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**KIM EOK'S TRANSLATION AND HAN
YONG-UN'S *THE LOVER'S SILENCE*
- THE INTERIORITY IN THE 1920s'
LITERATURE**

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Abstract: The article tries to examine and define the inner self of literature in the 1920s, now considered the birth of modern Korean literature. The interiority of 1920's literature is widely accepted as the transition period between the birth (the 1910s, the Enlightenment) and maturation (1930s, Modernism), and as a reflection of the tragic situation after 1919. However, in the light of the symptom that determines the structure of desire, the inner self of 1920's literature could be identified as a "person who denies loss", a pervasive attitude. And it also could provide a critical reading along with some directivity, which is meaningful to concepts such as self-relation and the other relations that construct the individual. This paper examines this perspective of inner self within 1920's literature of Kim Eok and Han Yong-un, so as to set an intrinsic standard

that would enable scholars to evaluate the literary value of the 1920's. Above all, through the Symptomatic Identification approach, this study will conduct archeological and genealogical research that could be helpful to today's discourse.

Key words: Inner Self; Perversion; Mysticism of Person Who Denies Loss; Symptomatic Identification; Kim Eok; Han Yong-un.

김억의 번역과 한용운의 *님의 침묵*-1920년대 문학의 내면

초록: 본고는 본격적인 한국 근대문학의 출발로서 1920년대 문학의 내면을 살펴보고 규정해보고자 한다. 대개 1920년대 문학의 내면은 내면의 탄생 (1910년대, 계몽주의 문학)과 내면의 완성 (1930년대, 모더니즘 문학) 사이의 과도기적 단계이자 1919년 이후 비극적 상황의 반영으로 이해되어왔다. 그러나 욕망의 구조를 결정하는 ‘증상’의 차원에서 살펴본다면, 1920년대 문학이 보여주는 내면은 도착적인 태도로서 ‘질 수 없는 자’의 내면으로 접근할 수 있으며, 이는 ‘개인’을 구축하는 자기관계 및 타자관계에 유의미한 문제의식과 더불어 어떤 방향성을 제공해줄 수 있다. 본고는 1920년대 문학 속 한용운과 김억의 내면을 증상의 차원에서 살펴봄으로써 1920년대 고유의 문학성을 파악해보고자 하며, 무엇보다 ‘증상과의 동일시’라는 접근을 통해 오늘날 담론에도 유효할 고고학과 계보학적 작업을 수행해보고자 한다.

주제어: 내면; 도착증; 질 수 없는 자의 신비주의; 증상과의 동일시; 김억; 한용운.

WYMIAR WEWNĘTRZNY LITERATURY LAT 20. WIEKU XX – MILCZENIE UKOCHANEGO HAN YONG-UN'A ORAZ PRZEKŁAD KIM EOK'A

Abstrakt: Niniejszy artykuł próbuje zanalizować i zdefiniować ‘wewnętrzny wymiar’ literatury lat 20. wieku XX, traktowaną obecnie jako koreańską literaturę współczesną. Okres lat 20. XX wieku jest powszechnie uznawany za okres przejściowy między narodzinami literatury współczesnej (lata 10. wieku XX, okres oświecenia) i dojrzałości (lata 30., modernizm) a jednocześnie stanowi odbicie tragicznych czasów po roku 1919. Jednakże w świetle symptomów struktury pożądania, wewnętrzny wymiar literatury lat 20. może być traktowany powszechnie jako postawa „człowieka zaprzeczającego poniesionej stracie”. Może także dostarczyć podstaw do czytania krytycznego z pewnym nakierunkowaniem kluczowym dla takich koncepcji jak np. relacja względem siebie bądź innych konstytuujących jednostkę odniesień. Artykuł bada podejścia Kim Eoka i Han Young-una do ‘własnego ja’ w obrębie literatury lat 20., które pozwalają na określenie

wewnętrznych standardów umożliwiającym badaczom ocenę wartości twórczości lat 20. Tekst jednak w pierwszej kolejności dokona przydatnej we współczesnym dyskursie analizy w ujęciu genealogicznym i historycznym przy zastosowaniu podejścia identyfikacji objawowej.

Słowa kluczowe: Własne Ja; Wypaczenie; Mistycyzm ‘Osoby Zaprzeczającej Stracie’; Identyfikacja Objawowa; Kim Eok; Han Yong-un.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the inner self at the beginning of the modern Korean poetry in the 1920s. Specifically, it examines the inner self in the works of Kim Eok (김억), who translated foreign poetry, such as works of French symbolism, into Korean, and the works of Han Yong-un (한용운), who is regarded as the progenitor of modern Korean poetry, with the goal of identifying their similarities and differences.

As Charles Taylor put it, the authenticity culture that comprehensively defines contemporary culture today and the self-image, start from romanticism and accordingly from interiority (2001: 40). In his discussion, today’s pervasive culture of authenticity in Korea and its accompanying self-image also originate from works of art published in colonial Joseon in the 1920’s, when romantic literature is considered to have started in earnest.

Therefore, this paper will critically define the inner self that appeared in the works of Kim Eok and Han Yong-un, who were very prominent in colonial Joseon of the 1920’s. With this, I want to arrange the points of reference that can provide a critical reading along with some directivity, which is meaningful to concepts such as self-relation and the other relations that construct the individual.

There are two things to point out before the full-scale discussion. First, it is a matter of confusion about the use of the term ‘the inner self’. The inner self is used as ‘mystery itself’ as a kind of inner ‘God’, or it is used as ‘I (spirit)’ which is related to such ‘mystery itself’. In many discussions, it has been used confusingly without being sufficiently arranged, but this paper defines the latter as the inner self.

Next, it is necessary to briefly review existing representative discussions on the inner self. Karatani Kojin has searched for the inner self of modern Japanese literature in his book *The Origin of Japanese Modern Literature* and criticized its anti-politicism. Adorno also criticized the inner self as a space escaping the contradictions and hostility of capitalism in his book, *The Jargon of Authenticity*. But the inner self is the key mechanism that cannot be abandoned in self-truth culture, the dominant culture of today (Taylor, 2001: 27) and the inner self can be a kind of 'laboratory' that can renew both 'me' and 'world'. Following this existing discussion, this paper examines the inner self that appears in the works of Kim Eok and Han Yong-un. In this way, this paper will identify the critical points of today's subjectivity and try to assess the possibility of overcoming them.

2. Mysticism of the person who denies loss: The perverted self

Let us begin the discussion of important preliminary studies of modern Korean poetry in the 1920s. According to a previous study (정명교 Jeong Myeong Kyo 2013: 28) pointing to Kim So-wol (김소월) and Han Yong-un as the two main origins of modern Korean poetry, Han Yong-un is classified as 'mysticism of person who denies loss'. Mysticism of the person who denies loss is an attitude that denies loss and defeat, and endures and overcomes by any phantasmal method. This can be generalized by rethinking the intellectual history rather than simply judging an individual attitude. As many previous studies have shown, the attitude of 'mysticism of the person who denies loss' is repeatedly expressed in every major phase of Korean modern literary history.

The phases are usually a cross between hope and frustration. For example, the following situations can be applied to this: the situation in the 1920s after the failure of the March First movements, and the liberation period after the darkness (pro-Japanese era) of the 1940s, and the frustration of the 1960s following the May 16th coup d'etat, and the 1990s after the failure of the Communist nation experiment. According to these phases, the attitude

of ‘the mysticism of the person who denies loss’ is repeatedly found in Korean modern and contemporary literature: Han Yong-un's *The Lover's Silence* (the 1920s), Lee Tae-joon's *Before and After Liberation* (liberation period), Changbi's literary magazine movement (1960s), reminiscences literature (1990s). Each overcame the desperate situations by creating a mysterious object out of a lover, the socialist state, the people (민중 / 民衆), and interiority.

Before further evaluation, one must first look at what is hidden within such an attitude. In short, the ‘mystical object’ of ‘the mysticism of the person who denies loss’ is created and sustained by the ‘inner self’ called ‘I’. The mysterious object is highlighted in the foreground, but the ‘I – interiority’ existing on the side of it is a truly mysterious existence. Here, more than a strong belief in the object, there is found a strong belief in the ‘I’ that sustains that belief. We find these beliefs and attitudes in ‘perversion’.

Unlike the terminology used in everyday life, perversion is not a perverse phenomenon but a “perverse structure” (Dor 2005: 71) It should reject certain images that the term immediately evokes before a full discussion. According to the classification of psychoanalysis, human subjects are categorized into three categories of ‘neurosis’, ‘perversion’, and ‘psychosis’, which means that human subjects necessarily belong to these three categories, and also means that it can be symptomatically overlapped at various levels. If so, what is the perversion as the structure that psychoanalysis explains?

The three structures of symptoms categorized by psychoanalysis are briefly described according to the Oedipus complex (Dor 2005). First, ‘psychosis’ is a structure of “*forclusion* (foreclosure)” in which the subject does not admit that the mother does not have a phallus. In short, it refers to the attitude of rejecting the situation in which utopia does not exist. The fantasy of a perfect mother overwhelms reality. There is no oppression or unconsciousness to the subject in such a situation in which the subjectivity overwhelms the objectivity.

In contrast to ‘psychosis’, the perverse structure is contested with subjectivity and objectivity. The subject in the perverse structure accepts the fact that the mother does not have a phallus, but makes another fact that the loss can be overcome by fetish. The subject accepts reality but denies at the same time. Psychoanalysis calls it the structure of denial. Finally, the subject

within the neurotic structure is in the situation where the objective reality that the utopia is absent overwhelms the subject. The subject accepts the fact that there is no utopia by 'repression' and expects an alternative reward in the world the father controls. However, every time the world of the father is at risk, symptoms develop. In summary, depending on the attitude toward castration (the absence of utopia), the structure of symptoms are divided into psychosis (*forclusion*), perversion (denial), and neurosis (repression).

This paper finds that the attitude of 'mysticism of the person who denies loss' is very similar to the 'perverse structure' in psychoanalysis. According to discussions on the aspect of modern literature in accordance with secularization, the mysticism of the person who denies loss and the structure of perversion are placed in the same stage. In short, in the process of modernization, religious imagination is classified according to attitude toward transcendence, but the person who denies loss and a pervert is at the level of external transcendence, which does not fully internalize transcendence. Their religious imagination is not fully modernized. For the person who denies loss and the person in the structure of perversion, the mysterious object and the fetish play a role in external transcendence.

This paper began by referencing the study that identifies Han Yong-un as a utilizer of 'mysticism of the person who denies loss', and via the discussions on the aspects of modern literature in accordance with secularization, the regulations on the inner self of the 1920s as symptoms should be examined. And from this point of view, when looking at the inner self at the birth of Korean modern literature, we can suggest the following argument.

First, Kim Eok's inner self in his translation poems which was not only published before Han Yong-un's *The Lover's Silence*, but also had a decisive influence on *The Lover's Silence* is also placed in the genealogy of 'mysticism of the person who denies loss'. Secondly, however, the interiority of the person who denies loss, that is, the inner self of the pervert, can be variously shaped and changed according to the attitude toward the mysterious object, so this article would re-appropriate 'the inner self' which was regarded as jargon as a laboratory. These claims are no more than answers to the following questions: Why is the translation and creation of Kim Eok not the beginning of modern Korean literature? Why is Han Yong-un

the beginning? What is the decisive difference between the inner self of Kim Eok and inner self of Han Yong-un?

This paper intends to address the questions above through a study of the Indian poet, Tagore. Tagore showed a ripe lyricism. And this article examines modern Korean literature of the 1920s, which showed different interpretations of Tagore. Kim Eok and Han Yong-un, who are the object of this study, are related to Tagore in the following ways. Three books of poetry of Tagore were translated by Kim Eok from 1923 to 1924, and Han Yong-un recorded the poem *Reading Tagore's Poem "Gardenisto"* in his *The Lover's Silence*. The following sections will look at the interpretation of Tagore by Kim Eok and Han Yong-un and identify their interiority.

3. Kim Eok's Translation

"Prisoner, tell me, **who was it that bound you?"**

"It was my master," said the prisoner. "I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power, and **I amassed** in my own treasure-house the money **due to my king**. When sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house."

"Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?"

"It was I," said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. **I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed.** Thus night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found it held me in its grip."

Gitanjali 31 (1914: 24)

„죄수, 그대를 누가 얽어매었습니까?

제 주인입니다. 죄인은 대답하며,

저는 이 세상에서는 돈으로나, 권력으로나 모든 사람보다 나은 줄로 알았습니다. 하여 저의 보고에 임금님께서 돈을 빌려서 쌓아 두었습니다. 잠이 오기에 저는 임금님이 주무시는 자리에서 잤습니다. 하다가, 깨어본즉 저는 벌써 제 보고안의 죄수가 되었습니다.

죄수, 누가 이 끊을 수 없는 사슬을 만들었습니까?

그것은 제 자신입니다. 죄수는 말하며, 모든 정신을 다하여 이 사슬을 두드려 만든 것은 제 자신입니다. 저는 저의 적수없는 힘이 이 세계를 잡아 저에게 절대 자유를 남겨줄 줄 알았습니다. 그래서 밤이나 낮이나 불을 흠뻑 피워놓고 애를 쓰며 두드렸습니다. 마지막에 그 사슬이 다되어 철환이 깨트릴 수 없게 썸 완성되었을 때에는 저는 벌써 그 사슬에 얽혀 있었습니다.

기탄자리 31 (trans. Kim Eok, 1923: 31)

Looking at the original poem by Tagore and Kim's translation together, the first point that is the key to the interpretation of poetry is the so-called 'invincible power'. Kim says that "the king loved me and gave me that strength", but Tagore's says that although 'I' do not have invincible power, but 'we' are believed to have that power. Because 'I' loved the perfect king so much, and 'I' believed that I was in love with him." This difference in interpretation makes the translation by Kim Eok more and more distant from the original.

The first stanza of Tagore's poem answers the reason for being bound by the king. Kim translated the first stanza as an extension of the interpretation of invincible power. He translated it that way because of his pride in power, "the king punished me". So, "when sleep overcame me I lay upon the bed that was for my lord" was translated as "잠이 오기에 저는 임금님이 주무시는 자리에서 잤습니다" ("When it was time to sleep, I slept in the place where my lord was sleeping.") omitting the meaning of 'for my lord'. There is no indication of waiting for love in his translation.

However, Tagore's poem is far from 'pride'. The 'I' of Tagore loved the king so much that 'I' waited for him and accumulated money in the treasury for the king, but the king was not at his side. Although 'I' have a lot of money, the world without a king is like a prison, and as a result, I become a prisoner. Therefore, as an answer to the reason for being "bound", the first stanza is nothing more than a metaphorical expression that the world is like a prison, and the suffering caused by the absence of the king. The second stanza is formed by the answer to the question that "who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?" Kim Eok translated it as, "I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed," as in freedom according to invincible power. This translation was an extension of the first stanza, and he continued to develop this interpretation. In other words, although the king has punished the subject, the 'I' is ultimately confined to itself for being responsible for such punishment.

However, Tagore's poem is also distant from such reflective confession. Let's look at the second stanza as an extension of the first. "I believed and desired the world only a king and I could exist." So, 'I' has a wall around 'us' for a world that allows only two people's freedom, thereby separating "the world and us". However, the answer is given by the first stanza, 'I' realized that the king is absent. There was no king in such 'us' and 'love'. In fact, there is only 'I' separated from the world. So, the desire to possess the king entirely makes the subject bound by an unbreakable chain.

We can see through this argument that, unlike the original poem, the subject in the translated poem of Kim Eok appears as 'I', thus confessing his pride. And after such a confession, a reflective and introspective 'I-interiority' is emerging. Though 'I' was foolish, it can expect a 'new I' in the future, through reflection. However, the original poem is very different. The subject who appears in his poem appeals to the pain of an impossible passion and appeals to the suffering of responsibility for pain. In other words, the desperately suffering "I" appears with concrete context. We can see in the preface of Yeats that Tagore's poems are recognized in the world literature chapter as follows, "Lovers, while they await one another, shall find, in murmuring them, this love of God a magic gulf wherein their own more bitter passion may bathe and renew its youth." (1914: XV). However, Kim translated the book of poetry omitting the preface above.

We can summarize these differences into the following simple distinctions. In the case of Kim, the 'I', which is suffering from reflection, is highlighted in front. But, in the case of Tagore, the 'pain' itself becomes a subject of reflection rather than the 'I'. The painful 'I' of Kim Eok only evokes a new 'I' after 'I's confession, omitting sadness and mourning. It is a poem of interiority that reflects and introspects, and through such reflection, the 'I' goes through a defeat. On the other hand, Tagore's poem is already experiencing the defeat itself and is lamenting it. There is no obvious alternative, such as the 'new I'.

The first argument, that is, whether Kim Eok is in the genealogy of the 'mysticism of the person who denies loss', is summarized as follows. The primitive poem of Tagore reveals the sadness and pain of responsibility of loss. On the other hand, Kim accepts the suffering caused by loss while translating it, but by putting responsibility for it to himself and immediately reflecting on himself,

he sets up a new alternative interpretation with the 'new I'. There is 'rejection' and 'fetish' in psychoanalysis, and there is 'mysticism of the person who denies loss' that is able to find new alternatives even in defeat.

In addition to the translation of Tagore, Kim translated the French symbolism poets such as Paul-Marie Verlaine. However, this translation seems to conflict with the claim mentioned above because it is the majority of the poems appealing sadness in suffering rather than a 'new I' after reflection. However, in Kim Eok's translation, the grief of 'I' is highlighted. In contrast, Paul-Marie Verlaine's sadness and sorrow are based on impersonality, as French critic Jean-Pierre Richard revealed (1984: 193), and Michel Foucault supports this (1964: 997). Even though 'sadness' is emphasized more than in the poems of Tagore, 'I', which is rarely found in the original, appears repeatedly. We can call it "the poetry of the sublime" (최호영 Choi Ho-Young 2014: 296) in relation to the expression of this grief. In Kim's translation, the expression of pain results in the subject's ability to deal with pain.

4. Han Yon-un's *The Lover's Silence*

As mentioned earlier, Han Yong-un is placed first in the genealogy of 'the person who denies the loss'. Han Yong-un is the owner of "the force that makes all things, at least the traces of yours" (정명교 Jeong Myeong Kyo 2013: 29). However, we find some discrepancies in the preface of *The Lover's Silence*: "Don't you also have a *nim* (lover)? If so, it's only your shadow." (Han, 1926: 1). The following is Han Yong-un's poem, entitled *Reading Tagore's Poem "Gardenisto"*:

My friend, you make me weep like flowers blooming on the grave
of a lost lover.
You gladden me like love met unexpectedly in desert darkness without
a single bird.
You're the scent of blanched bones that break out of an ancient grave,
floating skyward.
You're a song of hope within despair, sung while picking fallen
flowers for a garland.
My friend, you weep over broken love.

You tear can't bring back scattered flowers to the bough.
Sprinkle your tears beneath flowering trees, not on fallen flowers.

You say the scent of death is sweet, but you can't kiss the lips of dry bones.

Don't spread a web of golden song over the grave, but plant a bloodstained banner.

(But) The spring breeze tells how the poet's song stirs the dead earth.
My friend, when I hear your song I'm unspeakably ashamed - because I hear it along, far from my beloved.

Reading Tagore's Poem "Gardenisto" (trans. Cho, 2005: 80)

벗이여, 나의 벗이여, 애인의 무덤 위에 피어 있는 꽃처럼 나를
올리는 벗이여.

적은 새의 자취도 없는 사막의 밤에, 문득 만난 님처럼 나를
기쁘게 하는 벗이여.

그대는 옛 무덤을 깨치고 하늘까지 사모치는 백골의
향기입니다.

그대는 화환을 만들랴고 떨어진 꽃을 줏다가, 다른 가지에
걸려서 죽은 꽃을 헤치고 부르는 절망인 희망의 노래입니다.

벗이여, 깨어진 사랑에 우는 벗이여.

눈물이 능히 떨어진 꽃을 옛 가지에 도로 피게 할 수는
없습니다.

눈물을 떨어진 꽃에 뿌리지 말고, 꽃나무 밑의 띠끌에 뿌리세요.

벗이여, 나의 벗이여.

죽음의 향기가 아모리 좋다 하여도, 백골의 입설에 입맞출 수는
없습니다.

그의 무덤을 황금의 노래로 그물치지 마세요. 무덤 위에 피 묻은
깃대를 세우세요.

그러나 죽은 대지가 시인의 노래를 거쳐서 움직이는 것을
봄바람은 말합니다.

벗이여, 부끄럽습니다. 나는 그대의 노래를 들을 때에, 어떻게
부끄럽고 떨리는지 모르겠습니다.

그것은 내가 나의 님을 떠나서, 홀로 그 노래를 듣는
까닭입니다.

타고르의 시(GARDENISTO)를 읽고 (Han, 1926: 131)

At first glance, Han Yong-un is criticizing Tagore in this poem, which can be seen as a conversation with Tagore. As you can see in, “sprinkle your tears beneath flowering trees, not on fallen flowers”, Han’s ‘I’ tells Tagore not to shed tears in the “fallen flowers”, but “beneath flowering trees” that are likely to reproduce. According to this aspect, ‘the inner self’ of Han Yong-un is very similar to ‘I’ of Kim Eok. Just as Kim Eok’s ‘new I’ is evoked as a kind of alternative, Han Yong-un’s active inner self can also

be expected to provide some new alternative. However, as can be seen from the conversion of, “the spring breeze tells how the poet’s song stirs the dead earth,” the aspect of ‘inner self’ appearing in the Han Yong-un’s poem begins to change. Han Yong-un reflects that is because of the useless tears that make this dead world come alive. Han Yong-un also reflects in a manner similar to Kim Eok. However, the object of the reflection in Han’s poem is the ‘reflective I’ rather than ‘I’ who is simply wrong. In short, Han Yong-un is ‘a person who denies loss’, but at the same time, he clearly knows his own attitude and wants to reflect on it again.

Han Yong-un’s reflection work is repeated in throughout the book of *The Lover’s Silence*. Han Yong-un succeeds in such reflection by destroying the relationship between ‘I’ and the ‘lover’, that is, the relationship between the mysterious inner self and mysterious objects, when saying, “don't you also have a *nim* (lover)? If so, it's only your shadow.” In other words, a farewell is required between lover (*nim*) and me. But such a separation I not easy.” As Jacques Alain Miller points out, some of the perverts will try to escape the symptoms, but it is not easy. For example, abandoning the ultimate utopia may be theoretically possible, but perhaps practically impossible (Miller, 1996: 314).

This impossibility is repeatedly appearing in Han Yong-un’s *The Lover’s Silence*. Along with the declaration of the farewell, the wandering which cannot accept the farewell coexists at the same time. The wandering is similar to the poems of Kim Eok. However, there is room for Han Yong-un as another way of describing this wandering as it is. Han Yong-un confesses ‘shame’ with the failure of his reflection at the poet’s note at the end of the book. However, he exposes and publishes something shameful. He goes on to another project by confessing and revealing the failure of planning. This can be called “symptomatic identification” (Kim, 2017: 92).

Han Yong-un tried to reflect on ‘the mysticism of the person who denies loss’ from the first introduction of poetry. But such reflection shows failure throughout it. In other words, the aspect of ‘the mysticism of the person who denies loss’ is repeated. Such apparent contradictions appear throughout the entire book so that it is difficult to say that it a simple failure. A new interpretation begs the question. In psychoanalysis, ‘symptomatic identification’ is a cognitive act that accepts the structure of symptoms, such

as neurosis and perversion, as opposed to repressing or denying them. It does not suppress or deny the symptoms which are difficult to accept in the social personality, which is the so-called normal. This 'identification' is very meaningful in the sense that it accepts the 'other', something that is difficult to accept.

Han Yong-un accurately records his failure point. 'The mysticism of the person who denies loss', which was intended to overcome by separation from a lover, cannot be overcome and is repeatedly recorded. However, the honest record of this failure gives us a meaningful aporia. Of course, 'symptomatic identification' does not immediately lead to proper coexistence of the other. Opening the body to the other and rebuilding it as a new entity is as rare as a mutation in evolution.

Nevertheless, the 'symptomatic identification' is significant because the questions continue to be asked. The secularization is ongoing despite its slowness, and one defies their inner self by leaning on fetishes. In a modern society based on individuals as its nuclei, this tendency leads to excessive subjectivity, and the impossibility of society and community arises.

5. Conclusion

In philosophical history, Kant introduced the concept of a 'thing-in-itself', followed by romantic philosophy and literature. The notion of impossibility (a thing-in-itself) not only made humans aware of humility but at the same time inspired desire to overcome the impossible. Yet the two are mutually exclusive. It is only necessary to prevent the destruction of human beings due to a certain result. We cannot afford both extreme imprisonment and freedom.

Let's get back to the first question. Why is the translation and creation of Kim Eok not the beginning of modern Korean literature? Why is Han Yong-un the beginning? In this regard, some answers were provided by looking at the 'inner self' of Kim Eok and Han Yong-un, which have been revealed through their interpretations of Tagore. Both are a 'reflecting I', that go on without knowing defeat in the face of the impossible.

The disclosure of such failures acknowledges certain limitations that are obvious to us. But at the same time, it promotes

a desire to overcome the failure. Han Yoon-un has tried to overcome the 'I' who pursues too much freedom but revealed that it is also difficult to moderate that desire. Thus, Han Yong-un informed us of two limitations. He is both alerts to the pursuit of freedom and at the same time an attitude of giving up such freedom. In other words, it is impossible to give up 'I' and also to pursue 'I' alone. And this limit-setting causes the phenomena of swinging between the 'I' and the 'other'. The above effect is different from the romanticism of Kim Eok, who ultimately tried to go beyond the 'I', but finally ended up with 'I' anyway. After reading Han Yong-un's poem, the desire to endlessly go back and forth between the 'I' and the 'other' is felt. And this desire leads to a deepening and broadening of 'the inner self'.

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