the lonely fears they confronted. His sensitivity revealed itself through physical responses; he was suffering from a high fever that kept him in bed nearly all the time while on board a ferry crossing the Korean Straits to attend the Akutagawa Prize ceremony as a nominee for the prize (S. Kim 1940a). His fear can be deduced from his exceptional position as a Korean translator-writer in the literary circles of his home country that brought him to a vague place between irreducibility and reducibility, minority (national) literature and dominant literature, as well as between representation and alienation. In his short story "Nostalgia," the hero Yi Hyeon shows the physical response of fever when he finds his sister Kaya destroyed in Beijing. The destroyed lives of those abject beings were not merely the objects of perception but those of sympathy accompanied by physical pain. Kim Sa-ryang demonstrated the fact that an ethical attitude of exposing oneself to possible contamination is required in order to read the violent artificiality of the dominant order from the exceptionality of abject beings and the wounds inflicted by the order.

The Potentiality of the Colonies

An attempt has been made to examine an aspect of the colonial-imperial regime as *dispositif* through the case of Kim Sa-ryang as an ex-ception and changes in the literature circles of the colony and the empire during the war period. In that we can meet him only when he crosses to another country called a colony, Kim Sa-ryang functions as a migratory-bird-like bridge not only between colonial Korea and

Japan, its home country, but also between the past (a colony) and the present (nation-state).

What he attempted to reveal through routines and exceptions and a kind of negative print was how the colonial-imperial regime separated people from non-people and humans from non-humans and thereby turned the latter into nothingness. Abject subjects testify the scenes of order giving rise to divisions within this splitting line. At the same time, they are beings produced as a result of controlling subjectification and conflicts. In other words, abject beings reveal the nature of the changing colonial-imperial regime while personifying the cases in which exceptions become routines, and show the limits or ungovernable areas of the regime. Abject lives show on the borderline and with anxiety the rivalry between the form of subjects that the colonial-imperial regime or *dispositif* tries to establish and the living individuals that they attempt to subsume.

The singularity of the colonial-imperial regime reveals itself in a negative way when the practical subsumption of a colony by an empire reaches an extreme extent. In other words, the strategy to eliminate differences between an empire and its colony by way of a regular use of Japanese as the mother tongue, integrating Japan and Korea into one entity, and forcing Koreans to change their names into Japanese-style ones rather made structured discrimination into the actual. Frankly, Japan, by leaving only one way for the Koreans to live (becoming the Japanese and negating themselves), demonstrated that a colonial-imperial order can exist only when one element is denied by force. The motto of "being Japanese" promises a better life, accorded to the citizens of the empire, when the Koreans deny their bare lives. A better life, liable to be confused with freedom and liberation in the colonial-imperial regime, is possible only when one negates and nullifies bare life through *dispositifs* promising a better life.

It is not easy to realize in the motherland of a colony the fact that the colonial-imperial regime is thus grounded on one's self-denial and self-nullification. This is because bare life disappears in the qualification of being "Japanese" itself. The native people of a

colony, though they can hardly be generalized, however, can perceive traces of lives defeated and negated in a better life as they pass through the painful and inevitable process of erasing themselves. These traces are related to the artificial source of the colonial-imperial regime. In this respect, a colony contains potentiality that has not been exhausted even today. It is because a "better life" has been globally generalized, nearly unconsciously.

I presented a standpoint at the beginning of this article that we are all descendants of immigrants who have crossed a border. It was hence stressed that describing a colony is just like an act of crossing over to another country. This is all related to the task preserving the potentiality of a colony by objectifying and deobjectifying colonies. We discuss colonies neither to cut us off from a colony nor to affirm today that we have "overcome" their influence. It is rather to contemplate the subjectification formula of devices grasping our lives by uncovering the formula that captured, separated, and controlled lives amid the singularity of the colonial-imperial regime. To deepen the contemplation, we must incessantly cross over to the other country called the colony.

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